BRIJEN K. GUPTA

SIRAJUDDAULLAH AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, 1756-1757

SIRAJUDDAULLAH
AND THE
EAST INDIA COMPANY, 1756-1757
BACKGROUND TO THE FOUNDATION
OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA

SIRAJUDDAULLAH AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, 1756-1757

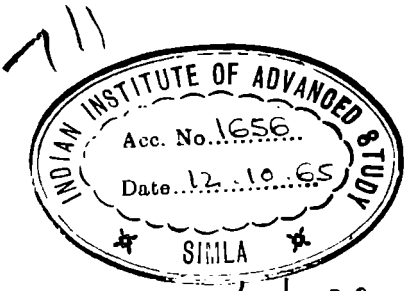
BACKGROUND TO THE FOUNDATION OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA

by

BRIJEN K. GUPTA

Department of Asian Studies
Victoria University of Wellington

LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1962



Printed in the Netherlands

For those who have taught me the most . . .

WALTER R. SHARP, introduced me to education in the United States, guided my first steps at Yale, gave me all the breaks I needed, hoping I might learn something somewhere;

ROBERT I. CRANE, invigorated my interest in Indian history, suggested this study, and has, from time to time, set my fractured methodology;

BERT F. HOSELITZ, taught me the appreciation of ideas, and saved me from becoming a dilettante;

MILTON SINGER, enabled me to appreciate intellectual differences, and made my life at Chicago a meaningful experience.

. . . with love, and greetings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to a number of persons, none of whom may be held responsible for my statements:

Stephen N. Hay, read the entire manuscript, painstakingly de-Indianised my English, and suggested several editorial changes.

Earl H. Pritchard, edited the final draft, and proved to be the severest and most inspiring critic.

Holden Furber and Myron Weiner, read portions of the manuscript, and pointed out several errors of interpretation.

Stanley C. Sutton, gave me excellent facilities for research at the India Office Library in London, and treated me to excellent conversations and dinners in foggy London.

Connie Campbell and Helen Smith of the University of Chicago Libraries, and Delphine Okie Richardson of the University of Pennsylvania Library, most sympathetically responded to my maddening demands for books on inter-library loans.

The staff of British Museum, Huntington Library at San Marino, Newberry Library of Chicago, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and Public Record Office, London, ungrudgingly allowed me to impose upon them.

Leonard Baldyga and Margaret Clark checked the proofs, and as students inspired me to become a better teacher.

PREFACE

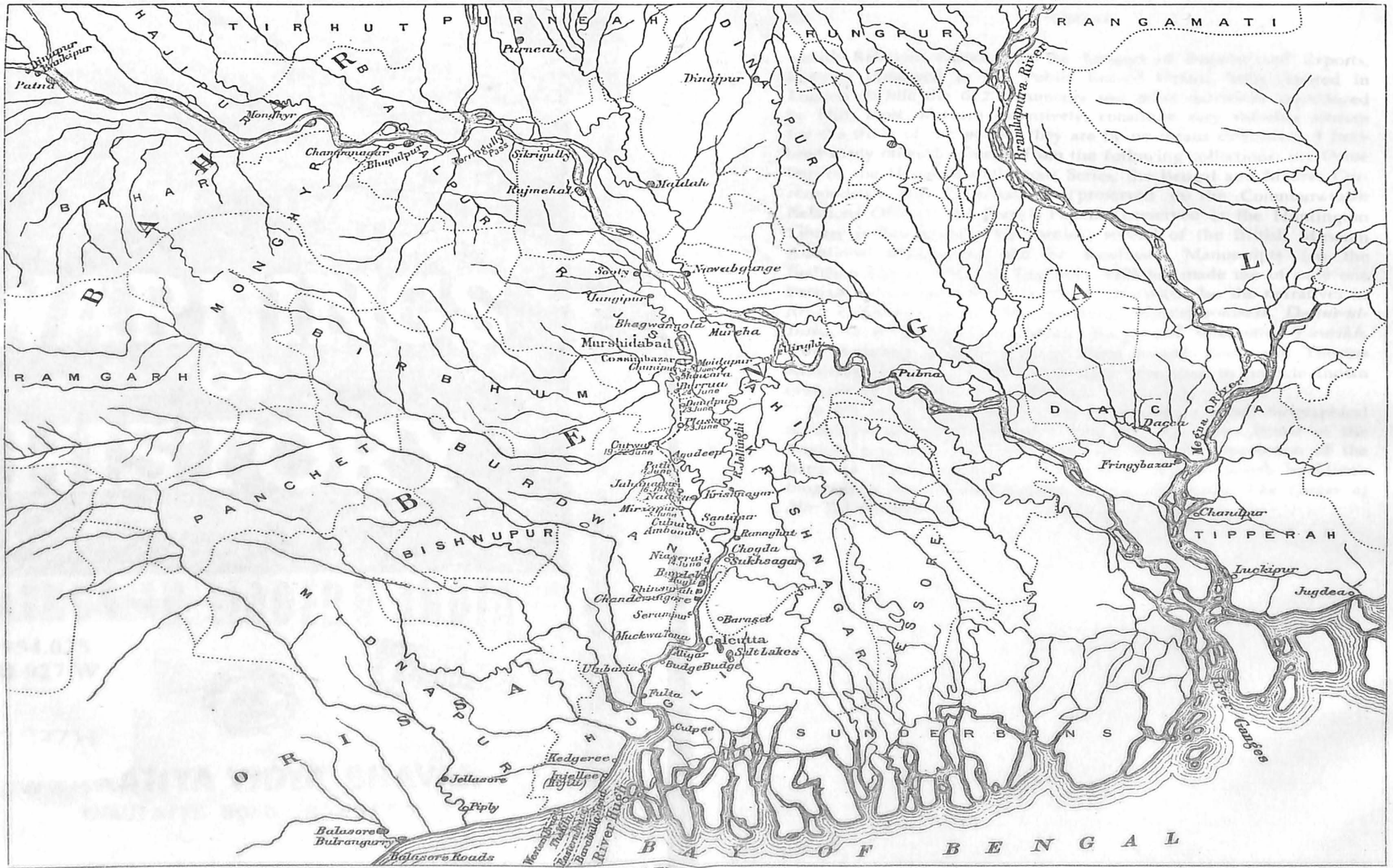
The short-lived nawabship of Sirajuddaullah in Bengal constitutes a critical period in Anglo-Indian relations. The English victory over Sirajuddaullah had consequences which were permanent and profound in their nature. The nawab's defeat broke up the Indian government of Bengal and prepared the way for territorial expansion of the East India Company on the Indian sub-continent. It also changed the pattern of Anglo-Indian commercial relations. Prior to 1757 Bengal was the sink into which foreign bullion disappeared; after Plassey it became the mine from which vast amounts of wealth were drained without any return.

The purpose of this monograph is to examine the background, the causes, the nature and the consequences of the conflict between the English company and the nawab of Bengal. Over half a century ago S. C. Hill treated this subject in a long introduction of 212 pages prefixed to the three volume collection *Bengal in 1756-57*. Two writers dealing with the same historical period are bound to relate many of the same events, but I have avoided, as far as possible, any duplication of factual narrative. My approach of the subject has been considerably different from Hill's. He narrates events well, but he has made an inadequate analysis of the commercial relations between the Bengali government and the East India Company, which lay at the basis of the conflict. He has failed to interpret how a commercial corporation came to acquire political power in Bengal. Hill's historical curiosity has been greatly satisfied by relating the causes of the conflict to the avaricious and cruel nature of the nawab. In pursuit of this thesis he has, at times, suppressed evidence to the contrary, and on some other occasions has accepted the opinions of unreliable secondary sources in place of primary witnesses. Hill's view fails to take into account the vast changes in the political and economic climate of India, the changes in the status of the Company itself, which, in the mid-eighteenth century made the English and Bengali interests quite irreconcilable.

In this study I have approached the subject both from the economic and political standpoints. This has necessitated the use of the commercial records of the Company, *viz*: the Journals and Ledgers, and the European Manuscripts preserved in original in the Common-

wealth Relations Office, and the Ledgers of Imports and Exports, likewise preserved in the Public Record Office, both situated in London. While the 612 documents and other narratives reproduced by Hill, most of them extensively, constitute very valuable sources for the study of the period, they are by no means exhaustive. I have used many other documents from the following collections: the Orme Papers, the Home Miscellaneous Series, the Bengal and Madras Correspondence and Consultations (preserved in the Commonwealth Relations Office); the Pocock Papers (preserved in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California); several of the British Museum Additional Manuscripts; and the Rawlinson Manuscripts (in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England). Hill has made use of only one Persian source, *Seir-i-Mutaqheerin*. I have used also the narratives in *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, *Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jung*, *Muzzaffarnamah*, *Dastur-ul-Insha*, *Ibrat-i-Arbab-i-Basr*, *Tarikh-i-Bangla* and *Khulasat-ut Tuarikh*. Two Armenian sources, *Life of Emin Joseph Emin* and Thomas Khojamall's history of *Hindustan* have been used to provide Indian evidence of the Black Hole incident.

In this study I have avoided much that has a purely biographical or military interest. Likewise I have not gone into details of the English conspiracy with Mir Jafar nor with the description of the Battle of Plassey. These events have been dealt at length by Clive's biographers and by Atul Chandra Roy in his study, *The Career of Mir Jafar Khan*.



BENGAL (AFTER RENNELL).

Stanford's Geog^l Estab^t, London

CHAPTER I

THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH TRADE INTEREST IN BENGAL

The East India Company was organized in 1600. [1] Within fifteen years of its incorporation the king of England recognised "the extraordinary benefit" its trade brought to England. [2] The continuance of these extraordinary benefits, the Company's supporters argued, depended largely on favorable privileges from the native rulers abroad, and from the English crown at home. From the former it sought the most favorable trading treatment possible, and from the latter a monopoly of English trade to the East Indies.

In practice, however, the Company enjoyed neither the most favorable trading treatment abroad nor an English monopoly at home. In India the Company negotiated arrangements with the local rulers to establish factories, to send its agents into the country to procure goods, and to transmit goods from one part of India to another without payment of inland duties. The official orders confirming these arrangements were often (especially in the hundred years before the Battle of Plassey) vague, and were interpreted differently by the Company's agents and the Mughal officials.

The Company allowed its employees to trade on their own account from one part of the Indian Ocean to another, except to and from Europe. This was called the 'country' trade. This concession was also extended to 'free merchants,' that is those persons not in the direct employment of the Company, but who were allowed to settle in the Company's establishments upon securing a license from the Company's court of directors. [3] A 'privileged' trade was also allowed to the of-

[1] The exact title was "The Governor and Merchants of London Trading into East Indies." Between 1698 and 1709, another rival company: "The English Company Trading to the East Indies," was also in existence. These two companies were united in 1709 as "The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies." Except for the period of rivalry, the shorter title, "The East India Company," is used in this study, for the pre-1698 and post-1709 periods. For the interval, "The London Company," and "The English Company" are used.

[2] *The First Letter Book of the East India Company*, ed. George Birdwood (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893), p. 470.

[3] The court of directors was the supreme executive body of the East India Company in London. For the administrative organization of the Company in London and India see, James Mils, *History of the British in India*, ed, and completed by Horace Hyman Wilson (10 vols.; London: James Madden & Co., 1840), III, 5-9.

ficers of the Company's shipping, by which they could carry a limited cargo on their ships free of freight. As the trade grew lucrative, it became extremely difficult to check the confines of the 'country' and the 'privileged' trades, which were, not infrequently, carried in the monopoly articles. This invasion of the Company's monopoly led to a further abuse — the misuse of the trading privileges granted to the Company by the Mughal government. It is hardly conceivable that a body of employee-merchants, intent upon invading the Company's monopoly, could have behaved honestly towards the Mughal officials who granted them trade privileges.

The monopoly of the Company [4] was also flouted and contested by the 'interlopers.' They maintained, in the seventeenth century, a steady pressure on the English government to lay the eastern trade open to all Englishmen. In the absence of a favorable outcome of their appeals, they financed illegal trade between England and the Indian Ocean countries. If the Company's servants violated the Company's monopoly like petty thieves, the interlopers did so like armed robbers.

We shall now examine the economic difficulties caused to the Company, first, by the ambiguous grants of Indian authorities, and second, by the Company's factors and the interlopers, who violated the monopoly.

A. Trade Privileges, 1650-1757

The Mughal letters of authorization for trade were of four kinds. *Farmans,* the imperial charters, were alsmost equivalent to commercial treaties. Below them came the *husb-ul hukms,* the orders issued by the grand vizier. Next in the hierarchy were the *nishans,* the letters-patent issued by the provincial governors. Of the lowest authority were the *parwanas,* which were temporary permits issued by provincial officials.

All these authorizations were "only *pro libitum.*" and were required to be renewed *de novo* as and when the new emperors and the new nawabs replaced the old incumbents. [5] This in itself became the source

[4] Great Britain, House of Commons, Reports on the East India Affairs, *Supplement to the Fourth Report from the Select Committee (1812),* p. 514, mentions the amounts of free freight allowed to various members of the crew.

[5] Surat Factory to the Court of Directors, April 6, 1660; Bridges to the Court of Directors, January 22, 1669 in *English Factories in India, 1618-69,* ed. William Foster (13 vols.; Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1906-27), X, 305; XIII, 178. (Cited hereafter as *E.F.I.*)

of a long dispute between the Company's agents and the Mughal officials. The former insisted on the permanent nature of their concessions, while the latter considered them only temporary. [6]

The first English factory in Bengal was established at Hughli in 1651. [7] Under the provisions of a *farman* issued by Emperor Shah Jehan a year earlier, the English traders were exempted from paying inland transit duties on goods bound for the western coast for export. [8] The *farman* of 1650 did not specifically apply to Bengal. The intention of the *farman,* as William Foster has convincingly pointed out, could not have been to excuse the English from paying export duties at the Bengal ports. [9]

However, by a misrepresentation of the *farman* of 1650, [10] the English traders obtained from Shah Shuja, the nawab of Bengal, a *nishan* certifying that the English goods were to be exempt from road and port duties "in accordance with" the *farman* of 1650. [11] Having established this precedent, the Company, between 1656 and 1672, secured from Shah Shuja and his successors at least six *parwanas* confirming the *nishan* of 1651. [12] The only significant change through these years had been the establishment of a yearly tribute of Rs. 3,000 to be paid to the nawab of Bengal for this concession. [13]

The Company's servants in Bengal were conscious of the dubious nature of the concessions they secured. [14] Time and again they suggested to the court of directors the necessity of securing a clearly-worded *farman* from Aurangzib, who had, in 1659, replaced Shah Jehan as the Mughal emperor. The court of directors did not accept this advice; on the contrary, it advised its factors in Bengal "to try the effect of a bribe on the officers of the nawab," whenever the

[6] *English Factories in India, New Series, 1670-84,* ed. Charles Fawcett (4 vols.; Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1936-55), IV, 158. (Cited hereafter as *E.F.*)

[7] *E.F.I.,* IX, 26.

[8] The *farman* is cited in *E.F.I.,* X, 414-15.

[9] *Ibid.,* X, 109; William Foster, "Gabriel Boughton and the Trading Privileges in Bengal," *Indian Antiquary,* XL (1911), 247-57.

[10] The nawab was not shown the original *farman.* He accepted the English word for it.

[11] *E.F.I.,* X, 415.

[12] *Ibid.,* X, 111, 416; XI, 395; XIII, 316; *E.F.,* II, 349-50.

[13] *E.F.I.,* X, 111.

[14] Bridges to Hall, May 21, 1669, *E.F.,* XIII, 298-99; Streynsham Master to the Court of Directors, October 28, 1676, *The Diaries of Streynsham Master,* ed. Richard Temple, ("Indian Record Series," 2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1911), I, 491 (cited hereafter as *Master Diary);* Job Charnock to the Hughli Council, October 28, 1678, *E.F.,* IV, 164.

Company's trade privileges were questioned. [15] So long as the Company's trade was small and adequate bribes were forthcoming, the interference of the Mughal officials was limited. [16] But with the rapid growth of the Company's investment in Bengal, which coincided with the viceroyalty of Shaista Khan (1664-78, 1679-88), the demands for bribes, and failing bribes, exactions, grew rather indiscriminately. [17] In the 1670's the stoppage of the English trade by the local officials had become such a serious abuse that the Company finally decided to approach Aurangzib, from whom, in 1680, it secured a delightfully vague *farman*. [18] Said the *farman*:

> Be it known that . . . it is agreed of the English nation that besides their usual custom of 2 per cent for their goods, more 1½ per cent *jizya*, or poll money, shall be taken. Wherefore it is commanded, that in the said place [Surat]three and a half per cent of all their goods, on account of custom or poll money be taken for the future. *And at all other places*, upon this account, let no one molest them for custom. *rahdari, peshcash, farmaish* . . . [19] (Italics added.)

The English traders interpreted this *farman* to mean that their goods *at Surat only* were to be subjected to a 3½ per cent duty, while "at all other places" they were to be free not only from such duties, but also the yearly tributes, like the one paid by them in Bengal. [20] The Mughal officials, on their part, linked the clause "and at all other

[15] *Ibid.*, II, 354.

[16] There was hardly any dispute between the Company and Shah Shuja (1651-60). During the viceroyalty of Mir Jumla (1660-63), though the nawab and his subordinates used the threat of a trade embargo on the Company's business, the relations between the two were fairly cordial. The nawab even lent Rs. 125,000 to the English agent, Jonathan Trevisa, of which Rs. 9,700 remained outstanding at the time of Mir Jumla's demise. For relations between Mir Jumla and the Company; see, *E.F.I.* X, 92-98, 184-87, 263-66, 280-305, 389-94; XI, 42-45, 148, 183, 292.

[17] Hughli Council to the Surat Council, April 12, 1666, *E.F.I.*, XII, 257-58. The Company's investment in Bengal, in different years, was as follows: 1659—£ 10,000; 1674—£ 85,000; 1680—over £ 150,000. *E.F.I.*, X, 275; John Bruce, *Annals of the Honourable East India Company* (3 vols.; London: Black, Parry & Kingsbury, 1810). II, 228, 361; *E.F.*, IV, 166.

[18] For the Mughal treatment of the Company's servants prior to 1680; see *E.F.I.*, XI, 394-402; XII, 140; XIII, 296-97; *E.F.*, II, pt. iii, *passim;* IV, pt. iii, *passim; The Diary of William Hedges*, ed. Henry Yule (2 vols.; London: Hakluyt Society, 1887-89), I, *passim* (cited hereafter as *Hedges Diary*); *Master Diary*, II, 68-69, 80-81.

[19] Charles Stewart, *The History of Bengal* (London: Black, Parry & Co., 1813), Appendix IV. *Rahdari* is transit duty; *pescash*, tribute; *farmaish*, incidental duties. Punctuation in the Persian language is usually conspicuous by its absence, and is, therefore, supplied by the reader.

[20] *E.F.*, IV, 259.

places" to the sentence preceding the clause, without inserting a period, which meant that a 3½ per cent duty was to be uniformly levied throughout India. [21] An appeal to the emperor to interpret the *farman* in the Company's favor met with no success. [22] The interlopers had appeared in Bengal waters in the 1670's. Their readiness to pay the 3½ per cent duty hardly encouraged the imperial exchequer to exempt the Company from it. [23]

"Despised and trampled upon" by the Mughal officials, [24] the Company's servants in Bengal recommended to the court of directors a policy of carrying on trade under the protection of a fortified settlement. It was felt that the threat of force would "oblige the Indians to do them [the English] justice." [25] The advice fell on the willing ears of Sir Josiah Child, and in 1685 the war with the Mughal emperor began. [26]

By 1689 the Company's forces had been completely routed on land, though the battles on the sea were indecisive. [27] Recognizing the failure of its expedition, the Company sued the emperor for peace. Its emissaries, George Weldon and Abraham Navarro were received in Delhi, with "their hands tied by a sash before them." On February 27, 1690 the emperor imposed a humiliating peace treaty. The Company was obliged to pay a fine of £ 150,000, and to make good the Indian losses. By a subsequent *farman* the English traders were permitted to return to Bengal and to trade free of custom duties, on payment of a yearly tribute of Rs. 3,000. [28] This, indeed, was an English diplomatic victory.

[21] *Hedges Diary*, I, 100.

[22] *Ibid.*, I, 33-62, 91-101; *E.F.*, IV, 294.

[23] *Infra*, pp. 12-14.

[24] *A Treatise Wherein is Demonstrated the East India Trade is Most National of All Foreign Trades* (London: R. Butler, 1681), p. 37.

[25] *A Letter to a Friend Concerning East India Trade* (London: Stationers Hall, 1696), p. 14; *Hedges Diary*, I, 117-39.

[26] The arguments are reviewed by Henry Yule in *ibid.*, Vol. II, chaps.xxiii-xxiv. Also see, Secret Committee of the Court of Directors to the Bengal Agency, January 14, 1686, *ibid.*, Vol. II, chaps. li-liii. The original memorandum for "War with the Mogul," as drawn up by the Company's governor, Benjamin Bathurst, is preserved in the Bodleain Library, Rawlinson MS A. 257.

[27] A good account of the events of this war is in Charles R. Wilson, *Annals of the Early English in Bengal* (3 vols.; London: W. Thacker & Co., 1895-1917), I. Bk. III, *passim*. Most of the relevant documents are reproduced by Henry Yule in *Hedges Diary*, II, pt. ii, *passim*.

[28] "The Diary of George Weldon and Abraham Navarro's Journey up to the Court of the Great Mogull," British Museum, Sloane MS 1910, No. 3, fols. 45-48; Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, ed. William Foster (2

The Company's defeat apparently meant that the aim of establishing a fortified settlement, or what the court of directors had called "a polity of civil and military power . . . [to] secure such a large revenue as may be the foundation of a large, well grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come," [29] had remained unrealized. And in the absence of such a settlement, the court of directors lamented that the Company's factors were merely "a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's royal charter, fit only to trade where no body of power think it their interest to prevent . . ." [30] The defeat further strengthened the position of the interlopers, who were successful in securing a royal charter for a rival company. [31]

These setbacks, however, proved to be only temporary. Job Charnock, the chief agent of the Company in Bengal, returned to Bengal with the Company's staff more determined than ever to secure a fortified settlement by persuasion, diplomacy, and the use of political opportunities. In 1696, taking advantage of a local insurrection, the London company was able to fortify its settlements. Two years later a bribe of Rs. 16,000 secured for the Company the *zamindari* (revenue and tax collection) rights of the three villages of Calcutta, Sutaniti, and Govindpur. Though the trade of the Company not infrequently suffered from interdictions by Mughal officials, the English factors were sufficiently protected at Fort William to defy ordinary embargoes. [32]

In 1700 Aurangzib sent to Bengal as his diwan, Murshid Quli

vols.; London: Argonaut Press, 1930), I, 225-26; Harihar Das, "The Mission of George Weldon and Abraham Navarro to the Court of Aurangzib," *Indian Antiquary*, LVIII (1929), 71; Bruce, *op. cit.*, II, 639-40; Stewart, *op. cit.*, Appendices, VII, VIII, IX; Walter J. Fischel, "Abraham Navarro, Jewish Interpreter and Diplomat in the Service of the English East Indies Company (1682-92)," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XXV (1956), 39-63.

[29] Court of Directors to the Fort St. George Council, December 12, 1687, cited by P. E. Roberts, *History of British India* (2nd ed.; Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 44.

[30] Court of Directors to the Council in India, September 11, 1689, cited by William W. Hunter, *A History of British India* (2 vols, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899-1900), II, 244.

[31] *Infra*, p. 13.

[32] The growth of the Bengal establishments, of which Fort William became the capital, has been ably traced and documented by Charles R. Wilson, *Old Fort William*, ("Indian Records Series," 2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1906). For fortifications of 1696, and the rights of 1698, see, *ibid.*, I, 19-20, 34-41. For the zamindari system of Bengal, see Charles L. Tupper, *Our India Protectorate* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1893), ch. ix. For the working of the zamindari system under the English administration, see John Z. Holwell, *India Tracts* (3rd ed.; London: T. Becket, 1774), pp. 177, 210-46; William Tooke, "Narrative of the Capture of Cal-

Khan, a strict revenue administrator. Since 1860 the emperor had been engaged in dealing with the almost never ending series of rebellions in one part of India or another which had reduced "the royal family, the court, and army to starvation." [33] Bengal, like Gujerat, was the source of a very large share of the empire's revenues. [34] Murshid Quli Khan's task was to secure them efficiently. The diwan, though

> . . . sensible that the prosperity of Bengal and the increase of the revenues depended on its advantageous commerce, particularly those carried by the ships from Europe . . .

was nevertheless, "jealous of the growing power of the Europeans in Bengal." [35] This soon manifested itself in friction between the diwan and the Company's agents.

In 1701 English trade throughout India was interdicted by an imperial decree as a penalty for European piracies in Indian waters. [36] In Bengal, as a result of this decree, the English factories at Patna, Kassimbazar and Rajmahal were seized in 1704, and Murshid Quli Khan demanded Rs. 30,000 as a tribute to vacate the seizures. [37] After three years of negotiations, in 1707, the Company and the nawab compromised on Rs. 25,000, but before the payment could be made, the news of Aurangzib's death arrived, and the Company decided not to make the payment. [38]

Both the Company and the nawab tried to take advantage of the uncertainties of succession to the imperial throne. The Company strengthened Fort William, while Murshid Quli Khan, in his turn,

cutta," *Bengal in 1757-57*, ed. S. C. Hill, ("Indian Records Series." 3 vols.; London: John Murray, 1905), I, 248-301. (Cited hereafter as *Hill Collection.*)

[33] Jadunath Sarkar, ed., *History of Bengal* (2 vols.; Dacca: University of Dacca, 1943-48), II, 407. For the diwan's role in Mughal bureaucracy, see Henry Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal from 1760 to 1764* (3 vols., London: J. Newberry, 1766), Vol. I, chap iv.

[34] In 1707 the revenues of Bengal (including Bihar and Orrisa) amounted to £ 3,358,179 out of the total imperial revenues of £ 37,724,615. William Bolts, *Considerations on India Affairs* (3 vols., London: J. Dodsley, 1772-75), I, 16-17.

[35] Salimullah, "Tarikh-i Bangla," tr. Francis Gladwin in *A Narrative of Transactions in Bengal* (Calcutta: Bangbasi Press, 1906), pp. 47-48. (Cited hereafter as "Tarikh-i-Bangla.")

[36] Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzib* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), pp. 411-18.

[37] Bengal Public Consultations, October 27, 1704, India Office Records, Commonwealth Relations Office. (Cited hereafter as I.O., Bengal Public Consultations.)

[38] *Idem*, February 9, 1707; April 3, 1707; April 14, 1707. Hill's statement (*Hill Collection*, I, xxiv), "As early as 1706 he [Murshid Quli Khan] exacted 25,000 rupees from the British . . ." is obviously erroneous. The payment was agreed upon, but not made.

interdicted the Company's operations on the ground that its trading privileges, as a result of the demise of the emperor, had ceased to be operative. [39] On one occasion he demanded Rs. 150,000 to renew the Company's privileges, and at another time Rs. 30,000, before the Company could resume its trade in Bengal. [40]

In view of the difficulties caused to the English trade, the Company sent to Emperor Farrukhsiyar an embassy led by John Surman. [41] In 1717, by a *farman* and two *husb-ul hukms,* the Company's old privileges were confirmed and some new ones granted. However, three important provisions of the imperial orders caused conflicting interpretations. [42]

According to the farman, "all goods and necessaries which their [the Company's] factors . . . bring or carry away either by land or by water," were to be free from custom duties. It was not clear whether the exemptions applied to goods belonging to the Company only, or to the goods of the Company only, or to the goods of the Company as well as its factors. The *farman* also permitted the Company to rent thirty-eight villages adjacent to Calcutta, for which the "*diwan* and subah [nawab]" were called upon to "give permission." A dispute arose as to whether the provision was mandatory on the nawab or merely advisory. And finally, the nawab was to allow the Company to use the royal mint for minting coins out of its imported bullion, "if it be not against the king's interest,"—a clause which was quite discretionary.

