

The Lall Singh Murder

While the War of 1914 to 1918 swept the world of many crowns and coronets, sheltered within the might of the Paramountcy, the Indian States emerged, if any thing, a little more secure, and certainly more important than they had ever been before. Before the War, it was unthinkable for a representative of the Princes to be employed to sign a treaty of international importance or to hear of them at Geneva. To find them in secret conclave conspiring against the future of India was unthinkable. Secure against foreign invasion, secure against internal tumult, backed with the power and prestige of a mighty Empire, helped by the distractions of the times, and a steadily diminishing scrutiny over purse and government, they made the most of the heydays of post-war irresponsibility.

The duty of the Paramount Power in relation to affairs within the domains of an Indian Prince had been laid down in no mistaken terms nearly half a century earlier in the famous case in which the Gaikwar of Baroda lost his gaddi.

"I cannot," said the Viceroy, "consent to employ British troops to protect anyone in the course of wrong-doing. Misrule on the part of a Government, which is upheld by the British Power, is misrule for the responsibility of which the British Government becomes in a measure involved. It becomes, therefore, not only the right but the paramount duty of the British Government to see that the administrator of a State in such a condition is reformed and that gross abuses are removed. If these obligations are not fulfilled, if gross misrule be permitted, if substantial justice be not done to the subjects of the State, if life and property be not protected, or if the general welfare of the country and people be persistently neglected, the British Government will assuredly intervene in the manner which in its judgment may be best calculated to remove these evils and to secure good Government."

Lord Curzon, some years later, also, in memorable terms, emphasised the same attitude in regard to the responsibility of the Paramount Power for the internal administration in the States.

But these dicta were sometimes conveniently forgotten or overlooked and much happened in some States of which the Paramount Power ought to have taken notice, but for reasons which were seldom disclosed, and oft-times left to surmise, declined to interfere.

According to the Propaganda Department of the Chamber of Princes, the States constitute an important long-suffering part of the Indian body politic: the Government of India rides roughshod over promises and treaties; subjects of State rule are generally contented, prosperous and happy; and as for the Rulers, they are a much and unjustly maligned order; democracy is the breath of their nostrils, they live frugally, rule in the interest of their subjects and steadily march their administrations on the road to progress. Vast effort and money maintain the continuity of the broadcast.

All would probably go well but for certain mechanical breakdowns. If only intrigues would come off as planned; if only money could ensure silence; if only documents would not wander in the post; if only the dust would keep out of the clockwork. But

\$150,000 could not keep Mr. "A's" identity sacrosanct; a woman's scream shook the Bharatpur gaddi; Indore abdicated because Mumtaz lived to tell a tale.

The murder of Lall Singh was an event that went a long way to discredit the state of affairs prevailing in Patiala at that time.

Many of the facts about the Lall Singh case are beyond controversy.

In 1912, Major-General, his late Highness Maharaja Sir Bhupendra Singh Bahadur ruled over Patiala State. He was amongst his princely order an outstanding personality. He ruled over the largest State in Northern India (excepting Kashmir); his territories extended to roughly six thousand square miles and his revenues equalled the combined revenues of all his contemporaries in the Punjab.

Maharaja Bhupendra Singh had long been known as an intelligent man, with an ability well above others of his exalted class. Physically he was a giant. His personal life was not so outstanding. He had the distinction of possessing the largest fleet of Rolls Royce tinction of possessing the largest fleet of Rolls Royce cars in the world; his kennels were the envy of his neighbours.

At the outbreak of the first World War, the Maharaja placed the major resources of his State at the service of the Empire; in Khaki and diamond ear-rings, he saw service on several fronts. As member of the imperial War Cabinet, he received high distinctions from Allied Governments, receiving the Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold; the Crown of Italy; the Order of the Nile; the Crown of Rumania; as also the Grand Crosses of the Order of St. Saviour of Greece and the Legion Honour of France. His distinguished services for the Empire did not pass without recognition- G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., were some of the honours he received.

One would imagine with so outstanding and brilliant a record the picture of the Patiala administration of that epoch would be equally impressive. This was not, however, so.

A great number of complaints in this connection went from time to time to the Viceroy and amongst cases that had come to the notice of the Government of India was the case of Dalip Kaur, wife of one Lall Singh.

Lall Singh was related to the Maharaja by marriage. He was cousin of the then Home Secretary, Gurnam Singh, whose daughter was one of the Maharaja's wives. Lall Singh commenced his career as a bugler in the Jind Army, but when Gurnam Singh's daughter became a Maharani, he ceased to blow the bugle for Jind and found employment in the Patiala State Forces as a Commissioned Officer.

On the death of his first wife, Lall Singh married Dalip Kaur, to all accounts a ravishingly attractive woman. The Maharaja was in Simla, when Lall Singh arrived fresh from his bridal conquest.

to be continued...

न्यायपालिका में व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार पर बहुत सारे जागरूक नागरिकों एवं अधिवक्ताओं ने न्यायिक अधिकारियों, जजों/ कर्मचारियों के भ्रष्टाचार, अवैध सम्पत्ति तथा विधि विरुद्ध कार्यों से सम्बंधित सामग्री भेजी है।

जिसका प्रकाशन हम आगामी अंको में इनका वेरिफिकेशन करने के बाद करेंगे।

आपसे अनुरोध है कि जो भी शिकायत/ सामग्री आप भेज रहे हैं उसका प्रमाण अवश्य भेजें। प्रकाशन सिर्फ सप्रमाण भेजी गयी सामग्रियों का ही होगा।

हमारा उद्देश्य न्यायपालिका को भ्रष्टाचार मुक्त करना है न कि किसी को बदनाम करना।

सप्रमाण सामग्री डाक/ईमेल से निम्न पते पर भेजें।

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