The policy of the nawabs of Bengal "had been invariable in opposing landholding, coinage," and the right for unlimited duty-free trade. [43] Murshid Quli Khan refused to permit the Company's servants to carry on their trade duty-free. According to Robert Orme, the imperial vizier at Delhi had himself refused to extend this privilege

[39] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, December 13, 1709, January 3, 1709.

[40] *Idem,* June 30, 1708, October 13, 1711.

[41] Surman's embassy is exhaustively treated by Wilson in *Early Annals.* II, pt. ii. Surman's diary is preserved with other documents pertaining to the embassy in the Home Miscellaneous Series, Vols. LXIX-LXXI, India Office Records, Commonwealth Relations Office. (Cited hereafter as I.O., Home Series.)

[42] The *farman* is cited in *Hill Collection,* III, 375-77. The working of the *farman* of 1717 is examined in details by Sukumar Bhattacharya, *The East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1704-40* (London: Luzac & Co., 1954), and Kalikinkar Datta, *Alivardi and His Times* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1939).

[43] MS Eur[opean]. D. 283, fols. 14, 24, India Office Records, Commonwealth Relations Office. (Cited hereafter as I.O., MS Eur.)

to the Company factors. [44] As such later claims of the Company's factors for a privilege of unrestricted duty free inland private trade had no legal foundation.

The hazy distinction between the private trade of the Company's factors and the export-import trade of the Company itself created several difficulties. In order to determine whether the goods in transit belonged to the Company and not to its employees, the officials at the octroi posts were empowered to open the cargoes, which gave them the opportunity to withhold clearance of the goods, unless a bribe was forthcoming. The Company's officials, in their turn, tried to pass the goods belonging to them as goods belonging to the Company, and thereby exempt them from duties. [45] Thus neither the Mughal officials nor the Company's factors observed the provisions of the *farman* with fidelity.

Murshid Quli Khan also denied permission to the Company to buy the thirty-eight villages. [46] For years the Company struggled to enlarge its possessions, often by recourse to the fraudulent purchase of villages in the name of the Company's native employees. The addition of these villages to the three villages of Calcutta, Govindpur and Sutaniti, which the Company had legally secured in 1698, confused the zamindari status of the Company. The Company insisted on paying only Rs. 1,195 as the yearly rental for its entire settlement, as provided in the original agreement of 1698 (for only three villages). The nawab, on the other hand, not unaware of the extension of the limits of the Company's settlements since 1698, claimed the revenues in accordance with the general zamindari practice. This meant not Rs. 1,195 a year, but the actual amount of the revenues secured by the Company from its settlements, less the usual 10 per cent collection fee. The Company's revenue from its settlements, which stood in 1717 at Rs. 11,071, amounted to Rs. 107,131 in 1754. [47] The nawabs of Bengal, therefore, from time to time demanded tributes to square

[44] Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the English Nation in Indostan* (2 vols.; London: John Nourse, 1778). II, 25.

[45] *Infra,* pp. 11-14.

[46] I.O., Bengal Public Consultation, July 30, 1717.

[47] *Idem,* April 18, 1717, July 11, 1717, September 2, 1717, December 2, 1717; William W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (20 vols.; London: Trübner & Co., 1875-77), I, 20. The revenue was collected by taxation on "everything which came within the denomination of common food or the common necessaries of life," in addition to ground rents, licensing fees for the practice of professions, and taxation on commercial transactions like mortgages, and sales of houses, ships, slaves, etc. J. Z. Holwell, *Indian Tracts* (3rd ed.; London: T. Beckett, 1774), p. 210.

off what they thought the Company owed them. In 1726 a demand for Rs. 44,000 was made; in 1736 for Rs. 55,000; and in 1754 for Rs. 3,000,000. On each of these occasions the disputes had to be compromised, and payments of Rs. 20,000, Rs. 55,000, and Rs. 85,000 respectively were made, [48]

The Company remained totally unsuccessful in securing minting privileges, for these the nawab denied outright. [49] These privileges were sought because the rupees coined at Madras, where the Company had a mint, were not acceptable in Bengal, except at a large depreciation. The shortage of cash funds is aptly described by Mandeville, who, in 1750, wrote:

> There is hardly enough currency left [in the Company's treasury] in Bengal to carry on trade, or even to go to market for provision and necessaries of life till the next shipping arrives to bring a fresh supply of silver. [50]

Under such an acute shortage of funds, the Company was forced to borrow from the local merchants, at very high rates of interest. [51]

It is thus clear that the sources for a conflict in 1756 had been in existence long before Sirajuddaullah's accession. The Company argued that it was being denied the full benefit of the provisions of the *farman* of 1717; while the nawab argued that the English traders were abusing these provisions to the detriment of his revenues. [52] The situation was aggravated by the conduct of interlopers and the Company's servants, who in their narrow selfish interests violated the Company's monopoly of the East India trade, and in addition abused the rights granted to the Company by the Mughal officials. Let us briefly examine their role in the hundred years prior to the Battle of Plassey.

[48] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, December 12, 1726, June 12, 1727, September 2, 1735, July 6, 1736; Fort William Council to the Court of Directors August 3, 1744, November 9, 1745, Bengal Correspondence, India Office Records, Commonwealth Relations Office. (Cited hereafter as I.O., Bengal Correspondence.)

[49] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, July 30, 1717.

[50] Cited by James Steuart, *Principles of Money Applied to the Present State of Coin in Bengal* (London: 1772), pp. 62-63.

[51] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, September 18, 1752, February 12, 1753, November 29, 1754.

[52] India, Records of Fort St. George, *Diary and Consultation Book (Public Department), 1756*, Vol. 86 (Madras: Government Press, 1946), p. 27. (Cited hereafter as *Fort St. George Public Consultations.)*

B. The Interlopers and Private Traders

From the very first years of its inception, the East India Company had permitted its employees and certain other individuals to trade privately on their own account in certain parts of the Indian Ocean. By 1675 the right to trade on one's private account had been extended to

> . . . any commodity . . . to any port or places in the East Indies to the northward of the equator, except to Tonkin and Formosa . . . [53]

The trade was highly lucrative, and the desire for inordinate profit led to serious abuses. [54] In the letters written by the court of directors charges constantly recur of illicit private trade in the monopoly articles, [55] of the use of the Company's capital for private benefit, [56] of the employment of the Company's ships in the service of private trade, [57] of the transfer of private losses to the Company's charge, [58] of the sale of the Company's vessels, on the pretext that they were no longer serviceable, to private individuals for personal gain, [59] and of exacting huge commissions on purchases and sales made on the Company's behalf. [60]

Private trade led to insubordination. When in 1676 the court of directors proposed that a register be kept of the private trade of the Company's employees, the Madras council (which then supervised the Bengal agency) called it "an impracticable and destructive condition," and refused to comply. [61] Once these factors had secured personal estates, dismissal from the Company's service had little impact on them. They simply became interlopers. [62] In the seventeenth cen-

[53] Commission of appointment from the Court of Directors to Streynsham Master, pars. 41-42, *Master Diary*, I, 213.

[54] For instance, Thomas Chambers was accused of having amassed £ 100.000 through his private trade. Court of Directors to Fort St. George Council, February 20, 1660, *E.F.I.*, XI, 168. Elihu Yale contributed out of his private fortune, $ 28,000, to provide for an endowment at Yale University. For Yale's career, see Hiram Bingham, *Elihu Yale* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1939.)

[55] *E.F.*, II, 4, 5, 152; *Master Diary*, I, 310.

[56] *E.F.*, II, 181, 219; *Hedges Diary*, Vol. II, chap. cxcix.

[57] *E.F.*, IV, 170.

[58] *Master Diary*, I, 158; *Hedges Diary*. Vol. II, chap. xii.

[59] *E.F.I.*, XIII, 176.

[60] *Master Diary*, I, 158-59.

[61] Fort St. George Council to the Court of Directors, 1676, cited in *E.F.*, II, 161.

[62] For example, William Langhorn, Streynsham Master, William Hedges, William Gifford, and Elihu Yale, all trusted servants of the Company at one time later became interlopers. On Langhorn, see Streynsham Master, "The Character of Government at Fort St. George, 1672-77." Master's Paper No. 10, India Office MS, Com-

tury even the most trusted of the agents had to be dismissed for his excessive private trade. In 1682 William Hedges was sent to Bengal to destroy the interloping trade of Mathais Vincent and Thomas Pitt. The expedition failed. [63] Ten years later, however, the same William Hedges was found to have become an interloper himself! [64]

Private trade in the 1680's led to the abuse of *dustucks*. These *dustucks* were permits issued by the president and the secretary of the council of the Company, specifying the quality and quantity of goods to be passed clear of all octroi posts free of duties. [65] In 1682 it was reported that the Company's factors were giving these permits to the native agents in "an infinite number," thus defrauding the Mughal authority of its proper revenues. [66] In spite of the directives of the court of directors, this malpractice continued well into the eighteenth century. [67]

In the seventeenth century a far greater threat to the Company's trade than the trade of its servants was presented by the interlopers, who carried on trade between Europe and the Indian Ocean countries in open violation of the Company's charter. By 1675 interloping had degenerated into near piracy. [68] And while "the directors fulminated against interlopers from London," [69] in India, between the interlopers and the Company's servants, "there was neutrality, and sometimes collusion." [70] The ships of the interlopers offered a convenient medium for the private trade of the Company's servants. [71] Nor were the Mughal officials averse to the buccaneers who not only paid the 3½ per cent customs duty, but added to the duties generous presents for the Mughal officials. [72] The defeat of the Company in the war with the Mughal emperor constituted, in a way, a victory for the interlopers. In 1693/1694 one of the interlopers declared to the House of Commons that "he did not think it any sin to trade to the East Indies, and

monwealth Relations Office. For others, see *Hedges Diary*, II, pt. iii.

[63] *Hedges Diary*, I, 15. For an account of Pitt's interloping trade, see Cornelius N. Dalton, *Life of Thomas Pitt* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1915); *Hedges Diary*, III, pt. i.

[64] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, chap. cxxiv.

[65] I.O., MS Eur. D. 283, fol. 14.

[66] *E.F.*, IV, 257-58.

[67] *Infra*, pp. 13-14.

[68] Edward Thompson and G.T. Garrat, *Rise and Fulfillment of the British Rule in India* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1934), p. 39.

[69] Hunter, *British India*, II, 296.

[70] Thompson and Garrat, *loc. cit.*

[71] *Master Diary*, II, 104, 189, 285, 306, 320, 339; *Hedges Diary*, II, pt. iii, *passim*.

[72] *Ibid.*, I, 55,, 130-36; *E.F.*, IV, 319, 341.

would trade thither until there was an Act of Parliament to the contrary." [73] Though in the seven years preceding 1693/1694, the court of directors had expended £ 107,000 to influence the English king and his ministers, [74] the interlopers carried the day when Parliament declared in an opinion on a petition that "all the subjects of England have equal right to trade to the East Indies." [75] Consequently the interlopers organized themselves into the English Trading Company Trading to the East Indies. However, its trading operations, especially in Bengal, proved to be a dismal failure. [76] After eleven years of existence, this company in 1709 merged with the old London Company to form the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies.

Though interloping activity ceased to operate in the eighteenth century, the practice of trading on personal account permeated all ranks of the Company's employees, including the clergy. "I am extremely anxious to go as a chaplain on the East India fleet," wrote one applicant, "the stipend is small, only £ 40 [per annum], but there are many advantages. The last brought home £ 3,000." [77]

The abuse of *dustucks* had become progressively worse, and betweeen 1702 and 1756 the court of directors

> . . . transmitted to Fort William twenty-five standing orders against it, each of these directing on detection, restitution to the *shah's* [emperor's] duties, immediate dismissal from service, and the aggressor to be sent to England on the first ship . . . [78]

The Fort William council refused to pay much heed to these directives, but, on the contrary, retorted: "If the Company allowed no private trade, their servants must starve, . . . confining the *dustucks* to the Company's trade would be giving up a great article in the *farman* [of 1717]." [79]

[73] Great Britain, *Journal of the House of Commons*, January 8, 1693/1694.
[74] Great Britain, House of Commons, *Collection of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament in 1694 and 1695 upon the Inquiry into the Late Briberies and Current Practices* (1905), p. 6.
[75] *Journal of the House of Commons*, January 19, 1693/1694.
[76] For the history of the two rival companies from 1698 to 1709, see Hunter, *British India*, Vol. II, chap. ix. The interlopers's company failed to secure a charter from Aurangzib. The records of William Norris's embassy to Aurangzib are in British Museum, Additional MSS 28493, 31302; and Bodleain Library, Rawlinson MS C. 912.
[77] Cited by E. Lipson, *The Economic History of England*, Vol. II, *The Age of Mercantilism* (3rd ed., London: Adam and Charles Black, 1943), p. 304.
[78] I.O., MS Eur. D. 283, fol. 25.
[79] *Idem*, fols. 24-25.

The official Mughal attitude toward these abuses of the *dustucks* was to seize the goods of the Company from time to time, and to impose penalties. [80] The longer the Company's agents waited to compromise the matters, the more severe the penalties became. [81] And the Company, unable to make good its protests with a show of force, had no other recourse than to submit. However, the penalties failed to have a salutary effect on the Company's servants. In 1756 Sirajuddaullah claimed that the could prove that in the forty-year period since 1717, the Company had defrauded the Bengal government of £ 1,875,000 in customs duties. [82] To those who may consider this as a wild exaggeration, it may be pointed out that the private trade of the Company's factors was, indeed, quite large. The profits of this private trade were usually remitted through bills of exchange drawn on the London office of the Company and on the Dutch company in Amsterdam. In the 1750's the remittances through the English company alone amounted to an average of £ 100,000 annually (they were £ 170,810 in 1753, and £ 117,240 in 1754), while the total emoluments received by the same remitters from their employers amounted to a paltry £ 2,760 and £ 2,840 in the respective years. [83] We do not have any records of how much was remitted through the Dutch company, but it is reasonable to assume that it must have been at least equal to that remitted through the English company.

C. Volume and Profits of the Bengal Trade

Behind the drive for the private trade and the conflicts between the nawab and the Company stood the opulent and highly profitable nature of the trade. In the fifty years before the Battle of Plassey, the Company's imports in Bengal averaged over £ 180,000 annually, of which 74 per cent consisted of bullion. [84] The decennial estimates of this trade in pounds sterling are shown in the tabulation that follows:

[80] See Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, and Datta, *op. cit.*, for the exactions of the nawabs of Bengal from 1717 to 1756 pertaining to the abuse of *dustucks*.

[81] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, April 15, 1728, September 23, 1731, October 17, 1731.

[82] I.O., MS Eur. D. 283, *loc. cit.*

[83] Bengal General Journals and Ledgers, 1753-54, 1754-55, *passim*, India Office Records, Commonwealth Relations Office. (Cited hereafter I.O., Bengal Journals and Ledgers.)

[84] Great Britain, House of Commons, *Sessional Papers, 1812-13*. Vol. VIII, No. 152, "An Account of the Bullion and Merchandise Exported by the East India Company to China from 1708 to 1811" (London, 1812-13). (Cited hereafter as *Sessional Paper 152.)*

Period	*Bullion*	*Goods*	*Total for Bengal*	*Total for India*	*Bengal's Share*
1707-17	772,520	159,619	932,139	3,858,049	24.2 %
1718-27	1,331,529	227,163	1,558,692	4,613,984	33.7 %
1728-37	1,063,447	511,347	1,574,794	4,599,866	34.2 %
1738-47	1,702,908	643,478	2,346,386	5,854,746	40.0 %
1748-57	1,835,629	826,825	2,662,454	7,760,813	34.3 %
1707-57	6,706,033	2,368,432	9,074,465	26,687,458	
Average	134,121	47,369	181,489	533,749	34.0 %

Thus, Bengal's share of the Company's total Indian trade rose from 24 per cent, in the decade 1708-17, to 40 per cent, in the decade 1738-47, though during the next ten years it fell to only 34.3 per cent.

During the fifty years under survey, the growth in Bengal's trade was phenomenal. In these fifty years Bengal's exports increased, on an average, by 186 per cent; those of all India, by only 101 per cent. Similarly Bengal's share in Great Britain's international trade arose from 1.8 per cent in the decade 1707-17 to 3.3 per cent in the years 1748-57. [85]

We have noticed that the share of Bengal in the Company's entire India trade registered a decline in the years 1748-56. Actually this decline took place in the five years before Plassey, as is evident from the following table:

(Annual averages in pounds sterling) [86]

Period	*Bengal*	*India*	*Bengal's Share*
1748-52	353,126	863,586	40.9 %
1753-56	202,945	756,748	26.8 %
Average decline:	150,181	106,838	

These figures show conclusively that the decline of the Company's investments, in the period 1753-56, was greater in Bengal than elsewhere in India. This decline in exports made its effect felt both in England and in India. [87] In England it contributed to the reduction in

[85] Great Britain's total import trade in the decade 1708-17 amounted to £ 51,890,000, and in the decade 1748-57 to £ 80,365,000. Charles Whitworth, *State of the Trade of Great Britain in its Imports and Exports* (London: G. Robinson, 1776), p. 78.

[86] *Sessional Paper 152;* 1756-57 omitted due to the war between the Company and Sirajuddaullah.

[87] Narendra K. Sinha in *The Economic History of Bengal from Plassey to the Permanent Settlement,* I (Calcutta: Author, 1956), 10, writes that "the East India Company's export trade from Bengal did not diminish in value to any extent," in the immediate pre-Plassey period. This is obviously erroneous.

the dividends of the Company from 8 to 6 per cent in 1755.[88] In India it was partly responsible for economic difficulties in the Bengali economy.[89] The real reason was that the Company did not have sufficient cash funds for investment. But when the Company's directors asked the Fort William council to determine the causes of the decline in the Bengal trade, the reply they received was that the exactions of the nawabs of Bengal, and the competition of the French and the Dutch were the causes for it.[90] On the other hand Indian merchants blamed the English for the difficulties of the Bengali economy. They advised Alivardi Khan to seize the Company's assets in Bengal.[91] Though the suggestion was brushed aside, it did not escape the notice of the English merchants, who became suspicious of the motives of the nawab. It is, therefore, no surprise to find that Sirajuddaullah's march on Kassimbazar and Calcutta, in June, 1756, was immediately interpreted by the English as motivated by the desire for plunder.[92]

The general growth of the Company's India trade led to the development of close economic and political relations between the Company and the English government. From 1713, when the Company's alliance with the Whigs led to the defeat of the Tories, until at least the fall of the Duke of Newcastle in 1762, the Company "was a cog and quite an important one" in English politics.[93] The English government of that era depended on public loans, rather than public taxation, to meet its financial obligations. The East India Company was an important factor in these credit arrangements. It had the reputation of

[88] Sinha *(loc. cit.)* argues that the cause of the reduction in the dividend was the expense of war against the French. This is not true. During the period 1729-34 the Company spent £ 786,576 on civil and military establishments in India; in the period 1750-55, the expenditure was £ 1,421,565 — an increase of 80 per cent. (Great Britain, House of Commons, *Reports on East India Affairs, Third Report of the Commitee of Secrecy, 1773*, pp. 80-82.) In the period 1729-34, the Company's India trade amounted to £ 1,559,58; in the period 1750-55, to £ 4,532,439 — an increase of 191 %. It is evident that the military expenses were proportionately far less than the growth of trade.

The dividend from 1722 to 1732 was 8 per cent; from 1734 to 1743 it was 7 per cent: from 1743 to 1755 it was 8 per cent.

[89] For other reasons of these economic difficulties see *infra*, pp. 26, 27, 32, 33.

[90] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, February 27, 1758.

[91] *Infra*, p. 44.

[92] *Infra*, p. 57.

[93] Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 19. The East India Company's political interest in the English political life has been examined in L. B. Namier's *Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, I (London: Macmillan & Co., 1929), 56 ff.

being able to raise these loans at the lowest rates of interest. The Company's bonds bore a 6 per cent interest in 1711. By 1732 this rate had been reduced to 3½ per cent, and it remained constant until 1746. In the three years 1746-49 the rate increased to 4 per cent due to the Jacobite rebellion and the war with France. However, in 1749 the rate on the Company's bonds fell to 3 per cent, the lowest level ever achieved. [94] The dependence of the government on the East India Company in the first half of the eighteenth century is readily seen in the amount loaned to the government. In the period 1708-43 it was 3.2 million pounds sterling; in the period 1744-57, 4.2 million pounds sterling. Not only did the government depend on the Company for loans but many people also depended on it as a safe source of investment for their savings. A large number of the Englishmen constantly bought the East India bonds, which in spite of the incredibly low rates of interest they carried, were quite popular in England.

Namier reports that many of the directors of the Company were members of Parliament. In addition there were, among these members, a number of the Company's stockholders who looked after their personal interests by protecting those of the Company. During the period of Whig supremacy, these members did, indeed, make their influence felt in the English politics. This was partly due to the Whig policies under Walpole, which included a firm alliance with the monied interests. In return for the support to the Whigs, the members of the East India lobby in Parliament received political patronage, including appointments to positions at home and in the colonies, and protection of the Company's commercial and political interests. One of the causes of the defeat of the commercial policy of Tories in 1713 was the combined opposition of the Company and the Whigs to the Anglo-French treaty of commerce. Since 1715 the relations between the Whigs and the Company had been close, and these relations found an expression in a foreign policy alliance between them. English naval and military policies were employed in the service of the Company in India and the Indian Ocean. The enemies of the Company became the enemies of England and *vice versa*. [95]

[94] Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[95] William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, I (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1879), 202, 215, 218.

D. Summary

A century of English trade in Bengal left the relations between the provincial administrators and the East India Company strained. So long as the trade was modest, the relations had been cordial. The Company's agents made generous presents to the Mughal officials and in return received patronage. As the trade grew in opulence, the profit motive outweighed all other consideration. The Company's European employees had taken employment far from home, in as uncongenial a climate as Bengal's, because the possibilities of making private fortunes, even on a small salary, were almost unlimited. The Mughal officials, on the other hand, had found bribes quite tempting. As the trade and contacts between the Europeans and the Indians grew, so the habit of pecuniary and inordinate profits was transmitted from the one to the other. It resulted in periodic exactions from the Europeans by the provincial administrators, especially when bribes were not readily forthcoming.

In such an atmosphere the trade treaties and licenses failed to be taken seriously. The Company's agents abused the privileges of *dustucks* and enlarged their factory settlements, much against the wishes of the nawabs. The nawabs, in turn, denied the Company the full use of its privileges as contained in the *farman* of 1717. Thus, not only did the English fail to enjoy their trade advantages with moderation, but the native officials neglected to fulfill their engagements with fidelity.

As the English company grew in commercial opulence so its influence, both in Bengal and in England, made itself felt. In Bengal the development of fortified settlements and the assumption of zamindari rights pointed towards the acquisition of political power. This remained largely latent. The Company's agents at first submitted to the dictates of the native authorities because they had to struggle, for half a century, against the interlopers on the one hand, and against the Mughal authority, on the other. For another half century the shadow of their humiliating defeat at the hand of Aurangzib haunted them.

In England the trading operations of the Company became a matter of national interest, especially during the Whig supremacy when the Company became a banker for national savings, and a primary source of loans to the government. The expansion of the Bengal sector of the English international trade made it coveted both by natives and Englishmen. It was a curious accident of history that this growth in

the Bengal trade with England coincided with the era of waning Mughal authority. A mild decline in the English exports from Bengal, in the few years before the nawabship of Sirajuddaullah, was immediately blamed by the Indian merchants on the English, and by the Company's agents on the nawab's vexations, notwithstanding the insufficiency of English investment funds. To this injection of political factors into the relations between the Company and the nawab of Bengal, we shall now address ourselves.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH POLITICAL INTEREST IN BENGAL

The first half of the eighteenth century witnessed vast changes in the power structure of the Mughal empire and the emergence of new power relationships on the Indian sub-continent. With Aurangzib's death in 1707 began the disintegration of the central authority in India. [1] The empire which in the first decade of the eighteenth century had commanded sovereignty over twenty-one provinces, was reduced, within fifty years to "roughly a rectangular wedge of territory about 250 miles from north to south and 100 miles broad." [2]

This breakdown of Indian political authority had deep repercussions. The rebellions against Mughal authority led to the growth of semi-autonomous local powers. These local powers were, generally, not only at odds with the crippled Mughal authority but also waged war upon one another and interfered in the domestic politics of the neighboring states by advancing the claims of pretenders. [3] While anarchy prevailed at the heart of the empire, from the extremities began the invasions of the Persians and the Afghans from the northwest and the European powers from the seacoast. If the East India Company was able to usurp the paramount authority in India, it was because in the mid-eighteenth century it had been left as the surviving power. The Afghans had decisively defeated the Marathas, and then retired, since their aim was plunder rather than the occupation of India; while in the South, the English had humbled their French adversaries. For our purpose a brief account of this development is essential.

[1] For a discussion of the disintegration of the Mughal empire, see William Irvine, *Later Mughals,* ed. Jadunath Sarkar (2 vols.; London: Luzac & Co., 1922); H. G. Keene. *The Fall of the Mughal Empire of Hindustan* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887); Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vols. I-II (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Ltd., 1932-34); and S. R. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India,* pt. iii (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1935).

[2] Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1951), p. 5. The twenty-one provinces were: Kabul, Kashmir, Lahore, Multan, Tatta (Sind), Ajmere, Delhi, Agra, Oudh, Allahabad, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Malwa, Ahmedabad, and the six Deccan provinces of Khandesh, Berar, Aurangabad, Bidar, Bijapur and Hyderabad.

[3] These local powers continued to recognize the emperor as the *de jure* sovereign of India and dispenser of legitimacy. Examples of the involvement of the local powers in internecine warfare are discussed in the section below.

A. The Growth of the Maratha Power

It was during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-48) that the Mughal empire passed through one of its most disastrous phases. All over India the local powers waxed supreme: In Oudh the dynasty of Saadat Ali Khan; [4] in Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan and his successors; in the Deccan, Nizamul Mulk; [5] in Farrukhabad, the Bangash Pathans; [6] and in Rohilkhand, Daud Khan. Since the latter part of Aurangzib's reign the rebellions of the Rajputs had been inflicting on the empire "a deep and draining wound which was never healed though superficially covered at time." [7] Northwest of Delhi the Sikh revolts "threatened to repeat in the north the disruptive work of the Maratha rising of the south" [8] In central India the Marathas had emerged "more than a match for the whole empire, were no European force [present in India] to interfere." [9] From the extreme north to the extreme south, from the far east to the far west, they were levying *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. [10]

It was during the peshwaship of Baji Rao (1720-40) that the Maratha confederacy took shape and pursued territorial aggrandize-

[4] For the early history of the Oudh dynasty, see Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *The First Two Nawabs of Oudh* (2nd ed.; Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co., Ltd., 1954).

[5] There is no definitive history of the reign of Nizamul Mulk. For summary accounts, see R. Martin McAuliffe, *The Nizam: The Origin and Future of the Hyderabad State* (London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1904); and *Cambridge History of India*, ed. Richard Burn, Vol. IV (Cambridge at the University Press, 1937), chap. xiii.

[6] For the history of the Bangash Pathans, see William Irvine, "The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad," *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XLVII-XLVIII (1878-79). In 1748 the nawab of Oudh sought to subdue the Bangash Pathans. The nawab was supported by the Marathas, the Pathans by Rohillas, while the emperor remained a bystander. This well illustrates the engagement of local powers in internecine warfare.

[7] *Cambridge History of India*, IV, 321.

[8] *Ibid.*, IV, 322.

[9] John A. R. Mariott, *The English in India* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 80. For Maratha history, see James Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas* (3 vols.; Bombay: Times of India, 1873); C. A. Kincaid and D. B. Parasnis, *A History of the Maratha People* (3 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1918); M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power* (Bombay: Punalekar & Co., 1900); Govind S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas* (3 vols.; Bombay: Phoenix Publications, 1940), *Main Currents of Maratha History* (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar & Sons, 1926).

[10] The terms are explained by Duff in *op. cit.*, I, 372ff, and Ranade in *op. cit.*, chap. xi. *Chauth* was literally a fourth of the land revenue, and *sardeshmukhi* an extra tenth. They were levied to free the inhabitants from Maratha plunder. These levies have been compared to Lord Wellesley's 'subsidiary alliance system' by Sardesai (*New History*, II, 53-54) and Ranade (*op. cit.*, 224-25). Contrary to these assertions, however, these imposts did not impose on the Maratha generals any corresponding obligation to protect a territory from disorders. *Chauth* could be levied on any part of India; *sardeshmukhi* was limited to the Deccan. Maratha generals

ment in northern India as a state policy. [11] In 1728 the Marathas defeated the Nizamul Mulk, perhaps "the foremost soldier of his time." [12] A year later they overran Bundelkhand. In 1737 they firmly established themselves in Malwa, and carried their depredations into the Gangetic valley and Rajputana. They defeated, in the same year, the Mughal forces outside the walls of Delhi, and by the Treaty of Durai Sarai (1738) secured from the Mughal emperor all the territory between the Narbada and Chambal rivers. [13]

While these expeditions were being carried out in northern India, the Marathas had also been busy asserting their influence on the western coast. There the Angrias of Kolaba, the Siddis of Janjira, and the Portuguese perpetually made sea wars upon each other. Balaji Vishwanath secured an alliance with Angria, who was appointed the Maratha admiral, and in 1733 a campaign against the Siddis was launched. Though the Marathas failed to destroy the Siddi power, they succeeded in capturing certain land territories. [14] Operations against the Portuguese were more successful. Their stronghold Thana was taken

often, in addition, demanded *ghas-dana* (fodder money) for their horses. For the controversy on the Maratha obligations, see Surendra Nath Sen., *Administrative System of the Marathas* (2nd ed.; Clacutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1925), pp. 113 ff.

[11] There is much controversy as to the exact aim of the Marathas. Sardesai (*op. cit.*, II, 363-65, 404) would have us believe that the Maratha aim was to preserve the Hindu religion, and that the slogan of *Hindu pad padshahi* (Hindu Rule of India) was an incidental consequeence of their zeal to release the famous Hindu shrines from the Muslim domination and misuse. It is difficult to accept this view. Baji Rao and his successors were determined to plant the Maratha banner in the far northwest, on the walls of Attock (Kincaid and Parasnis, *op. cit.*, II, 184). They even forced their correligionists, like the Rajputs, to pay them the *chauth*. See V. G. Dighe, *Peshwa Baji Rao I and Maratha Expansion* (Bombay: Karnatak Publishing House, 1944), p. 87 and *passim*.

[12] H. G. Rawlinson in *Cambridge History of India*, IV, 400.

[13] By a secret treaty in 1732 the nizam gave a free hand to the Marathas in northern India in exchange for a free hand in the affairs of the Carnatic. This is another example of the prevalent diplomatic intrigues.

[14] Kincaid and Parasnis, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, chap. xliii. The alliance of the Angrias with the Marathas came to an end in 1755. They were overthrown in that year by a joint Anglo-Maratha expedition. See Edward Ives, *A Voyage from England to India in the Year 1754* (2 vols.; London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1773), Vol. I chap. vii; Clement Downing, *History of Indian Wars*, ed. William Foster (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 28 ff; Charles U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (14 vols.; Calcutta: Government Printing, 1929-33), VII, 149; Richard Owen Cambridge, *An Account of War in India* (Dublin: George and Alexander Ewing, 1761), pp. 153-60; George William Forrest, *Selections from the Letters, Despatches, and Other State Papers Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat (Maratha Series)*, (Bombay: Government Press, 1885), Vol. I, chaps. ii-iii.

in 1737 and Bassein capitulated two years later.[15] Following the defeat of the Portuguese, the English came to recognize the paramountcy of the Maratha power in the Deccan. By a treaty of commerce the English secured from the Marathas the right to trade in the Deccan free of customs duties.[16]

In 1740 the Marathas turned their attention to the eastern seacoast. The Carnatic was invaded, and its Nawab Dost Ali Khan slain. The Marathas also threatened the French at Pondicherry, who had provided asylum to the nawab's son-in-law Chanda Sahib, but before Dumas's persistence and a gift of French liqueurs they prudently retired.[17]

The first Maratha invasion of Bengal took place in 1742. It was beaten off by Nawab Alivardi Khan, though not before Murshidabad and Hughli had been plundered.[18] The second invasion in 1743 was repulsed because of the division in the Maratha ranks; Peshwa Balaji Rao supported Alivardi Khan against Raghuji Bhonsle. The third visitation in 1744 saw the peshwa and Bhonsle reconciled, but by perfidiously massacring twenty-one Maratha commanders at the peace conference, Alivardi secured one more respite. This produced the fourth invasion in 1745, when Alivardi's ranks were divided and his Afghan nobles had allied themselves with the Marathas. Alivardi, however, continued to defend his provinces until 1751 when he was compelled to come to terms with the Marathas. He agreed to pay twelve lakhs of rupees annually as the *chauth* of Bengal, and ceded the province of Orissa to the Marathas.[19] It may be added that the Maratha invasions of Bengal in 1743 and 1745 provide two clear examples of the internal tensions within local powers. On one occasion one Maratha chieftain supported the nawab of Bengal against another

[15] This campaign partially explains the failure of the Marathas to assist the Mughal emperor against Nadir Shah.

[16] Aitchison, *op. cit.*, VII, 9-13; Forrest, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, chap. iv.

[17] Kincaid and Parasnis (*op. cit.*, II, 279-80) tell the story how Raghuji Bhonsle's wife was taken in by the French liqueurs, and later persuaded her husband to bypass Pondicherry for an additional gift of the same.

[18] Jadunath Sarkar (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 49f) presents a picture of the horrors perpetrated by the Marathas on women and children which included gang rape. Sardesai and Ranade have tended to minimize these atrocities by a vague condemnation of the atrocious atmosphere of that era. The fact is that Maratha atrocities in Bengal can only be compared to Nadir Shah's massacre at Delhi and Abdali's outrages against the population of Mathura.

[19] In 1746 the Mughal emperor had ordered Alivardi Khan to compound the conflict with the Marathas by recognizing the latter's claim to the *chauth* of Bengal. Alivardi's refusal to comply with the imperial order throws light on the pusillanimous policy of the central government and the defiance of the local authority. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 72-75.

Maratha chieftain, on another occasion one faction of the Bengali nobility supported the Maratha invaders against its own ruler.

By 1748 the Marathas had overrun almost the whole of northern India and the Deccan. There is evidence to support Grant Duff's rather casual statement that the Marathas watered their horses in the Indus. [20] "Their frontiers," writes Monstuart Elphinstone, "extended on the north to the Indus and the Himalayas, and to the south nearly to the extremity of the peninsula: all the territory which was not theirs paid tribute." [21] Both the Muslims and the Hindus, however, were getting weary of Maratha aggressions and extortions. The former invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to destroy the Maratha power; the latter, especially the Jats, the Sikhs, and the Rajputs, quietly withdrew themselves from the Maratha alliance. [22] The Afghan victory in 1761 checked the military power of the Marathas. [23] It became apparent to the Indian native princes that the peshwa could not protect them from anarchy and foreign invasions. [24] Internal dissensions also broke out among the Maratha chiefs. Some historians have minimized the consequence of Panipat and have sought to stress that the Maratha failure was a temporary setback from which they quickly recovered. This view ignores one great importance of the defeat: it gave the East India Company enough time and a free hand to consolidate its position in Bengal. [25]

B. The Invasions from the Northwest

While rebellions and internecine conflicts were taking place in the heart of India, the empire's frontiers both on land and at sea had become defenseless. The invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 was an extension of the internal conflicts in the empire. It was in a great measure sponsored by the Muslim feudatories of the Mughal emperor. [26] "Brother," said Nadir Shah to Emperor Muhammad Shah on

[20] Grant Duff, *op. cit.*, II, 126. Sarkar (*op. cit.*, II, 54) maintains that the Marathas never crossed the Chenab, but Hari Ram Gupta in his *Studies in Later Mughal History of the Panjab* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1944), pp. 175-76, presents evidence to corroborate Duff's statement.

[21] Monstuart Elphinstone, *History of India* (6th ed.; London: John Murray, 1874), p. 744.

[22] Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-78.

[23] For an account of war, which cost the Marathas over 200,000 men, see T. J. Shejwalkar, *Panipat: 1761* (Poona: Deccan College, 1946).

[24] Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vol. II, chaps. xx-xxi.

[25] *Infra,* chap. vi.

[26] For the career of Nadir Shah, see L. Lockhart, *Nadir Shah* (London: Luzac & Co., 1938).

a later occasion, "you have three faithful servants, and the rest are traitors; those three are Nasir Khan, Khan Duran, and Muhammad Khan; from these I received no letters; from all the rest I received invitations to invade your country." [27]

Nadir Shah's successor, Ahmad Shah Abdali, led ten invasions into India between 1747 and 1761. Like his predecessor his aim was not conquest; plunder seems to have been his chief motive. In 1757 when Sirajuddaullah was confronted in Bengal with the forces of Clive and Watson, Abdali was ravaging Mathura. Considering an attack on Bihar imminent, Sirajuddaullah had deployed the forces of Raja Ramnarain, one of his most trusted lieutenants, on Bihar's northwestern frontier. This had seriously weakened the nawab's forces and led to his rout at the Battle of Plassey. The attention of the Marathas was also focussed on the Abdali invasions, giving Clive another advantage in his designs in Bengal. [28]

C. The Intrusion of Europeans into Indian Politics

Compared to the Afghan invasions, the European intrusion into Indian politics, in the eighteenth century, had, in the long run, a far greater effect. Generally speaking the northwest invaders had hardly anything at stake in India; the Europeans had a legitimate economic interest. The former were interested only in barbaric plunder, the latter in commercial profits, though of an inordinate nature. It was their economic interest that led the European companies to interfere in the Indian body politic. It might, therefore, be useful to take a brief notice of the condition and relationship among the Dutch, the French, and the English companies.

Between 1715 and 1740 the relations between the three companies were rather friendly, and continued to be so until 1740. During this period they were competitors rather than sworn enemies. They made use of each other's communications and courier systems for correspondence within India and with Europe; used each other's ports of call for their merchant vessels; exchanged pilots on river estuaries whenever necessary; extradited the deserters of the sister companies; presented a common front against the interlopers; and, not unoften, joined in petitions to the local rulers for advancement of trade con-

[27] Cited by Wolseley Haig in *Cambridge History of India*, IV, 358. Nasir Khan was the Mughal governor of Kabul; Khan Duran, an imperial minister; and Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Farrukhabad. It may, however, be argued that Nadir Shah needed no invitation except that provided by the prevalent anarchy in India. See Lockhart, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[28] *Infra*, chap. vi.

cessions. [29] The all-round growth of India trade of these companies during the forty years, however, sowed seeds of enmity between them.

Since 1701 the import if Indian silks, calicoes and muslins into England for domestic consumption had been prohibited. [30] This had contributed to the growth of the Dutch and the French trade at the expense of the English. [31] Though the English laws were revised a decade later, yet in the intervening period the French had received a good start in the Indian silk trade. In Bengal a rivalry developed between the English and the French in the silk trade, and between the English and the Dutch in the saltpetre trade. [32] After 1740 a political rivalry also developed between the Dutch and the French because the former allied themselves too closely with the English. The twenty years before the Battle of Plassey witnessed a great slump in the English company's trade in Bengal, as is evident from the following table:

(Quinquennial totals) [33]

Period	*Raw Silk* (lbs.)	*Wrought Silk* (pcs.)	*Saltpetre* (cwts.)
1733-37	784,690	382,200	88,322
1738-42	680,295	280,458	132,190
1743-47	447,059	199,364	120,770
1748-52	260,285	134,525	79,746
1753-57	183,212	229,895	104,570

[29] Wilbert H. Dalgliesh, *The Perpetual Company of the Indies in the Days of Dupleix* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1933), chap. xiii. In 1752 the three companies jointly petitioned to Alivardi Khan for minting privileges (I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William to the Court of Directors, September 17, 1952); in 1754 the three companies acted in concert to prevent the establishment of a Prussian company in Bengal (I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Court of Directors to the Fort William Council, January 23, 1754, September 6, 1754); in 1755 when a Dutch agent was maltreated by a native official, the three companies jointly petitioned to the nawab for redress (I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, July 14, 1755).

[30] For the public controversy at the end of the seventeenth century on import of Indian fabrics and silks into England, see Shafaat Ahmad Khan, *East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century* (London: H. Milford, 1923), *passim.*

[31] Within one year of the enactment of the acts of 1701, the English custom receipts from duties on Indian fabrics and silks declined from £ 80.268 to £ 11,793. (British Museum, Additional MS 10122.) The French doubled their volumes of import in these commodities within five years, 1700-05. (Balkrishna, *Commercial Relations between India and England,* p. 320.) The Dutch increased their trade during the same period from an annual of £ 100,000 to £ 250,000. (Khan, *op. cit.,* pp. 289f.)

[32] Dalgliesh, *loc. cit.;* Henry Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1920), p. 3; Kalikinkar Datta, *The Dutch in Bengal and Bihar. 1740-1825* (Patna: University of Patna, 1948), pp. 13-21.

[33] The silk figures are from Ledgers of Imports and Exports, 1753-57, Public Record Office. The saltpetre figures are from I.O., MS Eur. D. 284, fol. 123. J. C.

After the departure of Dupleix from Chandernagore in 1742 the French trade also declined in Bengal.[34] Yet, comparatively, the French share of the silk trade was substantially larger than the English share in the 1750's. In 1752, for example, the French purchased between 450,000 and 525,000 pounds of silk and silk goods; the English, between 300,000 and 375,000 pounds; the Dutch, between 150,000 and 225,000 pounds.[35] In the saltpetre trade the position of the Dutch until the Battle of Plassey was always pre-eminent.

The decline in English exports from Bengal was blamed by the Fort William council in part on the French and the Dutch competition.[36] Competition there certainly was, but one should not overlook the fact that the French and the Dutch also suffered a decline in their exports. The English exports from Bengal, contrary to the Fort William council's assertions, declined because of a change in the investment policy of the English and the decline in the production in Bengal itself.[37]

In the background of these commercial rivalries two policies were being advocated in Paris and London on the eve of the War of the Austrian Succession. In the words of Dodwell:

> On the one hand, it was urged that war wold give the long needed opportunity of destroying the commerce of troublesome rivals; on the other hand, many held . . . that neutrality [by the companies] in the national struggle afforded the most advantageous course . . .[38]

La Bourdonnais in France and Henry Gough in England belonged to the activist school of thought. They urged upon their respective governments that they send sea squadrons to destroy the trade of rivals.[39] The agents of both the companies in India advocated neutrality. Dupleix made overtures to the English agents in India for a treaty of neutrality and the initial reaction was favorable. In 1744, however, an

Sinha in his *Economic Annals of Bengal* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 29, erroneously maintains: "From 1751 the English company's export of Bengal raw silk began to increase, and during the period 1751 to 1765 rose, on an average, to about 80,340 lbs."

[34] Abbé Raynal, *Atlas de toutes les parties connues du globe Terrestre dressé et Tableaux* (Genève, *ca.* 1780), chart IV, no. 2.

[35] Balkrishna, *Commercial Relations,* p. 198. According to the Dutch agent, A. Bisdom, the Dutch exported, on an average, 248,000 lbs. of silk and silk goods in the 1750's. Cited by Narendra K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal,* p. 56.

[36] *Supra,* pp. 14-16.

[37] *Infra,* p. 34.

[38] Dodwell, *op. cit.,* p. 4.

[39] Virginia M. Thompson, *Dupleix and His Letters* (New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933), chap. iv.

English fleet under Barnet appeared off Pondicherry. Neutrality could, therefore, be enforced only by the local rulers. In Bengal, Alivardi Khan forbade the English, the French and the Dutch to commit any hostilities against each other in his dominions, and sternly enforced this directive. [40] In the Carnatic, on the other hand, Nawab Anwaruddin proved less worthy of the task. Both the French and the English appealed to him to enforce neutrality—only when the other side was gaining. This resulted in his own embroilment in the Anglo-French conflict, as an ally of the English. In the conflict, the French emerged as victors. [41] Although by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle the status quo *ante-bellum* was nominally restored in India, the French, in the three years of war, had humbled the English at Madras, defeated the nawab of Arcot's forces at Adyar, and repelled the English from Pondicherry with serious losses to them. [42] As a consequent of this war the prestige of the French had soared high in the Deccan. The war had further left both the European companies with detachments of European forces which were subsequently used in the local conflicts.

From 1748 until 1754 the English and the French were once again engaged in unofficial wars in the Deccan. According to Orme, "the English in the line they pursued . . . acted with great indiscretion; the French with utmost ambition." [43] The two companies had begun their intrusion into Indian politics by selling mercenaries to the pretenders. Following on the success of the pretenders, they had obtained territo-

[40] *Correspondance du conseil supérieur de Pondichéry avec le conseil de Chandernagor, 1728-57*, ed. E. Gaudart and Alfred Martineau (3 vols.; Pondichéry: Société de l'histoire de l'Inde française, 1918-19), III, pt. ii, 350.

[41] For the Anglo-French rivalry on the Coromandel Coast, see Dodwell, *op. cit.*, pt. i; Alfred Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde française* (4 vols.; Paris: Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1920-31).

[42] According to Orme (*Military Transactions*, I, 73-76), the defeat of the nawab of Arcot at Adyar broke the charm of Asian superiority over European forces, since it was their first notable defeat in a century. The English had failed against Aurangzib in 1688, the Dutch against the ruler of Travancore in 1739, the joint Anglo-Portuguese expedition against Angria in 1722. La Tour's victory at Madras, and Paradis's victory at Adyar, against the nawab of Arcot, however, exhibited the superiority of field artillery against cavalry, not of the Europeans against the Indians, as Malleson erroneously believes. (*Decisive Battles of India* [London: W. H. Allen, 1887], pp. 13-17.) The Indian failure at Adyar was atoned for in the next year at Fort St. David where the nawab's troops, supported by the English, repulsed the French. This led Dupleix to believe that his forces were inferior to those of the natives and the English. Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Thompson, *op. cit., pp.* 178-93.

The English losses at Pondicherry were over a thousand men, the French less than a hundred. Dodwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

[43] Orme, *op. cit.*, I, 7.

ries, revenues and personal rewards. [44] As a result of these developments "the political and commercial motives had now become interwoven" [45]

Between 1748 and 1754 the French, by their successes in the Deccan, had gained territorial revenues of an annual value of £ 855,250. The English gains were only worth £ 100,000 annually. [46] The French. however, failed to compel the recalcitrant zamindars to hand over the revenues to them. This was the situation when Dupleix was recalled to France, and the English asserted their superior strength. The eventual failure of the French in southern India was largely due to their failure to find enough revenues from their Deccan territories. [47]

There is a close relation between the English victories in the Deccan and in Bengal. The English predominance in Bengal was established, thanks to the European troops accumulated in the South during the Carnatic wars. The overthrow of Lally in 1758 was made possible by the supply of money which the English victory in Bengal was to bring to them. [48]

D. The Crisis in Bengal's Body Politic

We should now turn our attention to an examination of how the prevalent anarchy in India and the growth of the European influence in the South affected the situation in Bengal.

With the breakdown of the central Mughal authority the nawabs of Bengal for all practical purposes had become autonomous. The farce of Mughal sovereignty was, no doubt, maintained inasmuch as the Mughal emperor was considered the dispenser of legitimacy. Yet, the apparent respect towards the emperor was a mask behind which the various political factions in Bengal, as elsewhere in India, advanced their claims. The Mughal emperor had lost the power of appointment of his subordinates; he could merely confirm those who could subdue their rivals.

As the struggle for political power grew more violent so the breakdown of the administrative machinery proceeded more rapidly. The gradual weakening of the Mughal power was accompanied throughout

[44] Dodwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 102.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[46] John MacGregor, *Commercial Statistics*, IV (London: Whittaker & Co., 1848), 352.

[47] The point is developed by André Morellet, *Mémoire sur la situation actuelle de la Compagnie des Indes* (Paris: Chez Desaint, 1769).

[48] Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. xviii.

India by a revival of Hindu feeling. In Bengal, however, the Hindu élite had greater economic and commercial power than political. Individual Hindus rose out of obscurity into the often glamorous, but always influential, position of court bankers and revenue administrators. Yet, they do not seem to have been in a political position, or have desired, to usurp the political authority for themselves. Time and again their interest seems to have been the substitution of fresh Muslim authority in place of decrepit authority.

This peculiar role of the Hindus first seems to have asserted itself in 1727 at the time of the death of Murshid Quli Khan, who had wanted his grandson Sarfaraz Khan to succeed him. By a display of force and by securing imperial confirmation from Delhi, Shujauddin Khan, father of Sarfaraz Khan, successfully thwarted his son's succession. [49] The preference of the Hindu élite for Shujauddin Khan over a person of Murshid Quli Khan's choice was largely motivated by Hindu hatred for the late nawab's policy of religious persecution. Murshid Quli Khan had forced the conversion to Islam of entire families of Hindus who defaulted in the payment of the land revenues. He had forbidden Hindu landlords to ride in a coach, and was notorious for the extirpation of the entire families, "root and branch," of those Hindus that rebelled. [50] As far as the personal qualities of leadership were concerned Shujauddin was no better than his son. Both were profligates. [51]

Shujauddin's rule marked the revival of court rivalries in Bengal that had been dormant for over half a century. The Hindu bankers became a leading faction at the provincial court. Together with two Muslim nobles — Alivardi Khan and Haji Ahmad — the leaders of the Hindu faction — Alam Chand and Jagat Seth — became the *de facto* rulers of the eastern provinces. Alam Chand also became the chief minister. [52]

On the death of Shujauddin in 1739 the Hindu faction helped

[49] Seid Gholam Hossein Khan, *Seir Mutaqherin*, tr. Nota Manus (Raymond Mustapha) (4 vols.; Calcutta: T. D. Chatterjee, 1902), I, 273-77 (cited hereafter as *Seir)*; Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us Salatin*, tr. M. Abdus Salam (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1904), pp. 307-15 (cited hereafter as *Riyaz*); Karam Ali, "Muzzafarnamah," tr. Jadunath Sarkar in *Bengal Nawabs* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1952), p. 12. (Cited hereafter as "Muzzaffarnamah.")

[50] *Riyaz*, pp. 258-67.

[51] *Seir*, I, 274; "Muzzaffarnamah," *loc. cit.*; Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 495; and, Luke Scrafton, *Reflections on the Government &c of Indostan* (London: A. Millar, 1763), p. 33.

[52] *Seir*, I, 279-81; *Riyaz*, p. 315.

Alivardi Khan depose Sarfaraz Khan. [53] It is significant to observe that the support of Sarfaraz Khan came from a faction led by Mir Murtaza, Haji Lutf, Ali Mardan and Husain Muhammad. They were all Muslims and their only Hindu ally seems to have been an insignificant zamindar, Bijay Singh. On the other hand, the supporters of Alivardi Khan were both Hindus and Muslims — Jagat Seth, Chedan Hazari, Bakhtawar Singh, Sardar Khan, Shamshere Khan and others. Further it was largely due to the influence of Jagat Seth at the imperial court that Alivardi's nawabship of Bengal was legitimized by the emperor. [54]

Although Alivardi Khan was in many ways a capable ruler, it was during his administration that the political, economic and social unity of his provinces broke down under the impact of the internal dissensions at his court and the external invasions of the Marathas. In the first year of his rule Rustum Jung and Baqir Ali rebelled against him. [55] Soon after their rebellion was put down the Afghan nobility took up arms and called the Marathas to support them. [56] Until 1751 the Maratha raids were a constant menace to the security of Alivardi's dominions. They had to be compromised by the cession of Orissa and an annual *chauth* of twelve lakhs of rupees to the Marathas. Court rivalries had degenerated to such an extent that the nawab himself participated in the intrigues of one faction against another. Once the nawab instigated the soldiers of one of his supporters, Hasan Quli Khan, to rebel against their master. Having failed in this purpose he tried to develop a fracas between Mir Jafar and Hasan Quli so that "one of these two officers might get killed." When this failed too, Sirajuddaullah was ordered to murder Hasan Quli Khan and his brother. [57] We have already noted [58] that the nawab had twenty-one of the Maratha commanders murdered at a peace conference. [59] Contempt for human life and the appetite for power among the court nobles had grown to such an extent that in 1753 Sirajuddaullah, heir to the nawabship, did not hesitate to lay plans for the murder of the nawab. [60]

[53] Datta, *Alivardi and His Times*, pp. 17-35; *Seir*, I, 326-40.

[54] *Riyaz*, pp. 306-12; *Seir*, I, 279-81; "Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jung," tr. Jadunath Sarkar in *Bengal Nawabs*, p. 84.

[55] "Muzzaffarnamah," pp. 24-26.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-43; *Seir*, II, 11-16; *supra*, p. 23.

[57] "Muzzaffarnamah," pp. 51-55.

[58] *Supra*, p. 23.

[59] *Seir*, I, 367-81.

[60] "Muzzaffarnamah," pp. 51-52.

In such an atmosphere of intrigue the nawab's only trustworthy friends seem to have been the Hindu nobles. As Orme points out, Alivardi preferred the services of the Hindus in every state office of dignity. [61] This dependence on them led to a further strengthening of the Hindu faction. Among his favorites were Rai Durlabh Ram, the Jagat Seth brothers Mahtab Rai and Swarup Chand, Raja Janki Ram, Raja Ramnarain, and Raja Manik Chand. [62]

The political influence of this Hindu faction, however, rested on its commercial base. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there had grown up a powerful mercantile class throughout India — in Madras, the Pillais and the Mudaliars; in Bengal, the Seth brothers. They were the equivalent of the latter-day Shanghai compradors. Due to the growth of the oceanic trade the Indian economy, which had hitherto been largely agricultural, was gradually taking on a commercial character. The exports ware not agricultural products; they were manufactured goods like silk fabrics, calicoes and muslins. It was, therefore, not unnatural that the landed military aristocracy of the Muslims should have lost in importance, in the eighteenth century, to the commercial houses of the Mudaliars and the Seths. As a result of the Indo-European trade a community of interests had developed between the Hindu mercantile class and the European companies. The Calcutta merchants later became the catalytic agent in the English occupation of Bengal.

The impoverishment of the Bengali economy is another feature that becomes evident during the rule of Alivardi Khan. In a period when the commercial revenue should have been the mainstay of the provincial treasury, the Bengal government depended on the land revenue. [63] The land revenue in Bengal was collected under two categories: *tumar jumma,* the standard assessments; and *abwabs,* special imposts. The latter opened a field of boundless exactions as they could be levied at

[61] Orme, *Military Transactions,* II, 53.

[62] For the career of Durlabh Ram, see Kalikinkar Datta, "Durlabh Ram," *Indian Historical Quarterly,* XVI (1940), 20-39; for the career of Seth brothers, see J. H. Little, "The House of Jagat Seth," *Bengal, Past and Present,* XX (Jan.-June, 1920), 141-200, XXII (Jan.-June, 1921), 1-119, and for the career of Ramnarain, see S. H. Askari, "Raja Ramnarain," *Indian Historical Quarterly,* XIV (1938), 74-95, 757-79; XV (1939), 13-38.

[63] In 1707 the export trade of Bengal was valued at £ 1,852,000. (Alexander Dow, *A History of Hindostan* [2 vols.; 2d. ed; London: T. Beckett, 1770], I, lxiii.) In the next fifty years the English export trade rose by over 250 per cent, which can be assumed to be true of other exporters as well.

the discretion of the provincial nawabs. [64] The standard assessment for Bengal, in 1728, was only Rs. 14,245,561. To this Shujauddin Khan had added Rs. 1,914,095, and Alivardi Khan, an additional Rs. 2,225,554 through the *abwabs*. Alivardi's imposts were levied for three purposes: to make up the deficiency in the imperial revenues caused by the cession of Orissa to the Marathas; to meet the cost of local insurrections; and to defray the expenses for new monuments. [65] According to John Shore:

> . . . nothing can be more evident than that the mode of impositions was fundamentally ruinous, both to the *ryots* [subjects] and zamindars, and that the direct tendency of it was to force the latter into extortions, and all into fraud, concealment and distress. [66]

The opinion of Shore is confirmed by an earlier view of Orme who opined:

> Every head of a village calls his habitation a *darbar* [court], and plunders of their meals and roots the wretches of his precinct, from him the zamindar extorts the small pittance of silver which his penurious tyranny has scraped altogether; the *faujdar* [district commander] seizes upon the greatest share of the zamindar's collection and then secures the favour of the nawab by voluntary contributions, which leave him not possessed of half of his rapines and exactions; the nawab fixes his eye on every portion of wealth which appears in his province. [67]

On the other hand, only the harshest treatment was given to the revenue collectors by higher authorities. For example Murshid Quli Khan used to have them "suspended head downwards . . . their noses rubbing stone," until their malpractices were discovered. [68]

As a result of these new imposts production declined and prices soared. Rice which sold at 100 to 120 *seers* for a rupee in 1738, was being sold only thirty *seers* for a rupee in 1746. Even in 1754, a year of tranquility, a rupee could buy only thirty-two and a half *seers* of rice. [69] During the same period, 1738 to 1754, the prices of calicoes and silk goods increased by no less than 30 per cent. [70]

[64] Great Britain, House of Commons, *Reports on East India Affairs, Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, ed. W. K. Firminger, II (Calcutta: R. Cambray & Co., 1917), 205, 222.

[65] Minute of Sir John Shore, *ibid.*, II, 7.

[66] *Ibid.*, II, 11-12.

[67] Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of Mogul Empire* (London: F. Wingrave, 1805), pp. 450-51. For corroborative evidence, see Scrafton, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-31.

[68] *Riyaz*, p. 258; "Muzzaffarnamah," pp. 16-19.

[69] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, December 11, 1752, June 10, 1754; I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, February 3, 1746.

[70] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, December 11, 1752, June 10, 1754.

The East India Company's investment policy also contributed to Bengal's economic difficulties. Prior to 1754 the Company used to procure goods through native brokers, who entered into contract with the Company to supply it with goods of a specified quality at a specified time and price. These brokers received advanced payments, called, *dadni*, from the Company, and they in turn advanced a part of this money to the local weavers. It was a very good credit system.

In 1754, however, the demands of the brokers for a higher commission and the insufficiency of English funds led the Company to replace the broker system by an agency system. [71] The brokers were replaced by agents who were employed as full-time servants of the Company. This not only disturbed the credit system, causing hardship to the artisans, but also caused unemployment of the brokers, who, though few in number, had considerable influence at the nawab's court. [72] The immediate effect of the change in the investment system was a decline in the English purchases, from Rs. 3,366,050 in 1751 to Rs. 1,281,637 in 1755. [73] Within five years the investment at the Dacca factory alone dropped from Rs. 840,390 in 1751 to Rs. 198,007 in 1756. [74] Another result of the new system was the extension of the abuse of the *dustucks*. The private trade of the Company's servants increased at the expense of the natives and the government. [75]

Thus on the eve of the nawabship of Sirajuddaullah not only the political system but the economic system of Bengal as well was undergoing severe strain, causing hardship both to the natives and the English. In this situation what was the response of the East India Company?

E. The East India Company in the Domestic Politics of Bengal

The East India Company could not, and did not, remain a passive spectator to this breakdown in the Bengali polity and economy. Although the court of directors was definitely opposed to further territorial acquisition in Bengal in the eighteenth century, it had nevertheless advised its Bengal subordinates to display force, if need be, to

[71] *Idem*, May 6, 1754.

[72] William Tooke's Narrative of the Capture of Calcutta, *Hill Collection*, I, 269.

[73] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William to the Court of Directors, August 20, 1751; December 8, 1755.

[74] I.O., Dacca Factory Records, III, *passim*.

[75] These abuses became noticeable only after the revolution in favor of Mir Jafar (Henry Verelst, *Rise, Progress and Present State of the English Government in Bengal* [London: J. Nourse, 1772], p. 6), and are discussed *infra*, chap. vi.

protect the already acquired English settlements from the assault of native officials and the incursions of the French. A directive from the Court said:

> It may some time be necessary that the natives should have apprehension of our power and strength so that they may not be tempted to insult or attack us, especially during such time as there have been of late while the country has been unsettled . . . [76]

As French influence expanded in southern India so the English company felt threatened by the French in Bengal. Under such conditions the pressures to fortify the settlements in Bengal at all costs, even against the wishes of the nawab, grew stronger. If the nawab of Bengal refused to let the English fortify their settlements, the Company's agents were directed to

> . . . tell him that you [the agents] shall be sorry to be obliged to take such measures as may be ruinous to his revenues and the country in general; and you may add, the king of England having the protection of the Company greatly at heart, as they may perceive by the strong force he has sent to the East Indies [Coromandel Coast] to meet the French, his Majesty will support the Company in whatever they think fit to do for their future security . . . [77]

But at the same time the Fort William council was urged to

> . . . make the government sensible that we have no intentions to render ourselves formidable to them but that our only view in erecting any works is to protect our property against the attempts and designs of any European power which at the same time may be the means of preserving tranquility of the country in general . . . [78]

In other words, what the Company was saying was that it doubted the power of the nawab of Bengal to protect it from French assaults. It stressed that it was trying to make itself formidable against the French, not only to protect the English interests but also to preserve peace and order in Bengal. It is not inconceivable that because of the failure of the nawab of Arcot to enforce neutrality between the English and the French in the Carnatic, the Company's court felt that the power of the nawab of Bengal was equally ineffective.

The Company's fears were in one respect justified. There is evidence to show that Dupleix, after his initial successes in the South, was harboring plans to drive Alivardi Khan out of Bengal. This is indicated by three of the letters he wrote to Bussy in 1751.

[76] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Court of Directors to the Fort William Council, January 13, 1714.

[77] *Idem*, June 17, 1748.

[78] *Idem*, November 29, 1754.

> I have just had word from Bengal that the nawab extorts money from us without rhyme or reason. Would it not be possible to get from the great Mogul, through Salabat Jung [the nizam of Deccan], an order compelling the nawab to leave us alone? Without this we shall be forced to drive him out. [79]
>
> Nothing can be easier than to humble the pride of that man [Alivardi Khan] whose troops are as worthless as those you already know. By sending to Bengal, Balasore or Masulipatam four to five hundred men . . . some light artillery . . . that is all you would need in Bengal, where there isn't a single fort and the whole country lies open to the first glance. By taking a few precautions we could make ourselves masters of Hughli . . . [80]
>
> The nawab is hated there because of his vexations. The English and the Dutch are not in a position to give him any help . . . I defy them to furnish more than three hundred soldiers . . . You alone are strong enough to become the master of the country which is ripe for invasion because of the tyranny of the present government. There are in that province . . . the Seths on whom we could put pressure. They are extremely wealthy. [81]

Dupleix, of course, was not the only European who had in the period of Anglo-French rivalry in the South given thought to the occupation of Bengal. Colonel Mill, an English soldier of fortune, expressed similar ideas in a letter to the German emperor:

> The policy of the Mughals is bad; their army is worse; they are without a navy . . . the country might be conquered and laid under contribution as easily as the Spaniards overwhelmed the naked Indians of America . . .
>
> A rebel subject, named Alivardi Khan, has torn away the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Mughal empire. He has a treasure to the value of thirty million sterling. His early revenue must be two million sterling. Three ships with fifteen hundred or two thousand regulars would suffice for the undertaking . . . [82]

We also find Robert Orme advising Clive:

> The nawab coming down with all his Excellency's cannon, and with an intent to bully all the settlements out of a large sum of money; Clive 'twould be a good deed to swing the old dog. I don't speak at

[79] Dupleix to Bussy, June 15, 1751, in Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

[80] *Idem*, July 16, 1751, p. 491.

[81] *Idem*, September 11, 1751, p. 493. After the capture of Chandernagore in 1757 Clive wrote: "We have done for ourselves and against the French what the French tried to do for themselves and against us." Cited by Alfred Lyall, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (London: John Murray, 1894), p. 101.

[82] Cited by Bolts, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. xv-xvi. Mills's information on the revenues of Bengal was substantially correct. In 1755 they amounted to £ 2,330,550 (Rs. 18,644,000). Similarly, the English force that captured Calcutta consisted of about 1000 men.

> random when I say that the Company must think seriously of it, or 'twill not be worth their while to trade in Bengal. [83]

The Court seems to have had a presentiment of the danger of a conflict between the Company and the successor of Alivardi upon his death. In 1752 the Court sent orders to Bengal for the formation of a militia. [84] Two years later followed fifty-nine pieces of cannon, eighteen and twenty-four pounders. It advised the Fort William council to fortify Calcutta with the approval of Alivardi Khan, "or at least [with] such a connivance [with the nawab's officers] as you shall judge will be as effectual as their consent." [85] At the same time, however, the Court exhorted its agents to keep their hands off the succession race:

> The death of the nawab is an event that may on account of his great age be daily expected and as it is highly probable [that] it may be attended with great confusion and troubles in the province before another can be securely seated; we, therefore, recommend to you whenever it happens to take all prudent measures to preserve our possessions, effects and privileges and standing upon defense to observe to the utmost of your power to the strictest neutrality between the competitors . . . [86]

The Company's agents, however, failed to carry out these political directives, just as they had failed to carry out the economic directives. [87] The Company's directorate was being naïve in presuming that its agents in Bengal could be trusted to use their military power with discretion. The European companies, by their involvement in Deccan politics, had by 1754 become political entities in India; while in England, anachronistically, the court of directors still considered them to be commercial corporations. The agents in India had discovered that participation in local conflicts, especially during the struggles for succession in the local princedoms, was as highly profitable a venture, if not more profitable, than normal commercial operations. The events of the South must need have conditioned the English agents in Bengal. Slowly they were assuming an attitude of open defiance of the Bengali authorities.

We have seen that the court of directors had advised its agents in Bengal to fortify the Fort William settlement. One of the members of

[83] Orme to Clive, August 25, 1752, I.O., Orme Papers, O.V., Vol. XIX.
[84] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Court of Directors to the Fort William Council, January 16, 1752.
[85] *Idem*, November 29, 1754.
[86] *Idem*, January 31, 1755.
[87] *Supra*, pp. 11-14.

the Fort William council, William Watts, chief of the Kassimbazar factory and the Council's representative to deal with the nawab's court, advised:

> It is far from being certain that he [Alivardi] will take any notice of our making Calcutta defensible, though we may be assured that his previous leave could not be obtained without a considerable sum of money . . . your Honour [the council's governor] . . . should determine to set about fortifying without applying for leave . . . [88]

The Council concurred in this opinion, and began fortifying Calcutta "designed to repel country forces," without the nawab's permission. [89]

The other area of the Company's intransigence was the protection it provided to the persons and property of the natives resident in the Company's settlements. Much of this conflict arose because the Company assumed in Calcutta zamindari rights far in excess of those permitted by Indian usage. Reference has already been made to the revenue disputes between the nawabs of Bengal and the agents of the Company. [90] According to Indian usage the zamindar was merely an agent of a nawab, who collected revenues on the nawab's behalf and maintained law and order. The nawab continued to exercise sovereign power. The Company, however, considered the zamindari rights as bestowing both revenue and political autonomy. In 1751 Ram Krishna Seth, a resident of Calcutta, was accused of smuggling by the nawab's officials. When Alivardi Khan demanded that the Fort William council surrender the accused, the Council successfully defied the order. [91] Similarly when in 1755 the nawab demanded the property of Lacchi, Radhanath and Gosain Sen, who had all died without any male issue, the company resisted the nawab's claim on the ground that they were "under the protection of the English." [92] The position of the Company in the matters of its assumed sovereignty over the residents of Calcutta is clearly defined by its stand in the case of Kanhiya and Sacher, two agents of the Company who had died intestate:

> The nawab sent . . . some peons with peremptory *parwana* to deliver up the effects of Kanhiya and Sacher . . . [and] to send Birju . . . to

[88] Watts to Drake and the Fort William Council, I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, August 15, 1755.

[89] *Idem*, September 2, 1755; I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, September 3, 1755.

[90] *Supra*, pp. 9-10, David Rennie, "Reflections on the Loss of Calcutta," *Hill Collection*, III, 384.

[91] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, May 30, 1751.

[92] *Idem*, September 11, 1755.

> Murshidabad to adjust the matters there. The president replied . . . that this being our busy season we could not now examine the demand but that as soon as the ships were all despatched to Europe we would make a scrutiny . . .
>
> A few days after we were appraised by a letter from Mr. Watts and his council that . . . the peons on their return to Murshidabad made complaint of their being dismissed without any answer to the *parwana* . . .
>
> We [have again] received a letter from . . . the nawab . . . wherein he peremptorily insists on the restitution of the effects of Sacher and Kanhiya . . . without further delay or excuse . . .
>
> To this we have replied that we can not think of submitting to a demand of so unprecedented a nature which if once admitted might subject your Honour's to being perpetually harassed and troubled . . . we can not think of subjecting our flag and protection to so much contempt as to abandon our tenants and inhabitants and permit their estates and properties to be seized and plundered . . . in case this demand is not laid aside we shall be under necessity to withdraw our factory and take proper measures to secure our employees from these impositions . . . we have taken to submit rather to a stoppage of our business than suffer this protection of our flag to grow contemptible . . . [93]

The tone of the letter is certainly one of open defiance. It was written two weeks after Alivardi Khan, eight-two years of age, had an attack of dropsy that was to prove fatal. In a few months the question of the English protection of the natives was to become a cause for Sirajuddaullah's march upon Calcutta. But before we turn our attention to that conflict, let us take brief notice of the relations of the Company with Sirajuddaullah on the eve of his nawabship.

The prince was visited once by the agents of the Company in 1752. They were

> . . . received with the utmost politeness and distinction far superior than was paid the Dutch or French and if these people's words are ever to be confided in, we flatter ourselves that the expense we have been at this occasion has procured you great favour and will be the means of your Honour's business being transacted without any interruption from the government for some time to come . . . [94]

The above letter would have us believe that the relations of the Company's agents with the crown prince were cordial. In reality the reverse

[93] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, February 23, 1756. Contrary to the assertions of the Company's agents, the nawab's demand was not unprecedented. In their letter to the Court of August 20, 1751, they reported turning over Haji Salim's property to the nawab, as he had died intestate.

[94] *Idem*, September 18, 1752.

was true. We have the testimony of William Tooke, Jean Law and William Forth regarding the hostile attitude of the Company towards the prince. Tooke writes:

> . . . it is usual according to an old Eastern custom, on being appointed prince of the country to be visited by different foreign nations and proper presents made him. This in the first place we neglected doing, and being a man of infinite pride and ostentation although abandoned to all manners of vice, gave him no small vexation, not only by slighting of him as we did but as there was very strong parties against him in the country . . . made him apprehensive we favoured some one of them . . . [95]

and Jean Law adds:

> The violent character of Sirajuddaullah and the general hatred for him had given many people the idea that he could never become *subahdar*. Among others the English thought so. They never addressed themselves to Sirajuddaullah for their business in the *durbar* [court], but on the contrary avoided all communications with him. On certain occasions they refused him admission into their factory at Kassimbazar and their country houses, because, in fact, this excessively blustering and impertinent young man used to break the furniture, or if it pleased him, take it awaiy . . . [96]

Some of the activities of the English factors, on the eve of Alivardi Khan's demise, also gave an impression to Sirajuddaullah that

> . . . the English were in league with [Ghasiti] Begum and his cousin Shaukat Jung to assasinate him [Sirajuddaullah] and put another nawab in his place . . . [97]

Ghulam Husain Khan, the author of *Seir* and an adviser to Shaukat Jung, informs us that Shaukat Jung was confident of receiving assistance from the English in his claim against Sirajuddaullah's succession to the nawabship. [98] Holwell was convinced that the faction of Ghasiti Begum had a great probability of success in thwarting the succession of Sirajuddaullah. [99] The English agents also placed a great premium on the intelligence that

> . . . the Hindu rajas and inhabitants were very much disaffected to the Moor government and secretly wished for a change and opportunity for throwing off their tyrannical yoke . . . [100]

[95] Tooke's Narrative, *Hill Collection*, I, 278.

[96] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 162. For corroborative evidence, see William Forth to Roger Drake, December 16, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 62.

[97] "Revolutions in Bengal," *ibid.*, III, 219.

[98] *Seir*, II, 198-99. For corroborative evidence, see Law's Memoir, *Hill Collection*, III, 163; Forth to Drake, December 16, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 62-65.

[99] Holwell to the Court of Directors, August 10, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 349.

[100] Charles F. Noble to the Select Committee, Fort St. George, September 22,

Colonel Scott, the Company's military engineer had also observed that

> . . . if a European force began successfully . . . they [the Hindus] would be inclined to join them if properly applied and encouraged, but might be cautious how they acted at first until they had a probability of succes in bringing about a revolution to their advantage . . .
>
> I look on old Omichund as the man in Bengal most capable of serving us, if he has a mind to it . . .
>
> There is a man Nimu Gosain, the high priest of the Hindus, who has a great influence among the Hindu rajas and with a particular caste of people who go up and down the kingdom well armed in great bodies . . . who might be possibly of service to us . . . [101]

On the basis of evidence available it is impossible to say whether or not the English agents were actively in league with Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jung. It is evident, however, that they did not keep themselves aloof from the intrigues between the court factions. They secretly wished for the failure of Sirajuddaullah in his bid for the nawabship. They themselves believed that the Hindu subjects of the kingdom were not only at a point of revolt against the Muslim nawab, but that the Hindus were willing to support the English in replacing the Muslim authority in Bengal. Sirajuddaullah could not have but viewed the English with great suspicion. He probably feared the English, and it is immaterial to his action whether these fears were founded on good reasons or not.

F. Bengali Response to Western Contatcs *

These fears must have been intensified by a generally unfavorable response of the Bengalis to a century of Western contacts. When the English factories were established in Bengal, in the seventeenth century, there was general ignorance in India about the West. Even in the education of the great princes, the ignorance of the West was apparent. Aurangzib is reported to have reprimanded his tutor for teaching him that

> . . . the whole of Feringustan [Europe] was no more than some inconsiderable island, of which the most powerful monarch was formerly the king of Portugal, then he of Holland, and afterwards the king of England . . . of . . . the king of France and him of Andalusia, you told

1756, *ibid.*, III, 328.

101 *Ibid.*

* Reprinted from my article, "Indian Response to Early Western Contacts in Bengal, 1650-1756," in *Studies on Asia, 1960*, ed. Robert K. Sakai (Lincoln: University of Nabraska Press, 1960), pp. 9-19. By permission of the publishers.

> me they resembled petty rajas and that the potentates of Hindustan eclipsed the glory of all other kings . . . [102]

Even after eighty years of European contacts with Bengal, Père Calmette sadly reported to Marquis de Cœtlogon:

> Indian geographical knowledge extends no further east than China, as far north as the Caucasus, and to Ceylon in the south, with no greater extent to the west, so they are very much surprised to see strangers who were not born in any of the fifty countries whose name they know . . . [103]

The Europeans had done very little themselves to clear up this ignorance. De Laval reports that when the Portuguese first arrived in India, they proclaimed their king to be the most powerful of all in Europe. The Dutch, a few decades later, claimed that European sovereigns were the vassals of Holland. They were discredited later by the English. When De Laval was asked by a native king to tell him who really was the greatest of the European kings, De Laval's chauvinism had the better of him. The native king, thereupon, answered that is was all very confusing; all the different Europeans proclaimed their rulers to be the most powerful. [104]

If on the one hand the Indian rulers lacked knowledge of Europe, on the other they were guilty of false pride and pomp. Their treatment of the Europeans was no less humiliating than the Chinese demand for the *kou-tou*. The English petitions to the Mughal authorities reflect not only the pompous expectations of the rulers, but also provide evidence that in the letter, if not in the spirit, the Mughal officials expected the foreigners to *kou-tou* to them. This is clearly brought out by three petitions of John Russell. In 1711 this agent of the Company in Bengal wrote to Azimus-shan Khan, the viceroy,

> . . . with the humblest submission . . . dedicating at your feet the life wholly dedicated to your service . . . [John Russell] presents this *arazdasht* [petition] . . . after kissing the ground on which treads the greatest and most powerful prince . . . [105]

In his letter to Emperor Jahandar Shah, Russell declared that his fore-

[102] François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, tr. Archibald Constable and rev. Vincent A. Smith (2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 155.

[103] Letter of September 28, 1730 in *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*. XXI (Paris: Nicolas le Clerc), 3-4; Scrafton, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22; Ives, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[104] François Pyrard de Laval, *Voyages to the East Indies, the Maladives, Malucca and Brazil* (3 vols.; London: The Hakluyt Society, 1887-90), I, 363.

[105] Russell to Azimus-shan, August 17, 1711, cited in Wilson, *Early Annals*, II, Bk. I, 22.

head was to be considered the tip of the emperor's stool. [106] To Emperor Farrukhsiyar, Russell presented himself as

> . . . the smallest particle of sand . . . with his forehead at your command rubbed on the ground . . . and [giving] reverence due from a slave . . . to your throne which is the seat of the miracles . . . [107]

Of Indian pomp and pride. Père Calmette wrote:

> India in the mind of its inhabitants is the queen among nations and other men are mere barbarians in comparison . . . all the courtesy, courage and arts and science of Europeans can not give our colonies the position which birth bestows on the Indians even in the poorest circumstances. There is no nation that does not pride itself, but with us there is a sense of moderate presumption. Here nothing is proportionate: nobility, arts, science, courtesy flourish only among them. It is true that along the coasts, time has tempered their pride but in the interior a white man hardly as yet escapes public ridicule . . . [108]

Shaista Khan called the Company "a company of base, quarrelling people and foul dealers," because of the personal quarrels of the Company's factors and their eagerness to make money by hook or by crook. [109] Shaista Khan was not too wrong in his estimate. In 1706 one Benjamin Walker was fined Rs. 20/- for using profane language in one of the Fort William council meetings. [110] A certain Captain Smith challenged William Hedges to a duel for the failure of the Council to fire guns in honor of his arrival in the settlement. This led Hedges to ask the Council if the councilors were obliged to accept the challenge of every bully. [111]

In 1733 the nawab of Bengal defined his attitude towards the English in these words:

> I am scarce able to recount to you the abominal practices of this people. When they first came to this country they petitioned the then government in a humble manner for liberty to purchase a spot of ground to build a factory house upon, which was no sooner granted but they ran up a strong fort, surrounded it with a ditch which has communication with the river and mounted a great number of guns upon the walls. They have enticed several merchants and others to go and take protection under them and they collect a revenue which

[106] Russell to Jahandar Shah, July 7, 1712, cited in *ibid.*, II, Bk. I, 65.

[107] Russell to Farrukhsiyar, March 27, 1713, cited in *ibid.*, II, Bk. I, 111.

[108] Letter of Père Calmette, *loc. cit.*, pp. 4-5. For corroborative evidence see Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor* ("Indian Texts Series," 4 vols.; London: John Murray, 1906-08), III, 73, 320.

[109] Cited by Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, 66.

[110] *Ibid.*, I, 205.

[111] *Ibid.*, I, 250-51.

> amounts to Rs. 100,000 . . . they rob and plunder and carry great number of the king's subjects of both sexes into slavery into their own country . . . [112]

It is, therefore, obvious that the English were not mentioned "but with pity or contempt" at the provincial courts. [113]

The disintegration of the Mughal central authority, the schism in the Bengali body-politic, and the victories of the Europeans in the South, however, had created a mood of confidence and a great power complex among the English agents. Alivardi Khan was not ignorant of the decline in the power and prestige of the Indian rulers. He was well informed of the European intrigues in the Deccan, on the Coromandel Coast and against the Angrias. [114] His policy was, therefore, twofold: first, to play the French against the English, "as he wisely judged their union only could make them formidable," [115] and second, to oppose any kind of military fortification of the European establishments in Bengal or the extension of European armed conflict to his dominions. When war broke out in the South in 1744, he ordered the European companies, no doubt with Dupleix's encouragement, not to commit any hostilities within his dominions — an order which he strongly enforced. [116]

Alivardi Khan was very pessimistic about the future independence of Bengal. He had the feeling that "the hatmen would possess themselves of all the shores of Hindia." [117] He was also careful to avoid provocation to the European companies who were waxing supreme in the South. Several of his courtiers advised him to move against the English. Khwaja Wajid, speaking on behalf of the merchants, declared that thirty million of rupees could be gained by driving the English out of Calcutta, but the nawab turned a deaf ear to the suggestion. [118] To Mustapha Jung's advice that the European settlements be seized, the nawab replied:

[112] Shujauddin Khan to Khan Durran, n.d., cited in I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, June 18, 1753.

[113] A comment made by Warren Hastings in 1756. Cited by M. E. Monckton Jones, *Warren Hastings in Bengal* ("Oxford Historical and Literary Series," Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1918), p. 45.

[114] We have the contemporary testimony of Law, Rennie, William Forth, Holwell, Orme, Gholam Hoosien and Scrafton of the influence of these wars on the nawab's thinking. See *Hill Collection*, II, 16, 66; III, 160-61, 384; Orme, *Military Transactions*, II, 52, 183; *Seir*, II, 159-63; Scrafton, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[115] Scrafton, *loc. cit.*

[116] *Correspondance du conseil de Pondichéry* . . .., II, 350.

[117] *Seir*, *loc. cit.*

[118] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 56.

> My dear children, Mustapha Khan is a soldier of fortune, and a man in monthly pay, who lives by his sabre; of course, he wishes that I should have occasion to employ him and to put in his power to ask favours for himself and friends, but in the name of common sense, what is the matter with your own selves, that you should join issue with him . . .
>
> What wrong the English have done me, that I should wish them ill? Look at yonder plain covered with grass; should you set fire to it, there would be no stopping its progress; and who is the man who shall put out the fire that shall break forth at sea, and from thence come out upon the land? Beware of lending an ear to such proposals . . . [119]

He told Mir Jafar Khan that the Europeans were like a hive of bees "of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death." [120]

Alivardi, though he played the French against the English, was careful to pursue a policy of noninvolvement in the Anglo-French conflict. He rejected an alliance proposed by the French Commander Bussy, and threatened to drive the French out of Bengal, after the death of Nasir Jung in the Deccan, were they to engage in Bengali politics. [121] He was aware of the role of naval power in contemporary history and doubted his ability to cope with it. With a prophetic vision he declared:

> If I triumph [over the Europeans], men would condemn me by saying that I was plundering the traders of my kingdom. And if, God avert it, the contrary happens I shall be incurring disgrace at the hands of subjects of my kingdom . . . [122]

As we shall see in the succeeding pages, Alivardi was right. The first victories of Sirajuddaullah over the English immediately led to his being called a plunderer. In the second round, his failure against the English eternally disgraced him.

G. Summary

The breakdown of the Mughal authority in the first half of the eighteenth century led to anarchy at the heart of the empire and the invasions of the Persians and the Afghans from the northwest extremity. In the mid-eighteenth century the neutralization of the Marathas by the Afghans left the field open for European encroachments.

[119] *Seir,* II, 163-64; "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 56.
[120] Cited by Scrafton, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[121] *Seir, loc. cit.;* Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
[122] "Muzzaffarnamah," *loc. cit.*

These profound changes in the structure of the political authority in India led to corresponding modifications in the policy of the European traders. In 1619 Thomas Roe had advised the English company to pursue a purely commercial policy for none other seemed then practicable within the limits of the Mughal power. In the 1750's, however, the "pettifogging traders" had undergone a metamorphosis into "imperialist swashbucklers and large scale extortionists." [123] The whole European outlook on Indian political life had undergone a change. Both the English and the French, due to their successes in the South, had developed a great power complex. They spoke of the ease with which they could overrun the dominions of Alivardi Khan for pecuniary profit. The transformation of merchants into politicians meant that the Company's agents brought commercial minds to their political duties. [124]

The nawab of Bengal, in this period of European ascendancy in India, was witnessing a severe crisis in the body-politic of his dominions. The disintegration of the Mughal authority and the preoccupation of the Marathas, the receivers of the Mughal empire, with the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali had left the nawab of Bengal solely on his own resources to deal with any European attack. These conditions meant that the English, who had temporarily humbled their French adversaries in the South, had been left as the chief contender for paramountcy in Bengal. They started fortifying their settlements, claimed autonomy for them, and extended asylum to the fugitives of the nawab. When Alivardi Khan died in 1756, prognosticating the evil that was to flow from European intrusion in Indian politics, a long chain of events, political and economic, had prepared the ground for a conflict between the government of Bengal and the East India Company.

It was the opulent nature of the East India trade that had brought the European companies to intrude into Bengali politics. A large scale trade necessitated large scale establishments. These soon grew into semifortified settlements, and caused friction between the nawabs of Bengal and the Company's agents because of their diverse views as to the revenue obligations arising out of such settlements. The second consequence of this opulent trade was the necessity of securing in-

[123] T. G. Percival Spear, *The Nabobs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 23.

[124] *Ibid.*, p. 28; Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (10 vols.: London: Oxford University Press, 1934-54), VII, 365 ff.

creased funds to meet trade obligations. The failure of the Company to secure minting privileges in Bengal and the demands of the Indian brokers for a higher commission, in the face of the shortage of the funds experienced by the Company, led to changes in the investment system, which caused a decline in the Bengali exports. When exports declined, the Bengali economy suffered, and the difficulties in this economy were made worse by the exactions of the nawab and the effects of the Maratha raids. Not unnaturally, but not quite rationally, the English blamed the nawab's exactions for the depression of their trade, while the nawab's courtiers blamed the English.

A third consequence of the opulence of the Indo-European trade was the development of rivalries among the three European powers — the French, the English and the Dutch. So long as the Bengali nawabs were strong the European traders willy-nilly accepted the doctrine of competitive coexistence, though their natural instincts ran in the direction of monopolization.

As the English company grew in commercial opulence so its political influence made itself felt in England. The relationship between the Company and the English government became close, and royal forces were allowed to be used in support of the Company. Military and political power thus became intertwined with the commercial aims of the Company.

This application of the military and political power in India had two profound results. In the first place, both the English and the French companies were left with European detachments following the War of the Austrian Succession. Secondly, the agents of the companies by applying their commercial ideas to the use of this military power had developed a new form of profitable venture, namely the renting of European troops and mercenaries to the rival claimants to the thrones of Hyderabad and Arcot.

It is in the light of these historical developments, which took place in the course of the preceding decades, that the events of 1756-57 in Bengal should be examined. The decisive victory of the English over the French in the South had further promoted the power mindedness of the English factors. In Bengal this found expression in the fortification of English settlements "designed to repel country forces," and the extension of asylum to the fugitives of the nawab. Further, as the death of Alivardi Khan drew near, the Company's agents did not remain disinterested in the race for the nawabship. They stood but one step from a violent rupture with the nawab.

CHAPTER III

SIRAJUDDAULLAH ON THE OFFENSIVE

In the preceding chapters we have seen that commercial and political causes had contributed to the deterioration of the relations between the Company and the local authorities. From his side, Sirajuddaullah saw the abuse of *dustucks* and the dismissal of *dadni* merchants as corrupting influences on the Bengali economy — at a time when the economy was in straits. From their side, the agents of the Company felt the denial of minting privileges, the exactions of the nawab's subordinates and the trade of their European rivals as restrictive influences on their operations — at a time when their Bengal trade had shown a downward trend.

In the sphere of politics, we have seen that Alivardi Khan and Sirajuddaullah felt apprehensive about the growth of European influence in the South. The uncordial treatment that Sirajuddaullah received at the hands of the Company's agents only exacerbated this hostility. The English factors, from their side, saw the schisms in the Bengali body-politic, the alienation of the masses from the dominant authority, and adopted a defiant attitude toward the provincial officials because they thought this the only effective way to protect their interests. A conflict was portending.

A. Deterioration of Relations

Two provocative incidents occurred just before Alivardi Khan's demise. One was the escape of Krishna Dass (alias Krishna Ballabh) from Dacca into Calcutta, and the other was the Company's attempt to renovate its fortifications in Bengal.

Krishna Dass was the son of Raj Ballabh, the revenue administrator of Dacca. Early in 1756 he was asked to submit the accounts of his division for auditing, as an embezzlement of government funds had been suspected. [1] While his accounts were being checked, he prevailed upon William Watts, the chief of the Kassimbazar factory, to provide protection for his son and family in Calcutta. This request was im-

[1] Raj Ballabh was estimated to have accumulated over twenty million of rupees during his tenure at Dacca. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, V. 123.

[2] Drake to Fort William Council, January 17-25, 1757, *Hill Collection*, III. 136; William Tooke, "Narrative of the Capture of Calcutta," *ibid.*, I. 249, 279 (cited hereafter as Tooke's Narrative); "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 62.

mediately granted. Krishna Dass arrived in Calcutta on March 13, 1756 with his family and a treasure estimated at Rs. 5,300,000. The Company's unhesitating acceptance of Krishna Dass was largely motivated by the influence Raj Ballabh was reported to have on Ghasiti Begum. She was the leader of a clique opposed to Sirajuddaullah's succession to the nawabship of Bengal, and Raj Ballabh had been an assistant at one time to Nawazish Muhammed Khan, the deceased husband of the Begum. Her chances of succeeding against Sirajuddaullah were in March, 1756, considered quite favorable. [3] Perhaps a bribe to some of the Company's officials was also involved. Pierre Renault, a French official, certainly believed so, [4] and the court of directors claimed to have been

> . . . informed on good authority that two of our servants of considerable rank actually received from Krishna Dass upward of fifty thousand rupees for our protecting his person against Sirajuddaullah. [5]

The charge of a bribe was vigorously denied by Holwell, Manningham and Beecher, three high officials of the Company, though they admitted that it had become a prevalent rumor in Bengal. [6]

Shortly before Alivardi Khan's death, when Sirajuddaullah's succession to the nawabship seemed rather assured, William Watts, who also was the Company's listening post for the affairs at the nawab's court, reversed his earlier opinion of Raj Ballabh and Krishna Dass and suggested to the Fort William council that

> . . . Krishna Dass and the rest of Raj Ballabh's family should have no longer protection in Calcutta, as it was very uncertain what a turn things would take here after the decease of the *suba* [Nawab Alivardi Khan]. [7]

The recommendation of Watts, though supported by Holwell and Manningham, was not, however, sustained by Governor Drake, who continued to provide sanctuary to Krishna Dass. [8]

The other cause for provocation was the attempt of the Company's

[3] Drake to Fort William Council, January 17-25, 1757, *Hill Collection*, III, 136; Holwell to the Court of Directors, August 10, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 348.

[4] Renault to Dupleix, August 26, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 207.

[5] I.O., Records, Bengal Correspondence, Court of Directors to Fort William Council, March 23, 1759.

[6] Holwell to Fort William Council, November 5, 1759, *Hill Collection*, III, 374-78; Manningham's and Beecher's evidence before the House of Commons Select Committee on East India Affairs, cited in *ibid.*, III, 287, 290.

[7] Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 5. Watts's original letter has been lost but its contents are corroborated by him. Watts to the Court of Directors, January 30, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 232.

[8] Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *loc. cit.*

agents to improve their fortifications at Fort William. As we have seen in the last chapter, these renovations began some time in September, 1755, and as the probability of the Seven Years War between France and England grew greater, so the work on these fortifications proceeded at a more rapid pace. [9] Sirajuddaullah suspected these fortifications to be an attempt to influence the succession to the nawabship in favor of the clique headed by Ghasiti Begum. The agents of the Dutch, the French and the English companies, when questioned by Alivardi Khan, apropos of Sirajuddaullah's charges, denied any knowledge of work being carried forward on the fortifications. But Sirajuddaullah's charges were not without foundation. [10]

Alivardi Khan died on April 10, 1756, and Sirajuddaullah, immediately upon assuming the reins of government proceeded against his two rivals, Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jung. [11] At the same time he sent a letter to Governor Drake, which arrived in Calcutta on April 15, 1756, demanding the extradition of Krishna Dass. [12] This was followed a few weeks later by another letter asking the Fort William council to desist from erecting any new fortifications, ordering it to demolish the redoubt and the drawbridge which had already been erected on the Perrin's Corner of Fort William, and demanding that the Maratha Ditch, which surrounded the Calcutta settlement, be filled up. [13] The first letter was not only rejected by Drake, but its bearer,

[9] *Supra,* pp. 35-38; Governor Drake's Narrative, *op. cit.*, I, 124; "Muzzaffarnamah", p. 62; Fulta Council to the Court of Directors, September 17, 1756, *Hill Collection,* I, 214; Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *ibid.,* II, 8. Both Drake and Holwell have asserted that these renovations began after the receipt of instructions from the court of directors, which arrived by the *Delaware* in May, 1756, asking the Fort William council to be prepared for a war against the French. These assertions ignore the fortifications that had commenced in September, 1755.

[10] William Forth to Roger Drake, December 16, 1756, *ibid.,* II, 66; Jean Law's Memoir, *ibid.,* III, 163-64. Forth and Law represented the English and the French companies at this meeting with Alivardi Khan. Hill states (*ibid.,* I, xlvi) that the English and the French, "to excuse their actions . . . accused each other of preparing to resist the government," through these fortifications. His statement is based upon Holwell's letter of November 30, 1756 (*op. cit.*); and is rather untenable. Neither Forth nor Law, our direct primary sources, say anything to corroborate Holwell. On the contrary, they both denied knowledge of fortifications, if any, being carried out by their rivals. I have failed to discover any evidence that would support Hill's contention that the French and the English, at his stage, incited the nawab against each other.

[11] For Sirajuddaullah's struggles with Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jung, see *infra,* Appendix I.

[12] Governor Drake's Narrative, *op. cit.*, I, 125.

[13] *Ibid.*; Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756; *loc. cit.*; Cooke's Narrative, *Hill Collection,* III, 394.

Narayan Singh, was unceremoniously dismissed from Calcutta, on the ground that he had entered into the English settlement like a thief and a spy, "and not like one in the public character he pretended as bearing the *suba*'s [nawab's] orders." [11] Of course, this was a poor excuse for the defiance, since Narayan Singh presented himself with Omichund, a respectable merchant resident in Calcutta, who vouchsafed Narayan Singh's status as the nawab's emissary. To the second letter, Drake sent an answer by himself, without consulting his council, whose purport was that

> . . . for this century past we had traded in his [the nawab's] dominions, and had been protected and encouraged by the several *subahs* [nawabs], always having paid obedience to their orders, that it gave us concern to observe that some enemies had advised His Excellency without regard to truth, that we were erecting new fortifications . . . that he must have been acquainted of the great loss our company sustained by the capture of Madras by the French, that there was an appearance of a war between our nations, that, therefore, we were reparing our walls which were in danger of being carried away by the river [floods], and that we were not otherwise erecting new works . . . [15]

B. Sirajuddaullah's Response and the Seizure of Kassimbazar

Drake's reply reached Sirajuddaullah on May 20, 1756, only a day or two after he had secured the allegiance of Shaukat Jung, having humbled Ghasiti Begum earlier. The reply carried a tacit reflection on

[14] Drake, *loc. cit.;* Holwell, *loc. cit.;* Cooke, *loc. cit.* According to "Muzzaffarnamah" (p. 63), Narayan Singh misbehaved himself before Drake. This account should be dismissed as neither Drake nor Holwell complained. Beecher, Scrafton, Watts and Hyndaman, on the other hand, assert (*Hill Collection*, I, 195) that Drake tore up the nawab's letter and threw it in Narayan Singh's face. This, too, seems to be an exaggeration. Holwell, who later questioned the prudence of Drake in this matter, would have mentioned such an incident.

[15] Drake to Fort William Council, January 17-25, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 147. No duplicate of the above letter was kept, and its contents were only orally transmitted to the Fort William council a few days after the letter was despatched. For corroborative evidence, see Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 7, and Cooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, III, 393-94. Cooke, who was the secretary of the Fort William council, however, did not think "that the answer Mr. Drake laid before the board was that which he first despatched." Jean Law heard a rumor (*ibid.*, III, 165) that Drake orally said to the nawab's emissary that since the nawab wanted to have the ditch filled up, it could be done by the heads of the nawab's subjects. Perhaps these words were uttered by some thoughtless English factor and were later attributed to Drake, but such a rumor indicated in what great disrespect Drake was held in Bengal. It is possible that Drake's reply was a little less polite than the above letter indicates. We find Sirajuddaullah complaining to Governor Pigot of St. George (*ibid.*, I, 196), of Drake's arrogant nature.

the power of the nawab to preserve neutrality between the French and the English, in the event of the extension of the Seven Years War to Bengal.[16] It confirmed Sirajuddaulah's apprehension that the Europeans, especially the English, wanted to repeat in Bengal what they had done a few years ago in the South. His temper was further inflamed by Narayan Singh who reported how unceremoniously he had been dismissed by Drake from Calcutta. If the author of *Muzzaffarnamah* is to be relied upon, Narayan Singh said to his master:

> What honour is left to us [natives] when a few traders, who have not yet learnt to wash their bottoms, reply to the ruler's orders by expelling his envoy?[17]

This report was made to Sirajuddaullah at a time when he had just humbled two of his adversaries. The very thought that the English could question his power to protect them from the possible encroachments of the French, therefore, incensed him far more than it would have in normal circumstances.

Two sets of advice were proffered to Sirajuddaullah by his courtiers as to the course of action to be taken against the English. One faction led by Ghulam Husain Khan, Zain-ul Abidin, Mirza Habib Beg and Mir Hashuallah, advised the nawab to leave the English alone since they were "flames of fire." They told him that a quarrel with them could only engage the country in a general war. The faction of Khwaja Wajid, Rai Durlabh Ram and Mir Jafar Khan, on the contrary, advocated a policy of firmness and diplomacy combined with a show of force.[18] In the pursuit of the latter advice, an emissary was appointed to approach the English to find out their intentions.[19] The person appointed was Khwaja Wajid, an Armenian merchant, who had commercial dealings with the English Company. The nawab in the letter of appointment informed him that

> . . . if the English are contented to remain in my country they must submit to have their forts razed, their ditch filled up, and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of Nawab Jafar Khan [Murshid

[16] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 165; Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *loc. cit.*

[17] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 63.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

[19] Khwaja Wajid was a court banker. Such courtiers often, in an honorary capacity, acted as emissaries of the nawab on important missions. For examples see Bhattacharya, *East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, passim.* Louis XIV also negotiated peace towards the end of the War of the Spanish Succession through a Rouen merchant, Nicolas Mesnager. The treaty after the War of American Independence was negotiated and signed by Richard Oswald, a London merchant.

> Quli Khan]; otherwise I will expel them entirely out of the provinces of which I am the *subah* [nawab]. . . . I am fully determined to reduce that nation to the above mentioned conditions . . . [20]

A few days later in another letter to Khwaja Wajid the nawab still further clarified his motives in taking strong action against the English. He wrote:

> I have three substantial motives for extirpating the English out of my country, one that they have built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the king's dominions contrary to the established laws of the country; the second is that they have abused the privilege of their *dustucks* by granting them to such as were in no ways entitled to them, from which practice the king has suffered greatly in the revenue of his customs; the third motive is that they give protection to such of the king's subjects as have by their behaviour in the employs they were entrusted with made themselves liable to be called to an account . . . [21]

and he added further:

> . . . if they will promise to remove the foregoing complaints of their conduct . . . I will pardon their fault and permit their residence here. . . . Please acquaint the English minutely of my resolutions. [22]

That the nawab initially had no intention of expelling the English from Bengal is also hinted in a letter he wrote to Governor Pigot of Fort St. George, in which he said:

> It was not my intention to remove the mercantile business of the company belonging to you from out of the *subah* [province] of Bengal but Roger Drake . . . was a very wicked and unruly man and began to give protection to persons who had accounts with the *padshah* [emperor]. Notwithstanding my admonitions, yet he did not desist from his shameless actions . . . [23]

Khwaja Wajid's diplomatic mission came to nothing. He was treated by Drake with ignominy and was turned out of Calcutta. William Watts informs us:

[20] Sirajuddaullah to Khwaja Wajid, May 28, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 3.

[21] Sirajuddaullah to Khwaja Wajid, June 1, 1756 *ibid.*, I, 4.

[22] *Ibid.* Hill asserts (*ibid.*, I, lii ff) that these three motives were mere *pretexts*, though, a little later, he confesses that the nawab "had a show of reason" in all these pretexts. According to him the real motive was his avarice and vanity. It is difficult to agree with Hill, though there is no doubt that Sirajuddaullah was vain and greedy, as *Riyaz* (p. 363), *Seir* (II, 188-89), and "Muzzaffarnamah" (pp. 63-64) so clearly point out. However, nowhere in his correspondence with Khwaja Wajid do we find the nawab demanding any money from the Company. As we shall see in the following pages, the nawab did launch a diplomatic offensive to avoid a violent showdown with the English, and, therefore, avarice and vanity cannot be ascribed as *primary* motives. Hill also says (*ibid.*, I, iv) that the only case of protection given to the natives is that of Krishna Dass. Elsewhere (*supra*, pp. 38-39) I have given evidence to show that Hill is misinformed.

[23] Sirajuddaullah to George Pigot, June 30, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 196.

> Khwaja Wajid . . . went four times to Calcutta in order to persuade the gentlemen to make up matters with the nawab but was threatened to be ill used if he came again on the same errand . . . [24]
> . . . from the above proofs there appears to us the greatest moral certainty that the nawab never intended to drive the English out of his provinces . . . [25]

While Khwaja Wajid was engaged in fruitless diplomatic negotiations with Drake, the nawab sent orders to Durlabh Ram and Hukum Beg, two of his senior military officers, to surround the Kassimbazar factory, which was located near Murshidabad, the seat of the nawab's government, and prevent provisions from entering it. [26] Mir Muhammad Raza Khan, the district commander of Katwa, was also ordered to prevent the English ships at Hughli from leaving Bengal. [27] A blockade of the companies establishments and trade had been the usual method of the nawabs of Bengal to force the Europeans to accede to their demands. [28] On May 24, 1756, 300 native troops arrived before the Kassimbazar factory, the next day another 200, until by June 3rd their total had increased to about 30,000, when Sirajuddaullah himself appeared. [29] Thereupon, Durlabh Ram sent a message to William Watts asking him to present himself before the nawab,

[24] William Watts and Matthew Collect to Fort St. George Council, July 7, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 58. Drake denied giving any impolite treatment to Khwaja Wajid, but he asserts that he could not trust this emissary. (Governor Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 139-40.) Watts's and Collet's assertions are corroborated by John Young the agent of the Prussian Company in Bengal, in a letter he wrote to Drake (*ibid.*, I, 62); Tooke's Narrative (*ibid.*, I, 354); Holwell's letter to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756 (*ibid.*, II, 22); Richard Beecher's letter of January 25, 1757 to Fort William council (*ibid.*, II, 161); etc.

Hill's assertion (*ibid.*, I lv) that Sirajuddaullah resorted to violent means, without trying diplomacy, to settle his dispute with the Company ignores the diplomatic offensive that Sirajuddaullah made and which continued, as we shall presently see, as late as June 13th, three days before the hostilities commenced.

[25] William Watts and Matthew Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 16, 1756, *ibid.*, I 108.

[26] Watts, Collet and Batson to Fort William Council, May 25-31, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 1-3.

[27] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 63.

[28] Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 2, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 45; *supra*, pp. 7-8; Bhattacharya, *op. cit., passim.* In 1743 the Pondicherry (French) council had written to the Chandernagore (French) council: "They [the Bengali officials] will never attack us in our forts, they know other, more effective means of paralyzing our commerce." *Correspondance de conseil supérieur . . . avec . . . Chandernagor*, II, 260.

[29] Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 2, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 46-47. This figure is more reliable since Watts and Collet were on the spot. Other estimates range from 11,000 to 65,000.

and assuring him of safe conduct.[30] When Watts appeared before the nawab, he was upbraided for the misconduct of the English in renovating and improving fortifications and sheltering the fugitives from the nawab. He was asked to sign a capitulation saying that:

> 1st: No protection is to be given in Calcutta to any of the nawab's subjects; 2nd: The drawbridge at Perrin's and the new fortifications are to be demolished; and, 3rd: No *dustucks* are to be given to any of the black [Indian] merchants.[31]

Watts signed the capitulation making it clear, however, that he had no authority to commit the Company.[32] The nawab did not demand any money nor did he confiscate any of the English property, except English artillery and ammunition.[33] The only casualty of the entire affair at Kassimbazar was the suidice of Lieutenant Elliot, who seems to have been opposed to Watts's policy of reconciliation with the nawab.[34] This action of Elliot caused the nawab's officers to disarm the English residents of the factory and confine most of them in their own rooms, lest similar acts of desperation should take place.[35] Except for Watts and his assistant Collet, who were asked to accompany the nawab in his march to Calcutta, all the English persons under confinement at Kassimbazar were released by June 10th. The warehouses and other establishments of the factory were sealed to prevent plunder by the native soldiers.[36]

[30] *Ibid.* Hill (*ibid.*, I, lviii) on the authority of a letter written by an unknown Frenchman to some M. Demontorcin, maintains that Durlabh Ram had tried to force his way into the factory with a deachment of troops. His attack having been repulsed "he retired precipitately, and, determined to resort to treachery," he lured Watts to meet the nawab. Watts and Collet not once in their letters mention any charge by Durlabh Ram's troops, nor question Durlabh Ram's good faith. Hill, unfortunately, has tended to use any information he has come across to discredit the nawab and his officers without caring to examine either corroborative evidence or the nature of his source.

[31] Francis Sykes to Fort William Council, June 4, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 10. This letter was written at Watts's behest. Watts later asserted that the letter of capitulation he signed was couched in cautious language than that indicated in Sykes's letter. (Watts to the Court of Directors, January 30, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 335-36.) However, Sykes's report was written immediately after the incident and should be considered more reliable.

[32] Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 2, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 46.

[33] Tooke (*ibid.*, I, 253) says that the nawab captured sixty-four guns and field pieces, while Captain Grant (*ibid.*, I, 74) adds eight additional cohorn mortars to Tooke's list. Most of these guns were reported by Watts and Collet to have been "honey-combed" and their "carriages rotten." Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 2, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 47.

[34] Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 253-54. Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 166.

[35] Watts to the Court of Directors, January 30, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 336.

[36] Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 2, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 46.

Sirajuddaullah's actions at Kassimbazar show that his main reasons for investing the factory were to disarm it and to bring pressures through Watts on the Calcutta council. His demands, in view of the long-standing controversy, were not without justification, and his conduct in surrounding the factory with troops was similar to what had been done by his predecessors. Unlike his predecessors he did not immediately demand any money, merely an agreement, and his treatment of Watts was quite polite. [37] "A proof that the nawab's intent," wrote Collet and Watts, "was to accommodate matter, was that he touched none of the Company's effects at Kassimbazar except warlike stores." [38] Even the demand for money was made at a later stage when these two factors were marching with the nawab's forces to Calcutta. During this journey Durlabh Ram declared to Watts and Collet that the whole matter could be settled for ten million rupees. When Watts informed him that the Company could never pay that much, Durlabh Ram was willing to settle for two million rupees. In reply Watts even questioned the English ability to pay that much. At this point Durlabh Ram invited Watts to make an offer, which Watts could not do in the absence of instructions from Calcutta. Durlabh Ram, however, refused to give Watts permission to write to Calcutta until "proposals of accommodation were made first from Calcutta." This conversation with Durlabh Ram was, nevertheless, reported to Drake before the commencement of hostilities by a letter secretly sent to him, but, Watts declares, Drake was "resolved not to come to any agreement." [39]

Holwell criticized Watts's action in giving up the factory on the ground that the military resources there were quite adequate for its defense. He argued that a spirited defense would have discouraged the nawab's march on Calcutta, or in any event, delayed it to the extent of making him the victim of the oncoming monsoons. [40] The explanation of Watts and Collet is as follows:

[37] On the authority of Law's Memoir, Hill declares (*ibid.*, I, lix) that Watts's hands were tied at his back when he appeared before the nawab. Tooke's statement (*ibid.*, I, 252), however, clarifies that statement by saying that a handkerchief was wrapped around Watts's hands merely to signify his submission. Watts in none of his letters complains of any harsh treatment from the nawab, as Hill's statement would imply.

[38] Watts and Collet to Fulta Council, July 8, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 61. A similar view was held by Richard Beecher English factor at Dacca, and his council. (Dacca Council to the Court of Directors, July 12, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 67.)

[39] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, July 16, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 103.

[40] Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 12.

> . . . We had great reason to believe that on paying this visit [to the nawab] we should be able to accommodate the matters and prevent his march to Calcutta.
>
> Had we attempted to resist our factory must inevitably have fallen into their hands, we being in no condition to make a defence against so large a force . . .
>
> But even supposing that we would have been able to resist the government, we are humbly of opinion it would have been madness in us to have attempted it when so great a part of your Honour's estate amounting to many *lacks* of rupees was dispersed all over the country, which would have been immediately seized, and you might have justly blamed us for commencing a war . . . [41]

Thus, the decision was primarily a political one, and it was obviously a reasonable one, since a subordinate factor of the Company, like Watts could not, on his own, commit the entire Company to a war with the nawab. His military decision was also sound, and he was upheld by Clive and other military officers. [42]

C. The English Response

The Fort William council, under the leadership of Drake, held a different estimate of the nawab's motives than did Watts and his Kassimbazar council. Drake believed that the nawab's grievances were not genuine but mere pretexts for capturing the English wealth and expelling them from Bengal. He was, therefore, determined to make a show of force. Kassimbazar and Calcutta, thus, became symbols for two policies: the former capitulated with only one shot being fired and with the English being treated generously and humanely, while the latter engaged in a war that saw the expulsion of the English from Calcutta, a great loss of life, and the plunder of English property.

Drake's conduct towards the emissaries of the nawab continued to be defiant and belligerent. On May 31st, Watts, Collet and Batson had written to Drake and his council that the nawab was serious about having the fortifications at Fort William pulled down, and the Maratha ditch filled up, and, "if your Honour &c. [the Fort William council] are determined not to comply with his demands, we request you will send us a supply of men . . . However, we think it advisable for your Honour &c. to write a letter to the nawab immediately." [43] The suggestion of rapprochement made in this letter was also ignored.

[41] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, July 16, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 102-03.
[42] Clive *et al.*, to Watts, January 28, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 331.
[43] *Ibid.*, I, 2.

Omichund, a prominent Calcutta merchant, at this stage, offered his services to reduce the tensions between Drake and Sirajuddaullah. [44] Another man, Sri Babu, tried to persuade Roger Drake, on June 7th, to accommodate matters with the nawab, who was marching down to Calcutta with a great force. Drake was so incensed by the capitulation of Kassimbazar, that he is reported to have replied to Sri Babu that "sooner he [Sirajuddaullah] came [to Calcutta] the better, and that he would make another nawab." [45] A second representation by Sri Babu on June 10th, however, persuaded Drake to write a letter to Sirajuddaullah, but the spirit of accommodation, if any, shown in that letter was nullified by Drake's orders the same day to attack Sukhsagar and Thana, two of the nawab's outposts. [46] On June 12th, Watts and Collet, who were travelling with the nawab, sent another letter to Drake, which arrived through the Dutch agent, Bisdom, proposing that an emissary to the nawab be sent for composing the matter, but Drake's reply was "that after the disgrace the Company had suffered at Kassimbazar . . . they were resolved not to come to any agreement." [47] The final effort for pacifically settling the dispute was made by Marquis de St. Jacques, a French renegade, and commander of the nawab's artillery, whose message was received by Drake on June 13th. Drake answered him by inviting him to change sides. [48] Since the door for negotiations had been completely shut by Drake, his only alternative was to put up a stubborn resistance against the nawab, and await the arrival of reinforcements from Madras.

Since the nawab had sent a message about May 15th demanding the demolition of the new fortifications at Fort William, Drake, apprehensive of hostilities, had issued orders for mobilization. By June 3rd, four days before the news of Kassimbazar reached him, Drake was convinced that

[44] Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 7, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 104; Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 254.

[45] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, July 17, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 116-17; John Young to Roger Drake, *ibid.*, I, 62.

[46] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, July 17, 1756, *loc. cit.* The news of the attack on Thana fort and Drake's letter through Sri Babu reached Sirajuddaullah the same day, and he was too incensed to take Drake's letter seriously. The attack on Sukhsagar and Thana is discussed *infra*, p. 60.

[47] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, July 16, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 104. Drake neither confirms nor denies this answer, but questions the rationality of Watts's and Collet's suggestion, and defends his refusal to send Omichund to negotiate on the Company's behalf, as seemed to him implied in the suggestion. He was ready to fight. Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 142 ff.

[48] *Ibid.*

> . . . no solicitations by his [the nawab's] ministers, letters from us, or any gift we could offer would pacify his extreme anger against us . . . [49]

He felt that a vigorous English defense would deter the nawab, or at least check him until the troops from the South arrived. Drake's attitude seems hardly justified but he persuaded himself rather easily of what he wished to believe.

On June 4th a request for immediate military assistance was sent to Fort St. George. [50] Three days later, the day the news of the capitulation of Kassimbazar reached Calcutta, a letter was sent to the Dutch agent at Hughli, informing him of "the danger that lies in the allowing of such an insult [as the capture of Kassimbazar] to one of the European nations"; and he was reminded in the name of the English government of the treaty of alliance that existed between England and Holland, and was requested "to make us acquainted . . . how many soldiers, or other aid we may expect." [51] The Dutch agent replied that he had orders "to remain neutral in all cases that do not concern us," but offered his good offices for mediation. [52] A letter sent to the French chief of Bengal factories, Pierre Renault, brought the reply that if the English considered Fort William indefensible, they should abandon it in favor of the French fort at Chandernagore, from where a joint defense against the nawab could be directed. [53]

The nawab also wanted to enlist the support of the Dutch and the French on his behalf. On June 3rd, he sent an emissary to Vernet, the Dutch agent at Kassimbazar, asking the assistance of his ships, and promising him a factory in Calcutta as a recompense. Vernet politely replied that there were no Dutch ships in the Bengal rivers at that time and, therefore, he was unable to be of any assistance. [54] The French were similarly approached and, in addition to the English settlement of Calcutta, were promised the same favors that the French had secured from Salabat Jung, the nizam of the Deccan. The French

[49] *Ibid.*, I, 126.

[50] *Fort St. George Public Consultations, 1756.* LXXXVI, 1-3.

[51] Fort William Council to Dutch Director, Hughli, June 7, 1756, *Hill Collection,* I, 12.

[52] Dutch Director, Hughli, to Fort William Council, June 8, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 14. A further letter on the subject was sent by the Fort William council on June 13th to which the Dutch director replied on June 16th. *Ibid.*, I, 16, 18.

[53] Holwell to Fort St. George Council, July 17, 1756. *ibid.*, I, 116; Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 295.

[54] Dutch Council, Kassimbazar, to Dutch Council, Hughli, June 3, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 7

declined on the ground that they could not embroil their company in a war without the permission of their superiors at Pondicherry. The nawab, the French agent wrote:

> . . . appreciated the force of our excuses. He has replied . . . in very gracious terms, asking only since we cannot assist him, we will be careful not to assist the English. [55]

Sirajuddaullah's attempts to enlist the support of the Dutch and the French led some Europeans to believe that the nawab was afraid to fight and doubtful of his success. [56] On the other hand, the nawab's correspondence with Khwaja Wajid makes it clear that he only wanted these Europeans to supply him with marine forces to blockade the English shipping. [57] His efforts to secure French and Dutch support clearly imply that he was determined to fight the English, if the diplomatic efforts failed.

On June 10th Drake, believing that the best defense was offense, ordered the commencement of hostilities. On that day a detachment was sent to Sukhsagar, halfway to Hughli from Calcutta, to cause panic in the settlement; another detachment with three ships was sent to Thana fort, located at the narrowest part of River Hughli. The English were expelled from Sukhsagar the next day by an advance guard of the nawab's forces, and they had to withdraw from Thana on June 15th in the face of a superior force of 20,000 men armed with fifteen field pieces. [58]

The nawab arrived before Fort William on June 16th, with a force upward of 30,000 men in arms, supported by heavy artillery. The nawab's artillery was commanded by a detachment of twenty-five Europeans and Indian Portuguese under the command of St. Jacques, the French renegade. [59] The effort of the English to persuade the Europeans and the Indian Portuguese through the clergy to desert the nawab, on the grounds that Christians should not fight Christians on behalf of a Muslim, failed to bring any response. [60]

The English resources were estimated by Drake as follows: [61]

[55] French Council, Chandernagore, to De la Bretesche, June 20, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 22; Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 167.

[56] Le Conte to Courtin, June 19, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 20.

[57] Sirajuddaullah to Khwaja Wajid, June 3, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 5.

[58] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 135-36; Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 256.

[59] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 135.

[60] *Ibid.*, I, 140.

[61] *Ibid.*, I, 137.

Military (of these not above 45 [were] Europeans)	180
Volunteers (Europeans)	50
Militia (Europeans)	60
Militia (Armenians and [Indian] Portuguese)	150
Artillery (Europeans)	35
Volunteers (consisting of sea-officers and [Indian] Portuguese helmsmen)	40
Total	515

We do not know how many of the sea-officers and helmsmen were Europeans. Assuming that they all were Europeans, the total number of Europeans comes to no more than 230; 45 military, 50 volunteers, 60 militia, 35 artillery men, and 40 sea-officers and helmsmen. According to Tooke, the Europeans did not number over 235; [62] according to Lindsay, not more than 225. [63] Robert Orme says that the number of persons who bore arms during the siege of Calcutta was 495, and of them 255 were Europeans. [64] His breakdown of the different categories is as follows:

Artillery, infantry and officers	79
Company's servants (volunteers)	49
European free merchants and other residents of Calcutta (militia)	77
Naval officers and crew	50
Armenians, Indian-Portuguese and other natives	240
Total	495

On comparing these figures with Drake's, we come to the following conclusion: (1) Drake gives the figure of Europeans in the artillery and infantry as 80, Orme puts it at 79; (2) the volunteers according to Drake were 50, according to Orme, 49; (3) the number of men in the European militia was put by Drake at 60, by Orme at 77, a difference of 17; (4) the naval militia, according to Drake, did not have more than 40 Europeans; according to Orme, there were 50 of them; and finally (5) the Armenians, Indian Portuguese and other natives numbered, according to Drake, 285, assuming the 135 non-European military fell into this category, according to Orme, 240. The figures of Drake and Orme, regarding the Europeans, indeed, are quite close.

[62] Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 255.

[63] Lindsay to Orme, July (?), 1756, *ibid.*, I, 171.

[64] Summary of a List of Inhabitants, &c., who Bore Arms at Late Siege of Calcutta, dated 1 July, 1756, *ibid.*, III, 415-16. The list gives the names of all Europeans except 25 artillerymen and 35 infantrymen.

For the purpose of our discussion, it may be appropriate to take Drake's figure of 230, as the minimum number of Europeans who bore arms during the siege, and Orme's figure of 255, as their maximum number.

In addition to these men, there were appoximately 1,000 Indian *lascars,* and 50 pieces of artillery. [65]

D. The Fall of Calcutta

The defense of Calcutta was entrusted to a council-of-war composed of the members of the regular administrative council of Fort William, the military captains, and the settlement's engineer. [66] It decided that

> . . . three batteries should be erected in all the roads leading to the fort at such distances as could be anywise [anyway] defensible with the small number of troops we had . . . [67]

This was a serious strategic error, for the area so covered was large, while the resources of the Company were limited. Captain Grant's suggestion that the fort alone should be defended, and the houses overlooking the fort should be blown up to ensure unrestricted fire on the nawab's troops, was rejected. [68] There were two reasons for this. In the first place, the members of the war council were so optimistic about the nawab's retreat in the face of the determination of the Company to repel force by force, as to give very little credit, "even to the last day, that the nawab would venture to attack us, or offer to force our lines." [69] In the second place, Grant's proposed strategy would have caused the private property of the influential English members of the council to be destroyed; thus, personal interests proved a great impediment to proper military action.

Three batteries were, accordingly, erected. One was situated at the eastern entrance to the settlement, near the Court House, and consisted of ninety-eight persons, armed with two 18-pounders and two field pieces, under the command of Captain Smith. The third was placed

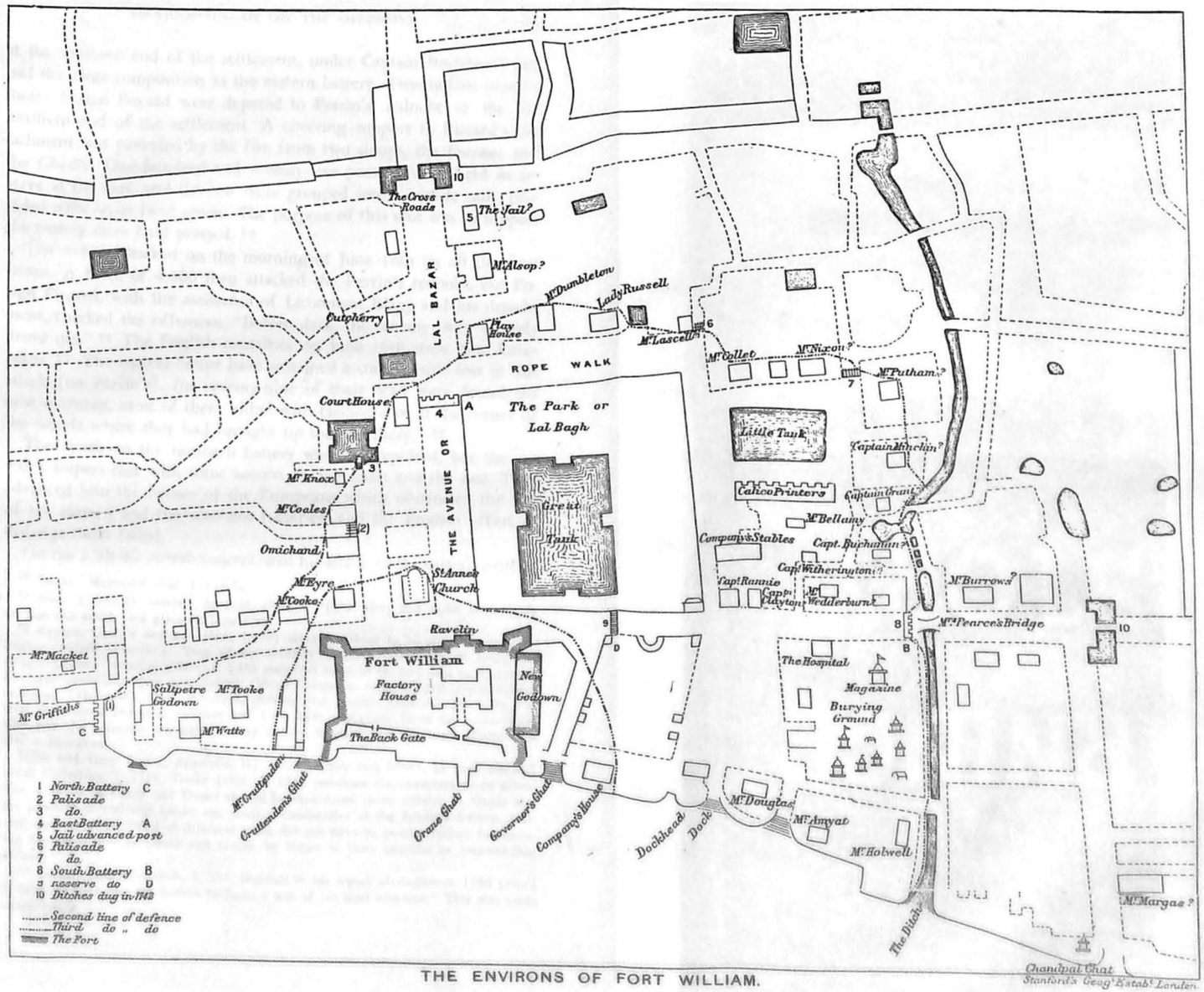
[65] Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756. *ibid.*, II, 29; Orme, *Military Transactions*, II, 59-63.

[66] Roger Drake, Charles Manningham, Paul Richard Pearkes, William Frankland, John Z. Holwell, William Mackett, Edward Eyre, and William Baillie, councillors; George Minchin, David Clayton, John Buchanan, Alexander Grant, Lawrence Witherington, and Peter Smith, captains; Charles O'Hara, engineer.

[67] Alexander Grant, "An Account of the Capture of Calcutta," *Hill Collection*, I, 75. (Cited hereafter as Grant's Account.)

[68] *Ibid.*, I, 76.

[69] *Ibid.*



THE ENVIRONS OF FORT WILLIAM.

at the southern end of the settlement, under Captain Buchanan, and had the same composition as the eastern battery. Twenty-five persons under Ensign Piccard were deputed to Perrin's redoubt at the far northern end of the settlement. A covering support to Piccard's detachment was provided by the fire from two sloops, the *Fortune* and the *Chance*. One hundred and seventy-five persons were held in reserve at the fort, and the rest were grouped into a mobile unit, provided with seven field pieces. The purpose of this unit was to support the battery most hard pressed. [70]

The nawab attacked on the morning of June 16th on all the four fronts. A force of 4,000 men attacked the Perrin's redoubt, but Ensign Piccard, with the assistance of Lieutenant Blagg and his detachment, checked the offensive. "Before dark the enemy was entirely drove off." [71] The English casualties on June 16th were nine Europeans. [72] The natives "must have sustained a considerable loss in this attack [on Perrin's], for seventy-nine of their dead were found the next morning, most of them killed with cannon shot at the corner of the woods where they had brought up their artillery." [73]

The attack on the northern battery was also repulsed, but the nawab's snipers met with some success on the south and the east. They advanced into the houses of the Europeans which obstructed the fire of the eastern and the southern batteries, and the English effort to dislodge them failed.

On the 17th the nawab concentrated his attack on the eastern battery,

[70] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 137-38.

[71] *Ibid.*, I, 144-45; Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 78-79. Grey and Mills erroneously say that this attack took place on June 17th.

[72] Captain Grant's account (*ibid.*, I, 79) mentions them to be one European volunteer (Ralph Thoresby), "four of the military" and "4 Europeans on board the sloop." Drake's narrative (*ibid.*, I, 145) mentions them to be five men on the sloop (without identifying their nationality), "three Europeans soldiers" and one European volunteer (Thoresby). It is, therefore, obvious that besides Thoresby, there were at least three more European soldiers and four more Europeans from the naval force. The way the accounts are written, they convey strongly that the ninth person was also a European.

Mills and Grey (*infra*, Appendix II) mention only two killed, as does Holwell (*Hill Collection*, I, 111). Tooke (*ibid.*, I, 275) mentions the casualties to be seven. The accounts of Grant and Drake should be considered more reliable as Grant was the adjutant-general and Drake the civilian commander of the English defense. Holwell and others stationed at different posts did not have as good facilities for learning the casualities as Drake and Grant, by virtue of their position as commanding officers.

[73] Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 257. Holwell in his report of August 3, 1756 (*ibid.*, I, 187) declares that the natives suffered a loss of "at least 800 men." This may seem exaggerated.

which was commanded by Captain Clayton and Mr. Holwell. More of the native snipers advanced into the houses on the southeast corner of the settlement. Belatedly the council-of-war accepted Captain Grant's strategy and ordered these houses set on fire, to remove the obstruction to the cannon-fire from the southern and eastern batteries. Another detachment under Captain Le Beaume, another French renegade, was sent to the Jail House, a position about 200 yards further west than the eastern battery. His detachment consisted of six members of the military (both Europeans and non-European), six members of the European militia and forty native *buxerries*. [74]

The nawab's strategy on the 17th was to occupy the outhouses on the southeast, and to move in more troops through the northeast. Since the northern battery, supported also by fire from Perrin's redoubt, had repulsed the nawab's offensive from the north, his forces burned the English houses on the north. On the night of the 17th almost all the *lascars* and *buxerries* employed by the English — over 1,000 in number — deserted to the enemy. [75]

On the 18th the nawab's forces were again repulsed on the north by Ensign Walcott's detachment. The nawab's offensive was, however, concentrated against the eastern battery and the advance post of the Jail House occupied by Le Beaume's detachment. Ensign Carstairs, with twenty men and two field pieces, was sent to reinforce Le Beaume, increasing the defensive forces to thirty-two men besides Carstairs and Le Beaume. [76] These persons held the post until three in the afternoon, when they withdrew with "numbers of their men killed." [77]

[74] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 79; Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 146.

[75] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 80; Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 146.

[76] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 79, which is corroborated by Holwell (*ibid.*, I, 111). Drake (*ibid.*, I, 148), however, says that Carstairs's detachment had only ten volunteers. These were all Europeans. Perhaps the other ten members of Carstairs's detachment were natives. This means that in the defense, of the Jail House at least eighteen Europeans were involved—Le Beaume, Carstairs, ten volunteers and six members of the European members of the military in Le Beaume's detachment. There were forty-five Europeans in a total of 180 men in the military, that is one of in every four was a European. It will, however, be assumed that none of the six military members of Le Beaume's detachment was a European.

[77] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 80. Drake in his narrative (*ibid.*, I, 148) says that "three fourths of the people," were killed. Tooke's account (*ibid.*, I, 259) mentions that Le Beaume and Carstairs lost most of their men. Likewise Lindsay in his letter to Orme declares that in this engagement on the Jail House "most of our men" were killed. There were at least eighteen Europeans in the detachments of Le Beaume and Carstairs. Assuming that two-thirds lost their lives, the number of the Europeans who were killed in this engagement may be taken as twelve.

The nawab's forces immediately took possession of the Jail House, and by dusk had routed the eastern battery, commanded by Captain Clayton.

In a lesser degree than the eastern battery, the southern battery was pressed by the nawab's forces. The commander, Captain Buchanan, began a slow retreat, during which process, Charles Smith and Robert Wilkinson, "two of the party, having imprudently advanced a little too far, were cut to pieces." [78] The northern battery, commanded by Captain Peter Smith, "was also ordered to be abandoned as maintaining that alone could answer no end." [79] Similarly Ensign Piccard's detachment at the Perrin's was ordered to retreat. By dusk all three batteries, and Perrin's post, had been abandoned, and the Company's forces retreated to the inner line of defense — namely, the fort.

And yet Drake, who was as incurably sanguine as he was naïve and confused, "imagined from the number of men slain of the enemy, a terror might seize them, and that they would decamp." [80]

In the evening the council-of-war was called to a meeting, to discuss "the measures and ways still available to repulse the enemy." It was decided

> . . . that the church, situated about thirty yards distance from our front gate [of Fort William], should be possessed by Captain Clayton with a party of 25 . . . that Lieutenant Bishop should, with the same number post himself in Mr. Eyre's house close to the church on the northward . . . Captain-Lieutenant Smith and a party of 30 . . . was ordered to Mr. Cruttenden's house, directly opposite Mr. Eyre's and situated within twenty yards to the northward of the fort . . . Lieutenant Blagg was posted in the Company's house, situated to the southward of the fort with 25 military and militia . . . the rest of the troops were divided on the several bastions . . . [81]

At the same time, Manningham and Frankland were permitted to escort women and children to the ships, and a detachment of thirty men was ordered to provide them safe conduct. So great, however, was the confusion that only four officers without soldiers could be obtained to escort them. [82] Though Manningham and Frankland were supposed to return to the fort, they sent a note that their presence, together with

[78] Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 260. Tooke was a member of this detachment and saw Smith and Wilkinson die.

[79] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 83.

[80] Drake to Fort William Council, January 17-25, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 154.

[81] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 150-51; Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 83-84.

[82] They were Lieutenant Sumner, Lieutenant Holmes, Lieutenant Wedderburn, and Le Beaume. Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 152, 154.

the four officers was necessary to insure the safety of the women and children on the ships. [83]

We have observed that at dusk four detachments had been ordered to defend the Company's house (under Blagg), the church, Mr. Eyre's house, and Mr. Cruttenden's house. About nine in the evening, "Lieutenant Blagg requested that he and his party might have orders to retreat into the fort as . . . the enemy kept such a very hot fire that it was not possible to maintain it any longer." [84] His withdrawal was consequently ordered. "The other outposts had been but little disturbed in the night, the enemy having satisfied themselves with setting some houses on fire." [85]

A little after midnight a second meeting of the council-of-war was held.

> The captain of the artillery was first asked what quantity of ammunition we had then in store . . . his answer was, that at the same rate, it would not be sufficient for above three days, and even a part of that, he was afraid was damp. This of itself, but added to the other circumstances [the exhaustion of the soldiers, and incapacitation of others who had made themselves drunk] still more, made it the unanimous opinion that a retreat on board the ships must be determined on in that time . . .
>
> The majority were of opinion that as such a retreat was already fixed on, the delay of it even until next morning could be attended with no sort of advantage. . . . This opinion Mr. Holwell in particular maintained very strenuously . . . [86]

It is not clear whether a decision was reached. Grant maintains, and he is corroborated by Tooke, who was present at the meeting, that the meeting adjourned "without fixing on any settled scheme . . . in hopes of making our retreat the next night." [87] Cooke, the secretary of the council, however, maintains that it was "resolved to defer the retreat till the next night." [88] His opinion is corroborated by Drake. [89] Since, of the two proposals, the first, of immediate retreat, was not carried into execution, it may be argued that the other, of retreat the next day, was adopted.

At break of the day, on the 19th, the nawab's forces renewed their

[83] *Loc. cit.*
[84] Drake's Narrative, *Hill Collection*, I, 151-52.
[85] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 82.
[86] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 153-54; Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 84-85.
[87] *Ibid.*; Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 261.
[88] Cooke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.* III, 297.
[89] *Ibid.*

attack. The nawab having neglected in the night to take possession of the Company's house, which Blagg had abandoned, "and Ensign Piccard having offered to maintain it with 20 military, his proposal was readily agreed to. [90] But it was found impossible to hold it. About nine in the morning Piccard's detachment was withdrawn, and a few minutes later Lieutenant Bishop's detachment at Mr. Eyre's house followed suit. By noon the garrisons at Mr. Cruttenden's house and the church were also withdrawn.

Confusion and terror began to prevail in the English ranks, "and as the resolution of retreating was known by the whole garrison by report, without the method which had been planned for putting into execution, many of the inhabitants imagined everybody was to shift for himself and endeavour to get on board such vessel as he conveniently could." [91] Just before noon on the 19th Drake, Minchin, Mackett and Grant left. This desertion proved contagious. Cooke adds:

> This ill judged circumstance occasioned all the uproar and misfortune that followed; for the moment it was observed, many of the gentlemen on shore (who perhaps never dreamt of leaving the factory till every body did) immediately jumped into such boats as were at the factory and rowed to the ships. [92]

The boats were filled to more than their capacity, and several of them upset. Within an hour of Drake's desertion all ships, except the *Prince George,* had weighed anchor and moved down the stream. [93] At least fifty-nine Europeans had deserted by noon. [94] Even Holwell,

[90] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 82.

[91] Cooke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.* III, 299.

[92] *Ibid.*

[93] Tooke's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 263; Holwell to Fort St. George Council, July 17, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 113.

[94] Fifty-two names are provided by Holwell. They were: Drake, Manningham, Frankland, Mackett, Minchin, Grant, Mapletoft, O'Hara, Wedderburn, Douglas, Holmes, Sumner, Baldrick, Ellis, Billers, Rider, Senior, Orr, Vassmer, Leycester, Tooke, Charlton, Champion, Lord, Campbell, Cruttenden, Beaumont, Rannie, Nixon, Putham, Nicholson, Austin, Lindsay, Whatmoug, Young, Margas, Peyfinch, Walmsley, Burton, Albert, Carvalho, Wood, Laing, Summers, Baillie, Ridge, Elvis, Whaley, Ling, Strousenberg, Helmstead, Fullerton. Holwell adds that three of the above, Captains Nicholson, Austin and Whatmoug, left with their crews. (Holwell to Fort St. George Council, August 3, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 189-91). Holwell fails to mention Le Beaume, who left with Manningham and Frankland, whose names have already been mentioned. To these should be added the five names of Barnard, Child, Carr, Jacobs and Smith provided by Mills. (*Ibid.*, I, 43.) One more name, that of Graham, is provided by Tooke. (*Ibid.*, I, 265.) Holwell also mentions Stephen Page, but Page died during the siege.

who later became the hero of Calcutta's defense, found it much against his inclination to stay behind, and nothing but the want of a boat prevented his escape. [95]

The desertion of Drake and others left only eight members of the council-of-war at Fort William. They were the four councilors, Richard Pearkes, John Holwell, Edward Eyre, and William Baillie, and four captains, Lawrence Witherington, David Clayton, John Buchanan, and Peter Smith. Pearkes waved his right of seniority, and with the concurrence of Eyre and Baillie, Holwell was appointed the governor of Fort William in place of Drake.

Pearkes and "three or four [European] volunteers" were sent to Captain Hague of the *Prince George* with orders to immediately weigh anchor and hold the ship in readiness for the general retreat. [96] Due to an error of Francis Morris, the pilot, however, the ship ran aground, was abandoned, and Pearkes, the volunteers, Hague and Morris, escaped to Chinsurah. [97] Thus, at least six persons escaped when the *Prince George* ran aground.

As soon as the news of the mishap to the *Prince George* reached Fort William, one corporal and fifty-six other soldiers, mostly Dutch, deserted to the nawab. [98] The rest refused obedience and freely helped themselves to liquor.

As usual the nawab's attack was suspended at dusk,

> . . . but the night was not less dreadful on that account; the Company's house, Mr. Cruttenden's, Mr. Nixon's, Doctor Knox's, and the marine yards were now in flames, and exhibited a spectacle of unspeakable horror. We were surrounded on all sides by the nawab's forces which made a retreat by land impracticable; and we have not even the shadow of a prospect to effect a retreat by water, after the *Prince George* ran aground . . . [99]

The next morning, June 20th, the enemy renewed its cannonade

[95] Robert Clive to William Mabbot, January 31, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 186; Robert Lindsay to Robert Orme July (?), 1757, *ibid.*, I, 168; Ives, *A Voyage from England*, p. 93.

[96] Holwell to Fort St. George Council, July 17, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 113. All volunteers were Europeans.

[97] Cooke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.*, III, 299. One of the volunteers was Lewis. We do not know what happened to the other members of the crew of the *Prince George*. It is hardly likely that they returned to the fort to fight. Most probably they also escaped.

[98] Grey's Account *ibid.*, I, 108. Holwell (*ibid.*, I, 114) mentions these desertions but does not give figures. Grey was, however, a witness to the desertions.

[99] Cooke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.*, III, 301.

and pushed the siege on all the three fronts simultaneously. On reviewing the resources left with him, Holwell found:

> . . . the number left [after the desertion of Drake and others], in the factory did not exceed 170; that of these we had 25 killed and 70 wounded by noon, the 20th, and that every man who survived was exhausted of strength and vigour . . . [100]

The fighting on the 20th had been very heavy, and it is obvious that Holwell lost twenty-five men on that day. This is a conservative estimate. Grant, on the basis of news at Fulta, declares that on that day "upwards of 50 Europeans were killed on the bastions." [101] Lindsay, though he was not present in the fort on the 20th, declares that "above forty men were killed on one bastion" alone. [102] Drake declares that "a great many of our people," were killed. [103] It may, therefore, be said that on the 20th, by noon, at least twenty-five Europeans had lost their lives.

In such a desperate situation, Holwell pleaded with Omichund, who was nursing his wrath against the English in the fort prison, to write a letter to Raja Manik Chand, asking him to plead with the nawab to cease the hostilities as the English were ready to surrender. [104]

Sporadic fighting continued in the afternoon. However, a Dutch sergeant named Hedelburgh [105] betrayed the back gate of the fort

> . . . in concert — I judge — with some that had deserted the preceding night from the walls . . . [106]

with the result that

> . . . a great part of the garrison, military and militia rushed out the moment the gate was opened and endavoured to escape; many were killed, some escaped, and others received quarter . . . [107]

In this situation Holwell having been left with nothing "but a surrender at discretion" hoisted a flag of truce. [108] The arrival of the nawab's forces in the fort, however, led to a skirmish during the process of surrender in which William Baillie, Blagg, Bishop, Piccard

[100] Holwell to the Court of Directors, August 10, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 358. A similar but less clear statement is made by him in his letter to Fort St. George council, dated July 17, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 114.

[101] Grant's Account, *ibid.*, I, 88.

[102] Lindsay to Orme, July (?), 1756, I, 168.

[103] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 159.

[104] Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 49-50.

[105] Holwell to Fort St. George Council, August 3, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 185.

[106] Holwell to Fort St. George Council, July 17, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 114.

[107] Holwell to Fort St. George Council, August 3, 1756, *loc. cit.*

[108] Holwell to Fort St. George Council, July 17, 1756, *loc. cit.*

and some others lost their lives. [109] In addition Thomas Bellamy committed suicide. [110] At four, the English led by Holwell and Buchanan surrendered. Thus ended a four day siege of Calcutta.

Holwell was taken to the nawab and had three interviews with him. The nawab "expressed much resentment at our presumption in defending the fort against his army with so few men." [111] He appeared much incensed against Drake. After the nawab's court was dismissed, the Indian Portuguese, the Armenians and the other natives were allowed to leave. At least fifteen Europeans also left the fort with them. [112] Among them were George Grey Junior and Captain Mills. All those left in the fort were under the general surveillance of the nawab's guard. Though the watches, buckles and buttons of these Europeans were rifled, Cooke informs us that "no further violence [was] used to our persons." [113] Calm finally descended, and in the dusk "the Mussulmans sang a thanksgiving to Allah for the success they had met with." [114]

E. The Black Hole *

Having been left unmolested, Cooke declares:

> . . . our apprehensions of ill-usage and barbarity began to vanish; and we entertained hopes not only of getting our liberty but of being suffered to re-establish our affairs and carry on our business upon the terms the *subah* [nawab] had pointed out in the *mutchulka* [capitulation] Messrs. Watts and Collet were made to sign . . . [115]

When everything seemed to be going well, some Europeans "having made [themselves] too free with liquor," became riotous and treated the guards abusively. [116] Thereupon, the nawab or one of his officers

[109] Holwell erroneously says that they died in the Black Hole. See, *infra*, p. 74 and Appendix IV.

[110] Mills's Account, *Hill Collection*, I, 43.

[111] Holwell to the Court of Directors, November 30, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 51.

[112] Cooke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.*, III, 301. Among them were, Knox Senior and Junior, Grey Senior and Junior, Taylor, English, Collins, Andrews, Alsop, Savage, James Johnstone, Tedcomb, Henderson, Kerwood, (Mills's Diary, *ibid.*, I, 44; Grey's Account, *ibid.*, I, 108). Mills was also among them, though he does not mention that, the reasons for which are discussed *infra*, p. 74. This makes the number of escapes fifteen. Mills also mentions Pearkes and Lewis. They had, however, escaped the previous day. (*Supra*, p. 68.)

[113] Cooke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.*, III, 301.

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] *Ibid.*

[116] Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, I, 15; British Museum Additional MS 29209, fols. 33 ff.

* Based on my article, "The Black Hole Incident," *Journal of Asian Studies*, XIX (1959), 53-63. By permission of the editor.

issued orders to confine all the Europeans left in the fort. On inquiry by an officer of the nawab, some European pointed out the Black-Hole, a cell eighteen feet long by fourteen feet, ten inches wide, as the room where disorderly Europeans were confined by the Company's administration. This officer perhaps without examining the size of the room too closely, ordered all the Europeans, among them Holwell and Cooke, to be confined in that cell. Holwell, the principal narrator of the incident, asserts that out of 146 persons so confined, only twenty-three survided. [117]

The number of persons who perished in the Black Hole has been a matter of long controversy, especially intensified since the Indian viceroyalty of Lord Curzon of Kedleston. Two scholars, C. R. Wilson and S.C. Hill, and their patron, Lord Curzon, have maintained that Holwell's narrative is substantially true. [118] On the other hand, J. H. Little has argued that the Black Hole tragedy is a "gigantic hoax," exaggerated beyond all proportions, since only a few men, in his opinion, were confined in the Black Hole, and of them only those died that had received severe wounds during the actual fighting. [119] Recently, however, while English scholars have generally followed the Curzon-Hill-Wilson school, Indian scholars have come to accept Jadunath Sarkar's point of view that those confined in the Black Hole were probably not more than sixty. [120]

Little has argued that Holwell's narratives must be dismissed because (1) they contain numerous inconsistencies; (2) they were written by a man whose veracity, due to several other incidents in which he patently lied, is questionable; (3) they are only corroborated by

[117] Holwell's Genuine Narrative of the Black Hole, *Hill Collection*, III, 131 ff. In his first story to Sykes, Holwell reported that 160 persons were confined, and of them 140 died. (Sykes to Fort St. George, July 8, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 62.) In his second story, he asserted that 165 or 170 persons were confined and 16 survived. (Holwell to Fort St. George Council, July 17, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 115.) It was in his letter of August 3, 1756 to the Fort St. George council that he arrived at the figures of 146 confined, 123 died. (*Ibid.*, I, 186.) The final figures are identical with the figures provided by George Grey Junior and may have been copied from him. (*Infra*, pp. 75, 79).

[118] Wilson, *Old Fort William; Hill Collection*; The Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, *British Government in India* (2 vols., London: Cassell & Co., 1925). Vol. I, chap. vii.

[119] J. H. Little, "The Black Hole: Question of Holwell's Veracity," *Bengal, Past and Present*, XI, 75-105; Little, "The Black Hole Debate," *ibid.*, XII, 136-49; Akshay Kumar Mitra, "The Black Hole Debate," *ibid.*, XII, 156-71.

[120] Among the English scholars is Henry Dodwell. See his *Dupleix and Clive*, and *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. IV, chap. vii. Sarkar's view, rather a guess, is in *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, chap. xxv.

those persons who borrowed the story from Holwell or fabricated it in league with him; (4) they are not corroborated by contemporary Indian accounts, which are conspicuous by their silence on the Black Hole incident. [121] He further argues that some of the important documents composed at Fulta, where the English stayed until their return to Calcutta, make no mention of the incident. Similarly one is struck by the absence of a demand on the part of Clive and Watson that Nawab Sirajuddaullah provide compensations for the Black Hole victims.

Henry Dodwell, after accusing Little of being "unaccustomed to the conflicts of evidence which the historian has perpetually to encounter," [122] points out that Little's contentions are rather negative and they

> . . . cheerfully ignore the first principles of evidence. That Holwell touched up his narrative with an eye to picturesque effect is possible enough, but that a large number of people were suffocated in the Black Hole is established by the evidence of too many survivors . . . Of Holwell's general veracity the present writer has as poor an opinion as anyone, but even he at times approximated truth . . . [123]

On a closer examination the "too many survivors" of the Black Hole, who have left evidence of the incident, turn out to be two — Holwell and Cooke —, and at the most three, if Captain Mills is also included. [124]

Accounts of the Black Hole incident are to be found in the following: (1) a letter written by an unknown Frenchman at Chandernagore, dated July 3, 1756, to another unknown person; (2) a letter written by Francis Sykes (on the basis of a letter from Holwell) from Kassimbazar, dated July 8, 1756, to the Fulta council; (3) an account written by Captain Grant at Fulta, July 13, 1756; (4) an account written by George Grey Jr., and forwarded by Watts and Collet, with their letters from Chandernagore, dated July 16, 1756, to the court of directors; (5) a letter written by Holwell from Murshidabad, dated

[121] This is not, however, exactly true. Although the Indian chroniclers make no mention of the incident, two Armenian merchants do. Emin Joseph Emin in his biography *Life and Adventures of Emin Joseph Emin* (London: Privately Printed, 1792). p. 119, mentions that 400 (? 40) Englishmen were suffocated in the Black Hole Thomas Khojamal in his history of *Industan* (Allahabad: n.p., 1764), p. 292 mentions that fifteen Europeans lost their lives in the Black Hole.

[122] *Cambridge History of India*, V, 156.

[123] *Dupleix and Clive*, p. 122.

[124] However, it seems certain that Mills was not in the Black Hole. See, *infra*, p. 74.

July 17, 1756, to the Fort St. George council; (6) a letter written by John Young, a Prussian agent, from Hotel de Prusses, dated about July 18, 1756, to Roger Drake; (7) an account written by Roger Drake at Fulta, July 19, 1756; (8) a letter written by William Lindsay to Robert Orme from Fulta, dated July (?) 1756; (9) another letter written by Holwell from Hughli, dated August 3, 1756, to the Fort St. George council; (10) an account written by William Tooke at Fulta, dated November 10, 1756; (11) an account to be found in Captain Mills's pocket book; (12) two accounts composed at Fulta which appeared in the London *Chronicle* of June 7-11, 1757, and the *Universal Magazine* of June, 1757, and from whence other European papers copied them; (13) Holwell's 'Genuine Narrative of the Black Hole' written on February 28, 1757; and (14) a reference made by John Cooke in his evidence before a select committee of the House of Commons in 1772. [125] There are other French and Dutch accounts, and other references in Holwell's correspondence but they all are based on the accounts mentioned above.

All of the above mentioned accounts can be traced to Holwell, Grey and Mills. The French account of July 3d was written after the arrival of Mills and Grey in Chandernagore, and also after Holwell had passed through that town on his way from Calcutta to Murshidabad. [126] Francis Sykes confesses in his letter that his account of July 8th was based on a letter received from Holwell. [127] John Young's account was written after Holwell's release, which it mentions. Young probably talked with Holwell himself. He implies so. At least he patently confesses that the source of his information is Holwell. [128] Grant's account is based on Sykes's account. For example, Sykes writes: "All the night our poor gentlemen were in Black Hole, the nawab's people kept firing at them through the door." [129] And Grant echoes this by writing: "Some of those who give us the account say that they

[125] *Hill Collection*, I, 48-53, 61-62, 73-89, 106-09, 109-16, 62-66, 118-62, 163-73, 185-92, 248-301, 40-45; III, 131-54, 290-303. Hill misdates John Young's letter as July 10th. Since it mentions Holwell's release from Murshidabad, it must have been written after July 17th.

[126] Mills and Grey reached Chandernagore on July 2d. (Mills's Account, *ibid.*, I, 194). Holwell left Calcutta on June 24th and arrived at Santipur, a place further north of Chandernagore, on June 30th. During this journey he had freedom of movement and he utilized this freedom to talk to Europeans enroute. (Holwell to William Davis, February 28, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 147-49.)

[127] *Ibid.*, I, 61.

[128] *Ibid.*, I, 65-66.

[129] *Ibid.*, I, 62.

[the native soldiers] fired upon them [the Black Hole prisoners] all night with small arms through the doors and windows." [130] Similarly the accounts of William Lindsay, Roger Drake and William Tooke are based on the Sykes-Holwell version. One should not also ignore the fact that though Cooke and Lushington, two of the survivors of the Black Hole, had joined Drake and his fellow deserters on June 21st, no account of the Black Hole was mentioned until after the arrival of Francis Sykes's letter of July 8th. They probably did not mention the Black Hole tragedy because it was not so catastrophic as Holwell later made it out to be.

The accounts of George Grey and Captain Mills are largely indentical. Mill's pocket book, which carries the account, is in most parts a reproduction of Grey's account. [131] Grey and Mills were together from June 25th to July 2d, [132] and yet it is strange that Grey in his account of July 16th does not mention Mills as a captive or a survivor of the Black Hole. [133] The accounts in the London *Chronicle* and the *Universal Magazine* describe Mills as having escaped being put in the Black Hole, along with John Knox and George Grey. [134] Mills himself confesses having spent a week with Knox and Grey in Calcutta after the Black Hole incident. [135] The accounts of the London *Chronicle* and *Universal Magazine* have been considered by S.C. Hill to be more reliable than Holwell's and Mills's, especially so far as they relate to William Baillie, Lieutenant Blagg, Lieutenant Bishop, and Piccard, who were reported by Holwell and Mills to have died in the Black Hole. [136] We may, therefore, in view of Grey's account, and the general veracity of these newspaper accounts assume that Mills was not in the Black Hole. If he flattered himself by including his name amongst the survivors of the Black Hole, it was because Hol-

[130] *Ibid.*, I, 88. Holwell later abandoned this story of *firing* and changed it to "insulting us the whole night." *Ibid.*, I, 186.

[131] *Infra*, Appendix II. Mills's account must have been written after Grey's and not *vice versa*, because: Mills provides more details than Grey, which he probably secured as the information became available to him from time to time. He has left several blank spaces. Grey would not have failed to mention Mills as a survivor of the Black Hole, which Mills's account does, had Grey copied from Mills.

[132] Mills's Account, *ibid.*, I, 194.

[133] Grey's Account, *ibid.*, I, 109.

[134] *Ibid.*, II, 72, 105.

[135] Mills's Account, *ibid.*, I, 194.

[136] S.C. Hill, *List of Europeans and Others in the English Factories in Bengal at the Time of Siege of Calcutta in 1756* (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1902), entries under the aforementioned names. Curzon, *op. cit.*, I, 167-68. Holwell, Genuine Narrative, *Hill Collection*, III, 153. See, *infra*, Appendix IV.

well had given it publicity, and many others were, indeed, trying to claim the honor of having been confined in the Black Hole. [137]

Finally, we have John Cooke's account. This was in the form of his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1773, fully sixteen years after the incident. In this testimony Cooke gives Holwell the credit for having publicized the Black Hole incident, "with all the horrors of the night," which surpassed any description that Cooke could paint. [138]

We are now left with the two accounts of Holwell and Grey. From June 22d to June 24th, Holwell was in Calcutta, technically under house arrest at the Dockhead, but with freedom of movement. [139] From June 21st to June 25th, one hundred yards south of the Dockhead, Mills, Grey and Knox, none of whom were confined in the Black Hole, were staying. [140] It is, therefore, quite probable that Holwell, Grey and Mills met and discussed the fall of Calcutta. One striking evidence that supports this conclusion is that Holwell's final figure of 146 persons confined in the Black Hole, of whom 123 died, are the same as those put forward by Grey. Nowhere has anyone said that Grey was in the Black Hole. How then did Grey get these figures, which Holwell later accepted in preference to his earlier figures? An association between Holwell and Grey is indicated.

The question is not whether the Black Hole confinements took place or not. They did. The question is: how many people were confined and how many people survived, and were they all men? Holwell's account cannot be accepted because even the most ardent supporter of Holwell's story question his veracity. Suspicion also arises because Holwell's story is fantastic. The hero, who is the author himself, is no less than a Hercules, who undergoes extraordinary suffering, possesses remarkable powers of endurance, and instantaneous recuperation. Witness Holwell's account, wherein he writes:

> Among the first [at 8 : 00 p.m.] that entered [the Black Hole] were myself, Messrs. Baillie, Jenks, Cooke . . . exhausted by continual fatigue and action . . .
>
> From about nine to near eleven . . . my legs were almost broke with the weight against them. By the time I was very nearly pressed to

[137] For others who claimed the 'honor' of being in the Black Hole, see *Hill Collection*, I, xciv-xcvii.

[138] *Ibid.*, II, 302.

[139] Holwell's Genuine Narrative, *ibid.*, III, 146-47.

[140] They were living in a section of Govindpur (see map), north of the Surman Gardens. Mills's Account, *ibid.*, I, 194.

> death . . . deprived of all motion . . . [and yet] with much difficulty . . . I travelled over the dead, and repaired to the further end of it [the room] . . .
>
> The moment I quitted the window my breathing grew short and painful . . . my thirst grew unsupportable . . . I was seized with a pain in my breast and palpitation of my heart, both to the most exquisite degree. . . . I had, in an ungovernable fit of thirst, attempted drinking my urine, but it was so intensely bitter there was no enduring a second taste . . .
>
> From half an hour past eleven till nearly two in the morning, I sustained the weight of a heavy man, with his knees in my back, and the pressure of his whole body under my head, a Dutch serjeant . . . upon my left shoulder, and a *topaz* [Portuguese half-caste soldier] bearing on my right . . . [141]

At six in the morning, he was found "under the dead," but the fresh air instantly revived him. The whole night, which claimed the lives of 123 persons, if Holwell is to be relied on, had only temporary effects upon him. On the 21st, within an hour of his release from the dungeon, he talked incessantly with the nawab until "he stopped me short." The same day he walked three miles, and the next day, in spite of the boils that covered him from head to foot, he marched the same distance with heavy fetters, and "under the scorching beams of an intense hot sun." [142]

In view of the general unreliability of Holwell's account, one must deduce the number of those who died in the Black Hole on the basis of arithmetic. We have noted that at the time of the commencement of the hostilities in Calcutta, there were 230 to 255 Europeans in the defense forces. [143] Of them, by combining the lists given by Holwell and Mills, we can trace twenty-two survivors of the Black Hole. [144] This is a figure given by Holwell and Grey. Of them twenty-one were men, the twenty-second being Mrs. Carey. In addition we can account for another 138 men, making the total number of survivors as 159 (see the following page). Of the 159 survivors, I have been able to trace the names of 142 persons. [145] The remaining seventeen were perhaps among the deserters who never returned to the Company's service.

[141] Holwell's Genuine Narrative, *ibid.*, III, 136-42. This account would have us believe that some non-Europeans were also confined in the Black Hole. This seems erroneous. See *infra*, p. 78.

[142] *Ibid.*, III, 144-46.

[143] *Supra*, pp. 61-62.

[144] *Infra*, Appendix IV.

[145] *Infra*, Appendix III.

This figure of 159 does not include the members of the crew of Captains Nicholson, Whatmoug and Austin who left on the 19th. Nor does it take into consideration the crew of the *Prince George*, who presumably escaped; nor the number of persons who escaped during the process of surrender. Yet at the same time it must be said that there may have been more than 255 Europeans who have to be accounted, though this seems unlikely.

Escaped to Fulta on the 18th and 19th	59
Escaped to Chinsurah after the mishap to the *Prince George*	6
Deserted after the news of mishap to the *Prince George* became known	57
Deserted to the enemy (Hedelburgh)	1
Left the fort after it was surrendered but before the Black Hole event	15
Survived the Black Hole	21
	159 [146]

If 159 persons survived, the rest presumably died either in the course of the fighting or in the Black Hole. Their number would be 71 (if we accept Drake's overall figure of 230 Europeans) or 96 (if we accept Orme's figure of 255 Europeans).[147] Fifty-three of these can be accounted for as casualties of the fighting as follows:[148]

Killed on the 16th	9
Killed in the defense of the Jail House on the 18th	12
Killed in the retreat from the southern battery on the 18th	2
Killed before noon on the 20th	25
Killed during the process of surrender on the 20th	4
Committed suicide	1
Total	53

These figures do not take into account the casualties either on the 17th or on the 19th. Some persons must have lost their lives on these days. We should also bear in mind that this figure of fifty-three represents the *minimum* number of persons who are presumed to have lost their lives during the fighting.

We are thus able to account for the lives of (159 + 53) 212 Europeans. The maximum number of Europeans, therefore, who would have lost their lives in the Black Hole comes to

[146] *Supra*, pp. 63-70.
[147] The names that I have been able to trace are given *infra*, Appendix IV.
[148] *Supra*, pp. 63-70.

230—212 = 18, if we take Drake's figures, or
255—212 = 43, if we take Orme's figures.

The total number of persons confined in the Black Hole can be obtained by adding twenty-one (21) survivors to the above figures, which give us a range of thirty-nine (39) to sixty-four (64). It has been established both by Little and Hill that all the Indo-Portuguese, the Armenians and other natives had left the fort on the evening of the 20th, prior to the confinements in the Black Hole, and hence only Europeans were confined, though Holwell asserts that non-Europeans were also there.[149] It is safe to say, therefore, that at the most only sixty-four persons were confined in the Black Hole, of whom twenty-one survived.[150] The area of the room, which was eighteen feet by fourteen feet, ten inches, amounted to 267 square feet, giving about 4.2 square feet to each person. This area seems sufficient for a person to stand and sit down, though not without discomfort.

One of the questions, however, is how then did Grey and Holwell arrive at the figures that they mention? I think their narratives contain the answer.

Hollwell in his letter of July 17th mentions that "our garrison did not consist of [more than] 250 fighting men, officers included."[151] I think both Holwell and Grey assumed this to be the total figure for the Europeans engaged in the defense of Calcutta. Grey, in his narrative, accounts for seventy-nine of them as listed on the following page.

Died on the 16th (Smith and Wilkinson)	2
Deserted with Drake	19
Francis Morris, a pilot, escaped after the mishap to the *Prince George*	1
Deserted on the evening of the 19th	57
Total	79

In addition he says that many others lost their lives during the hostilities, and some others escaped after the fort surrendered. I think he assumed the figures for this category to be twenty-five, which raised his total to 104. This is 146 short of the total number of Europeans he and Holwell assumed. And Grey quickly put them all in the Black Hole.

[149] Little, "The Black Hole Debate," *Bengal Past and Present*, XII, 139; *Hill Collection*, I, lxxxix.

[150] This is quite close to Jadunath Sarkar's intelligent guess of "about sixty."

[151] *Hill Collection*, I, 111.

Holwell has two sets of figures. In his narrative of July 17th, he maintained that 165 or 170 persons were confined in the Black Hole; in his August 3d narrative he reduced them to 146. On July 17th he wrote:

> . . . finding we had 25 killed and 70 of our best men wounded, and our train [of artillery] killed, wounded and deserted to all but 14, and not two hours ammunition left, we threw out a flag of truce . . . [152]

In the same account he mentions that the train of artillery consisted of forty-five men. He also mentions that twenty-nine persons deserted with Drake. Thus he is able to account for eighty-five persons as follows:

Killed	25
Deserted	29
Artillerymen, killed, wounded or deserted (45-14)	31
Total	85

From a total of 250 Europeans, this leaves 165 Europeans to be accounted for. And Holwell states that 165 or 170 Europeans were confined in the Black Hole. I think he left a margin of five to account for some of the thirty-one artillerymen who may have been only wounded.

In his letter of August 3d, he states:

> I over reckoned the number of prisoners put into the Black Hole and the number of the dead; the former being only 146 and the latter 123 . . . [153]

These revisions were necessary for two reasons. In the first place, Holwell would have discovered to his dismay that he neglected to take into consideration casualties other than those that took place on June 20th, and additional desertions. In the second place, he must have heard that an account by Grey had been submitted to the court of directors, in which the number of those confined in the Black Hole was given as 146 and of those who survived as twenty-three. Holwell persisted in the figures thereafter. [154]

[152] *Ibid.*

[153] *Ibid.*, I, 186.

[154] This is so in spite of his own contradictions. For example, in his letter of August 10, 1757 he declared that after the desertions of Drake and others, only 170 persons were left in the factory (*supra*, p. 69), of whom twenty-five died on the 20th. This leaves 145 persons, to which if we add Mrs. Carey, we get the figure of 146. But Holwell throws away his story. In his letter of August 3, 1756, he had declared that on the 20th a man, Hedelburgh, had betrayed a gate to the nawab's forces through which "a great part of the garrison military and militia rushed out." This would considerably reduce his figure of 146.

There is also some doubt as to whether or not Mrs. Carey was in the Black Hole. In his letters of July 17th and August 3d Holwell makes no mention of a woman being confined and surviving. This seems a very significant omission. The accounts of Sykes, Grant, Tooke, Grey and Lindsay do not mention a woman. Mills mentions that "144 men, woman and children" were confined in the Black Hole, though both he and Grey say that European women were sent on board ships on the 18th. No other accounts mention children. In view of all the evidence, Mills's statement seems to be no more than a literary flourish. Mrs. Carey is mentioned only by Holwell and only in his 'Genuine Narrative' which was not written until 1757. In the absence of corroborative evidence, it is very difficult to say whether she was in the Black Hole or not. Sarkar, however, accepts her presence. [155]

F. Economic Losses *

Hill, and following Hill, Jadunath Sarkar, uncritically accept William Tooke's estimate that the English losses in Bengal amounted to Rs. 22,500,000; of which Rs. 9,500,000 belonged to the company and the rest to private individuals. [156] Tooke's estimate is wrong. The official figures were: Rs. 3,698,273 (£ 462,284) for the Company's losses, and Rs. 3,946,138 (£ 493,267) for private individuals. [157] The Company's losses can be broken down for the different establishments as follows:

Fort William	Rs. 2,375,501
Kassimbazar (including Rs. 200,000 for the factory)	Rs. 548,121
Dacca	Rs. 223,669
Other subordinate factories .	Rs. 550,982
Total	Rs. 3,698,273

Contrary to the assertions that Sirajuddaullah was a plunderer, the Fort William council, on the recovery of Calcutta testified:

> We had the pleasure to find that a very exact and particular care had been taken of the money, goods and effects seized at the several factories which were returned almost without loss, such parts of the

[155] *History of Bengal*, II, 477.

[156] Tooke's Narrative, *Hill Collection*, I, 293; Hill's Introduction, *ibid.*, I, xcv; Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, II, 477.

[157] I.O., Home Series, LXVIII, fols. 86-87; I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, October 13, 1757.

* Based on my, "The Actual English Losses in the Fall of Calcutta, 1756," *English Historical Review*, LXXV (1960), 90-91. By permission of the editor.

goods as had been sold by the government were regularly accounted for, and the sums repaid . . . [158]

As a result of this the losses were reduced by Rs. 1,948,787 (£ 243,598) as follows: [159]

Recovered at Calcutta . . .	Rs.	777,593
Recovered at Dacca	Rs.	22,305
Recovered at other factories . .	Rs.	72,487
Recovered from the government .	Rs.	876,402
Kassimbazar factory recovered . .	Rs.	200,000
Total	Rs.	1,948,787

Hence, the net losses of the Company in Bengal amounted to Rs. 1,749,486 (£ 218,683). This is very close to Robert Orme's estimate of Rs. 1,649,149) [160] The losses at Calcutta alone came to Rs. 1,223,440. [161]

G. Aftermath of the Fall of Calcutta

On the morning of June 21st, Holwell, Court, Walcott and Burdett were ordered by the nawab to be taken to his capital, Murshidabad. All the rest were released. Some of them reached the ships on which Drake and others had fled, which were then near Govindpur, while others took shelter in deserted huts, where some of the natives, who had served the English in different employments, came and administered to their immediate wants. [162] Among the former were Cooke and Lushington, among the latter George Grey, Jr., John Knox, Sr., and Captain Mills. Holwell and his three comrades embarked on a boat for Murshidabad on June 24th, and on the way stopped at Hughli, where the native governor treated them humanely. At Chandernagore they talked with Jean Law, the French agent, who gave them provisions. Finally on July 9th they reached Murshidabad, where, al-

[158] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, January 10, 1758.

[159] I.O., Home Series, LXVIII, *loc. cit.*

[160] I.O., Orme Papers, O.V., XIX, fols. 199-215. It is strange that this estimate should have escaped Hill's attention. Hill has made extensive use of the Orme Papers in his *Collection*, including Vol. XIX. Or was Hill merely suppressing this information because of the unfavorable view he held of Sirajuddaullah? One wonders. Another estimate of the losses given in British Museum Additional MS 12564 puts the figure at Rs. 2,215,675.

[161] I.O., Bengal General Journals and Ledgers, 1756-57, fol. 127.

[162] Holwell's Genuine Narrative. *Hill Collection*, III, 145-46; Mills's Account, *ibid.*, I, 194.

though confined, they were treated with kindness and respect by their native jailer. On the 17th they were presented to the nawab, when Holwell pleaded:

> . . . that notwithstanding my losses at Alinagar [Calcutta], I was still possessed of enough to pay a considerable sum of money for my freedom . . . [163]

To this the nawab replied:

> It may be; if he has anything left, let him keep it; his sufferings have been great; he shall have his liberty. [164]

Drake's party left Govindpur a little before noon on June 21st. Of the flotilla, the *Neptune* and the *Calcutta* ran aground below the Thana fort, and were captured by the nawab's troops. The few women who fell into the hands of the nawab's soldiers were respectfully treated by Omar Beg, the commander of Thana, and restored to the English. [165] The party reached Fulta, twenty miles from Thana on June 26th, and gradually all those who had been left in Calcutta and other English factories made their way to that post.

The nawab left Calcutta on the 24th for his capital. On his way he compelled the European companies to make complimentary presents to him. Unwillingly, the Dutch gave him Rs. 450,000; the French, Rs. 350,000; the Danes, Rs. 25,000; the Prussians and the Portuguese, Rs. 5,000 each. [166] In the English treasury he had found only Rs. 40,642. [167]

Thus ended the first phase of hostilities between the nawab and the East India Company.

H. Conclusion

It is obvious that Drake and his fellow councilors made serious miscalculation of the nawab's power. They miscalculated his opposition to the English fortifications as well as to the refuge they had provided to the fugitives from the nawab. The refuge to Krishna Ballabh was provided because the councilors had anticipated Sirajuddaullah's failure in his bid to succeed his grandfather. Perhaps William Watts was more realistic than the other councilors. Though he had

[163] Holwell's Genuine Narrative. *ibid.*, III, 152.
[164] *Ibid.*
[165] *Seir*, II, 290.
[166] Dutch Council, Hughli, to M. Vernet, June 27, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 33-34; Dutch Council of Bengal to Assembly of Seventeen, January 2, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 279.
[167] I.O., Bengal General Journals and Ledgers, 1756-57, fol. 1.

been the one who had advised the Company to proceed with the fortifications without seeking the nawab's permission and also to provide refuge to Krishna Ballabh, yet, soon after Sirajuddaullah's peaceful succession, he had reversed himself by proposing that Krishna Ballabh was not to receive the Company's protection any longer. However, Drake and his fellow councilors persisted, making their miscalculations even more serious.

On the other hand if we judge Sirajuddaullah by his conduct during the first phase of the hostilities, he appears to have tried to compose his differences with the English on terms that seem honorable. It is a reasonable assumption that the nawab did not want war, but faced with the intransigence of Drake and his councilors, he could not discover a way to avert war without risking his prestige. Through correspondence and Narayan Singh, he tried diplomatic negotiations without a show of force. This realized nothing. Through Khwaja Wajid and by marching on Kassimbazar, he tried diplomacy backed by a show of force. This embroiled him into war. Even then Drake was so sanguine as to believe that a force of about five hundred men could repulse the nawab's attack, and force him to retire from Calcutta.

It seems difficult to reconcile ourselves with the rhetoric of Holwell and Macaulay, and the scholarship of Hill, who have accused the nawab's campaign as motivated by avarice. Though the nawab on his march back to Murshidabad, after the fall of Calcutta, did exact money from other European companies, yet he showed no desire to plunder either the factory at Kassimbazar or the settlement at Calcutta. On the contrary he took good care of the effects that had fallen into his hands. Whatever the Company losses, they were mostly caused by fire during the hostilities at Calcutta.As for his alleged cruelty, though it may be argued that the Indian historians have accused the nawab of maltreatment of the natives, yet we find no evidence of his deliberate persecution of the English. His vices were those of a despot, but he had no love for deliberate cruelty, as Macaulay would have us believe.[168] We do not find him inclined to avenge himself upon the English councilors like Watts, Collet, Holwell, Court and others whom he had secured. As for the Black Hole incident, Holwell as well as the English historians, like Orme, Stewart, Hill, and Wilson, have

[168] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, I ("Everyman's Library," New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1920), pp. 504 ff.

absolved him of personal responsibility in the matter. It is, therefore, impossible to sustain the thesis of Hill that the most important causes that prompted Sirajuddaullah to reduce the English "were his vanity and avarice." [169] Rather it may be said that it was the failure of the English to respect his authority that led to the unfortunate hostilities.

[169] *Hill Collection*, I, liii.

CHAPTER IV

SIRAJUDDAULLAH ON THE DEFENSIVE

The re-establishment of the Company's settlements in Bengal, after the English defeat at Calcutta, was possible in one of two ways. The first was to approach the nawab to forgive the Company; the other was to avenge the defeat by force. In pursuit of the first of these alternatives, Roger Drake and such other members of the Fort William council as had fled to Fulta, addressed a letter on July 6, 1756, to some of the Bengali notables, among them Raja Manik Chand, Rai Durlabh Ram, Ghulam Husain Khan and Khwaja Wajid, asking their advice how the matters with the nawab could be accommodated. [1] The letters were sent to William Watts and Matthew Collet, two of the members of the Kassimbazar council who were then living in Chandernagore, with a request that they be forwarded to the addressees. Watts and Collet refused to forward these letters on three grounds. In the first place, and with much sanctimonious indignation, they castigated Drake and his fellow councilors for having turned a deaf ear to the advice given to them to accommodate the matters with the nawab on payment of a monetary tribute. [2] In the second place they questioned the authority of Drake and his councilors to transact the Company's business inasmuch as they had brought defeat and shame upon the Company. Finally, they argued that "should the nawab think fit to permit the English to return and resettle we are afraid it would be not only with the loss of all their privileges but on such shameful terms that Englishmen we hope will never consent to." [3] Thus, the only method to re-establish the English settlements in Bengal in their view was by military force. [4] Sree Babu, the chief assistant to Khwaja Wajid, also told Watts that after the humiliating defeat of the English at Calcutta peace with honor was almost unthinkable. [5] So ended the first abortive attempt for peaceful negotiations.

A. The Response of the Madras Council

The letters of the Fort William council carrying the news of the

[1] *Hill Collection*, I, 59.
[2] *Supra*, p. 54.
[3] Watts and Collet to Fulta Council, July 8, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 61.
[4] Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, July 7, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 58-59.
[5] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, July 17, 1756, I, *ibid.*, I, 117-18.

nawab's seizure of the Kassimbazar factory, and requesting military assistance to defend Calcutta reached Madras on July 13th, 1756. The Fort St. George council was at that time preparing to act upon the request of Salabat Jung, the nizam of the Deccan, for a military detachment so that he could sever his connections with the French. At the same time there was great apprehension of a general war with France, which could have embroiled, as it later did, the English establishments in India in a war with the French company. The fear of the latter was, indeed, great. Intelligence had been received of the despatch of a French fleet of nineteen men-of-war with 3,000 troops from Brest to Pondicherry. Yet, with a promptitude, uncharacteristic of the Company's bureaucracy, the Council decided to despatch as expeditiously as possible the *Delaware* with two military companies, four three-pounders, ammunition and money to defray the expedition's expenses. [6] The command was entrusted to Major Killpatrick, who was recalled into service on the eve of his departure for England. The *Delaware* sailed on July 20th. Further military supplies were despatched by the *Sea Horse* on August 4th. [7]

On August 16th news of the fall of Calcutta was received. Three different policies were advocated in the Council. Palk and Vansittart argued in favor of sending a detachment to Salabat Jung at all cost, even though this meant leaving the Bengal establishment to its fate. [8] Another opinion was expressed by Admiral Watson. He pointed to the probability of a war with France, and the intelligence received of a French squadron being on its way to the Cormonadel Coast. He, therefore, argued in favor of sending a small expedition to reinforce Killpatrick, and suggested that "the fifty and twenty gun ships would be as much force as there would be occasion for." [9] He also declared himself in favor of postponing the expedition until the last week of September to escape the monsoons. [10] A third point of view was expressed by Orme. He argued that a small expedition to Bengal might fail in its purpose without vindicating a weakened Madras. [11] After two long debates it was finally decided that

[6] *Fort St. George Public Consultations*, LXXXVI, 7-11.

[7] *Ibid.*, LXXXVI, 15.

[8] Orme, *History of Military Transactions*, II, 86-87. Orme to Payne, November 3, 1756, I.O., Orme Papers, O.V., XXVIII, fols. 58-60.

[9] *Fort St. George Public Consultations*, LXXXVI, 37.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*, LXXXVI, 26 and *passim*.

> . . . in case the expected ships from England should [not] bring the news of a war with France, Admiral Watson be then desired to proceed down to Bengal with the whole squadron at once, that Colonel Adlercon be desired to proceed on the squadron with his whole regiment and train of artillery, and that all preparations of stores and necessaries be made with all possible expedition . . . [12]

This policy represented a combination of the advice given by Admiral Watson and the plea made by Robert Orme.

On September 19 the long awaited ships, the *Chesterfield* and the *Walpole,* arrived from England. They did not bring news of the outbreak of war in Europe. Two days later the Council again met to decide upon the military policy to be pursued in Bengal. It had three questions before it. First, what should be done in case the news of war with France arrived in Madras before the reduction of the nawab of Bengal? Second, who should have jurisdiction over the troops, the Madras council or the Bengal council? And finally, should the expedition be placed under the military command of an officer of the Company or of his Majesty's forces in India? In answer to the first question, the Council resolved to recall the troops to Madras without waiting for a final decision in Bengal. It also decided to place the troops under its own jurisdiction, and further to bestow the command of an officer in the service of the Company. These decisions were motivated by a desire to have available the troops for action on the Coromandel Coast. It was feared that placing them under the jurisdiction of the Bengal council and their command by an officer of the English government might delay their return to Madras. [13] Robert Clive was accordingly chosen to lead the troops, and John Smith and John Walsh were appointed deputies to Clive, "to receive and attend to the advice of the gentlemen at Bengal . . . and to re-establish the gentlemen of Bengal in Calcutta." [14]

The appointment of Clive as the military commander of the expedition met with strong protest from Colonel Adlercon, the commander of the King's troops in India. Adlercon had been bypassed in favor of Clive because he had failed to give categorical assurances to obey the directives of the Madras council. [15] On hearing of Clive's appointment, he refused to allow the troops under his command to proceed with the expedition.

[12] *Idem,* p. 41.
[13] *Idem,* pp. 55-56.
[14] *Idem,* p. 57.
[15] *Idem,* pp. 54-55.

> Surely gentlemen you are not so unreasonable as to expect that I will send away any part of his Majesty's train or regiment (who are so immediately under my direction) and leave to you the nomination. [16]

He further demanded that the ammunition and military stores belonging to his forces, which had been laden on the ships, be immediately disembarked. The Council had no other choice but to accede. [17]

The appointment of Smith and Walsh as civilian advisors to Clive, and superior in rank to the Bengal council, immediatly met with a denunciation from Charles Manningham, a representative of Drake's council who had been sent to Madras to plead for an expedition against Sirajuddaullah. Overruling the objections of Clive and Orme, the Council decided to cancel the appointment of the two deputies. Instead a special Select Committee for Bengal, composed of Roger Drake, William Watts, Charles Manningham, Richard Becher and Robert Clive, was appointed. They were to act jointly. However, Clive was empowered to have a free hand in military decisions. [18]

The object of the expedition was outlined in a letter written by the Fort St. George council to the Fort William council, on October 13, 1756. It said in parts:

> We could not have resolved to engage our Honourable masters in the vast expense of fitting out this armament but with the hopes of obtaining equivalent advantages. The mere taking of Calcutta should, we think, by no means be the end of this undertaking; not only their settlements should be restored but all their privileges established in the full extent granted by the great Mughal, and ample reparations made to them for the loss they have lately sustained . . .
>
> Should the nawab on the news of the arrival of these forces, make offers tending to the acquiring to the Company the before mentioned advantages, rather than risk the success of a war, we think that sentiments of revenging injuries, although they were never more just, should give place to the necessity of sparing as far as possible the many bad consequences of war . . . but we are of the opinion that the sword should go hand in hand with the pen . . .
>
> We need not represent to you the great advantage which we think it will be to the military operations . . . to effect a junction with any powers in the provinces of Bengal that may be dissatisfied with the violences of the nawab's government, or that may have pretensions to the nawabship . . . [19]

[16] India, Records of Fort St. George, *Diary and Consultation Book, Military Department* (Madras: Government Printing, 1913), p. 283.

[17] *Idem*, p. 226.

[18] Orme and Clive's Minute of Dissent, Fort St. George Select Committee Consultations, October 1, 1756, *Hill Collection*, I, 224-25.

[19] *Ibid.*, I, 239-40.

To the suggestion of bringing about a *coup d'etat* in Bengal, the suggestion of dispossessing the French of their settlement of Chandernagore was also added:

> We have desired Mr. Watson, if he thinks it practicable, to dispossess the French of Chandernagore . . . should you be of this opinion we desire that you will enforce our recommendation. [20]

Clive was in high spirits, confident of doing "great things," and of dispossessing the French of Chandernagore. [21]

The expedition sailed from Madras on October 16th. It consisted of five ships of war (*Kent, Cumberland, Tyger, Salisbury,* and *Bridgewater*), one fireship (*Blaze*), three Indiamen (*Protector, Walpole, Marlborough*), and three ketches (*Lapwing, Snow,* and *Boneta*). On board them were 528 infantrymen, 109 artillerymen, 940 sepoys and 160 lascars. [22] The weather was rough. As a result of south-westerly winds the *Cumberland* and the *Marlborough* were driven into Vizagapatam and put back into Madras, reducing Clive's forces by 243 infantrymen and artillerymen, and 430 sepoys. It was a tortuous voyage, during which a shortage of water and cereals developed as well as an outbreak of scurvy. On December 15th, the *Kent,* the *Tyger* and the *Walpole* reached Fulta. [23]

We must now return to developments at Fulta after the arrival of the *Delaware* and the troops under Major Killpatrick.

B. Preparations for an Offensive Against the Nawab

Killpatrick arrived at Fulta on July 31st. On August 15th he wrote a letter to the nawab

> . . . complaining a little of the hard usage of the English Honourable Company, assuring him of his good intentions notwithstanding what had happened and begging in the meantime, till things were cleared up, that he would treat him at least as a friend and give orders that our people may be supplied with provisions in full and friendly manner . . . [24]

The letter was sent to Warren Hastings, a factor of the Company then at Kassimbazar, with orders to forward it to the nawab. He also wrote

[20] Select Committee, Fort St. George, to Select Committee, Fort William, November 14, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 302.

[21] Clive to his Father, October 5, 1756, *ibid.*, I, 227; Clive to Secret Committee, London, October 11, 1756, cited in George W. Forrest, *The Life of Lord Clive* (2 vols.; London: Cassel & Co., 1918), I, 276.

[22] Fort St. George Council to Clive, October 13, 1756, *Hill Collection,* I, 233.

[23] For a graphic account of the journey, see Ives, *op. cit., passim.*

[24] I.O., Fulta Select Committee Consultations, August 22, 1756.

letters to Raja Manik Chand (governor of Calcutta), Khwaja Wajid, Jagat Seth and Rai Durlabh Ram asking their intercession on behalf of the Company. [25] Hastings failed to deliver the letter to Sirajuddaullah, but the letter to Raja Manik Chand brought a courteous reply. An entry in the Fulta Consultations says:

> Yesterday [September 4th] ... there came another letter to the Major [Killpatrick] from Raja Manik Chand ... with many compliments and the strongest assurance of his assistance. He sent at the same time a boat with a *dustuck* with orders for opening a bazar in Calcutta and for supplying us with provisions of all kinds. [26]

On this evidence it seems fair to say that Sirajuddaullah and Raja Manik Chand were quite amenable to an amicable settlement of the nawab's dispute with the Company. This is further confirmed by a letter from Warren Hastings, dated Kassimbazar September 23, 1756, in which he informed the Fulta council

> ... Manikchand has already received orders about settling with the English all that was desired. [27]

In a letter of November 4, 1756, Manik Chand wrote to Killpatrick saying:

> ... having made mention of the Major in the best manner to the nawab, he [Killpatrick] is now desired by the nawab ... to inform him of our [the Company's] intentions, for if we intended a war, he would be down with his army immediately, and if otherwise, he would hear our demands ... [28]

The Company's agents at Fulta treated these peace overtures with scant respect. They had two good reasons. In the first place, Sirajuddaullah had been engaged at that time in reducing Shaukat Jung, the nawab of Purnea, who had laid claim to the nawabship of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa. [29] The Company's agents cautiously hoped for Sirajuddaullah's defeat. [30] Although this failed to materialize, they received intelligence of the despatch of the expeditionary force from Madras, under Watson and Clive, and it was not unnatural on their part to hope to negotiate with Sirajuddaullah from a position of strength.

[25] *Idem.*
[26] *Idem*, September 5, 1756.
[27] *Idem*, September 30, 1756.
[28] *Idem*, November 6, 1756.
[29] *Infra*, Appendix I.
[30] Fulta Council to Fort St. George Council, September 17, 1756. *Hill Collection*, I, 219ff.

Clive and Watson arrived at Fulta on December 15. Clive immediately entered into a correspondence with Manik Chand. Wrote Clive:

> Upon my arrival in these parts from Madras I was informed that you had shown a great friendship and regard for the English company, for which I write to return thanks. I doubt not but as you have hitherto professed a desire to serve the Company, you will at this time, when their affairs most require it, retain the same disposition in their favour. [31]

Manik Chand's reply was characteristic of courtesy and peaceful intentions:

> I sincerely rejoice to hear of your safe arrival in these parts. . . . Had there been another amongst the English possessed of your qualifications the affairs would never had been in the condition to which they are reduced. The causes of the misfortunes which have befallen the Company's settlements you will learn from their former agents. My conduct in them you must have already known as well as my disposition for peace and quiet . . . Radha Krishna Mullick . . . whom I have sent to you will impart you some further particulars which I recommend to your attentive consideration . . . [32]

Clive replied on December 21. He forwarded a letter addressed to the nawab to the raja with a covering note warning:

> It would be the nawab's own fault if the troubles of this country should begin again and be worse than ever . . . [33]

In the letter to the nawab, Clive said in part:

> Your Excellency will hear from others what force is come to Bengal . . . such a force was never seen in your provinces. . . . I hope you will have so great a regard for yourself, for us, and for the trade of your province as to give the Company full satisfaction for all the losses they have lately sustained . . . all things may be made up in a friendly manner, by restoring to the Company and the poor inhabitants what they have been plundered of . . . [34]

Raja Manik Chand's reply was dated December 23d, and said:

> Your sending me a copy of your address to the nawab . . . for my perusal I esteem as an instance of your friendship. Finding in it many

[31] I.O., Home Series, CXCIII, no. 1.

[32] *Ibid.*, no. 2.

[33] *Ibid.*, no. 3.

[34] *Ibid.*, no. 6. A slightly different version is given in *Hill Collection*, II, 71. Watson sent a similar letter directly to the nawab saying: "The king, my master, . . . sent me to these parts with a great fleet to protect the East India Company's trade, rights and privileges. . . . I am come down to Bengal to re-establish the said Company's servants . . . and hope to find you inclinable to do them that justice. . . . I doubt not you will consent to make them a reasonable satisfaction for the losses and injuries they have sustained . . ." *Ibid.*, II, 70.

> improper expressions and concluding that by sending me the copy you desired to know my sentiments upon it, I have, therefore, made some alterations in it and return it entrusted to Radha Krishna Mullick, who will deliver it to you. You will write your letter after that form and dispatch it again to me, and I will forward it to the nawab . . . [35]

The amendements that the raja had suggested were quite minor except the salutation to the nawab, whom the raja desired to be addressed as "the Sacred and Godlike Prince." [36] Clive retorted to the raja, in a letter dated Christmas Day, 1756, saying:

> I cannot consistently with my duty to the Company or their honour accept of your advice in writing to the nawab a letter couched in such a style, which, however, proper it might have been before the taking of Calcutta, would but ill-suit with the present time, when we are come to demand satisfaction for the injuries done us by the nawab, not to entreat his favour, and with a force which we think sufficient to vindicate our claim . . . [37]

Clive thus proved himself true to the directive of the Fort St. George council that "the sword should go hand in hand with the pen." To add deeds to words, the fleet was ordered, on December 29th, to proceed up the river. On December 30th, Budge Budge was taken, and on January 2, 1757, Calcutta was recaptured. The next day Drake and his councilors were restored to authority at Fort William. [38]

On January 3d a manifesto of war was drawn against the nawab. [39] It said:

> We do hereby on the behalf of the said East India Company and as their representatives in Bengal, in consideration of the several acts of hostility and violence already premised, declare open war against the aforesaid Sirajuddaullah . . . and against the subjects of the said *subah* [nawab], their cities, towns, shipping and effects, according to the maxims and rules of all nations, until ample restitution be made [to] the East India Company, their servants, tenants, and inhabitants residing under their protection, for all damages and losses sustained by them . . . and until full satisfaction be made the said East India Company for the charges by them incurred in equipping a large army and marine force to procure a re-establishment of their factories and towns . . .

[35] *Ibid.*, II, 74.
[36] *Ibid.*, II, 75.
[37] *Ibid.*, II, 76.
[38] For the account of the recapture of Calcutta, see Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 99ff; Scrafton, *op. cit.*, pp. 12ff.
[39] The Company and Admiral Watson issued separate, but largely similar, manifestoes. The latter spoke in the name of the English king. *Hill Collection*, II, 83-87.

> The President and Council think it proper to notify that they do not intend to molest any Europeans [settled here] . . . provided those Europeans maintain strict neutrality between the *subah* and the British nation and do not directly assist the said *subah* or his adherents with any men or war like stores or in any other shape whatsoever . . . [40]

While preparations for a further advance towards the capital of Sirajuddaullah were being made, the victors fell out among themselves. The powers granted to Clive by the Madras council was the subject of this dispute. On January 7, 1757, the Fort William Select Committee wrote to the Fort St. George council:

> We cannot conceive by what authority you have assumed a right in giving that gentleman [Clive] the powers you have done, and therein treating us in the light of a subordinate . . . [41]

On the same day Clive wrote to Governor Pigot of Madras about the Fort William councilors in the following words:

> I would have you guard against everything these gentlemen can say; for believe me they are bad subjects and rotten at heart, and will stick at nothing to prejudice you . . . the riches of Peru and Mexico should not induce me to dwell among them . . . [42]

Clive, who had come to avenge the defeat of the English, was shocked to discover that the factors of the Company in Bengal were not as much interested in avenging the dishonor of the English as they were in having their private fortune restored. [43] On January 18th, the Select Committee of the Fort William council informed him that they believed it.

> . . . our duty to require as follows:
>
> That you recede from the independent powers given you by the Committee of Fort St. George as commander-in-chief of their land forces, and subject yourself to the orders of this presidency.
>
> That you strictly comply and follow whatever plans of military operations the Select Committee of Fort William may judge proper to point out . . .
>
> That you remain in Bengal with the troops under your command until honourable and advantageous terms can be obtained from the *subah* . . . [44]

[40] Declaration of War by Fort William Council, January 3, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 485.
[41] *Ibid.*, II, 97.
[42] *Ibid.*, II, 85.
[43] *Ibid.*, II, 96.
[44] Select Committee, Fort William, to Robert Clive, *ibid.*, January 18, 1757, II, 122.

Clive in his reply said:

> I do not intend to make use of my power for acting separately from you without you reduce me to the necessity of so doing, but as far as concerns the means of executing those powers you will excuse me, gentlemen . . . [45]

While this acrimonious debate between Clive and the Fort William councilors was proceeding, the sword hand in hand with the pen was making its influence felt on the nawab's advisors. On January 4th, it was decided to attack Hughli. The expeditionary detachment was to consist of one man-of-war, the *Bridgewater,* two sloops, the *Kingfisher* and the *Thunder,* and a force of 170 infantrymen, 300 sepoys, and the grenadier company. [46] Since the course of the river was treacherous, and the expedition lacking in an experienced pilot, a Dutch pilot was abducted and compelled to pilot the English squadron to Hughli. [47]

The forces landed below Hughli on January 9th. Clive declared that "it was resolved before we left Chinapatam [Madras] that that city [Hughli] should fall a sacrifice" for the ruin of Calcutta. [48] The town was plundered, several of its adjoining villages razed to the ground, and many granaries set on fire. The walls of the Hughli fort were demolished and such guns as could be carried on the ships were seized. On January 20th, the expedition retired to Calcutta. The same day the nawab with a large force arrived on the northern outskirts of Hughli. [49]

While the destruction of Hughli was in progress, Clive was also busy approaching Raja Manik Chand, Jagat Seth and Khwaja Wajid with proposals that they put pressures on the nawab to accommodate matters with the Company on the English terms, and declaring that the English could not "rest satisfied with the bare walls of Calcutta,"

[45] Robert Clive to Select Committee, Fort William, January 20, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 123.

[46] Despatch of Admiral Charles Watson, January 4, 1757, *Selections from the Letters, Despatches, and Other State Papers Preserved in the Madras Secretariat, Clive Series,* ed. George W. Forrest (Madras: Government Press, n.d.). Cited hereafter as *Forrest Selections (Clive).*

[47] Dutch Director, Hughli, to Assembly of Seventeen, January 22, 1757, *Hill Collection,* II, 82.

[48] Clive to Khwaja Wajid, January 21, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 124. The damage to Hughli was more severe than done to Calcutta.

[49] "Journal of Military Transactions in the Expedition to Hughli," *Forrest Selections (Clive), passim;* "Journal of the Proceedings of the Troops Commanded by Lt. Col. Robert Clive on the Expedition to Bengal," I.O., Orme Papers, O.V. XX, *passim.*

nor with the trifling destruction of Budge Budge. [50] On January 8th identical letters were despatched to these three notables. The letter to Jagat Seth drew the following reply on January 14th:

> You are pleased to say that the nawab listens to what I may recommend.
>
> You have acted the very reverse part, and possessed yourselves of Calcutta by force, after which you have taken and destroyed the city of Hughli, and by all appearances you seem to have no design but that of fighting. In what manner then can I introduce an application for accommodating matters between the nawab and you.
>
> What your intentions are it is impossible to find by these acts of hostility. Put a stop to this conduct and let me know what your demands are. . . . How can you expect the nawab will pass by or overlook your conduct in pretending to take up arms against the prince or *subah* of that country? [51]

Khwaja Wajid, on the other hand, suggested that Renault, the French agent at Chandenagore should be asked to act as the mediator between the Company and the nawab. [52]

Clive had planned to attack Dacca after Hughli. However, his strategy had to be modified in view of two developments. The first was the arrival of Sirajuddaullah with a large force. The second was the arrival of the news of the commencement of hostilities between England and France. The latter meant not only that Clive would be unable to receive reinforcements from Madras, but that he might even have to depart for Madras to protect the English settlements on the Coromandel Coast. [53] On January 21st two Frenchmen, deputed by Renault, arrived at Calcutta. The next day the Dutch also offered their good offices to settle the dispute between the nawab and the Company. [54] Clive however, refused to "approve of the intervention of the French," [55] though Watson was "not so very averse to our putting some confidence in the French." [56] Watson was also completely opposed to the Dutch mediation.

Clive sent to Khwaja Wajid his terms for peace on January 22, 1757. They were:

[50] I.O., Home Series, CXCIII, nos. 8, 9, 11
[51] *Hill Collection*, II, 104.
[52] *Ibid.*, II, 110.
[53] *Supra*, p. 87.
[54] Dutch Council, Hughli, to Watson, January 22, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 128
[55] Clive to Khwaja Wajid, January 21, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 126.
[56] Watson to Clive, January 22, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 130.

1. That the nawab cause satisfaction to be made to the Company, to the English and all other inhabitants under their protection, for all the losses they have sustained by the captures of Calcutta, Kassimbazar, and all their other settlements; that he cause restitution to be made of all goods, effects, merchandise &c., seized at the different *aurungs*.
2. That he put the Company in full possession of all the countries, villages, privileges, &c. granted them by the royal *farman* [of 1717].
3. That he suffer the English to secure and fortify themselves in their own possessions in such manner as not to be liable to the like misfortunes in future.
4. That he suffer the Company to erect a mint in Calcutta, endowed with the same privileges with the mint at Murshidabad . . . [57]

Khwaja Wajid, in his reply, asked Clive to specify "the amount of damages claimed." Wajid thought that the nawab would be amenable to granting the Company the right of fortification but doubted if the minting privileges could be granted. [58]

On January 23d the nawab himself wrote to Admiral Watson. After accusing Roger Drake of being responsible for the troubles of the Company, he declared:

> It was my inclination to have given the English company permission to carry on their trade as formerly, had another chief been sent here. . . . If you are inclined to re-establish the Company, only appoint a new chief, and you may depend upon my giving a currency to their commerce upon the same terms they heretofore enjoyed.

In a postcript to the letter he made it clear that he was not frightened by the English force. He emphasized:

> If you imagine that by carrying on a war against me you can establish your trade in the dominions, you may do as think fit. [59]

On January 24th the nawab sent a special emissary to Clive desiring him to send "a trusty person with our [English] proposals." [60] Three days later Ranjit Rai, an assistant of Jagat Seth and one of the nawab's courtiers, wrote to Clive again to send "a person of trust and confidence with an address to the nawab." [61] The nawab repeated his request on January 30th. [62]

The nawab's letter of January 23d and his subsequent requests for

[57] Clive to Khwaja Wajid, January 21, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 126.
[58] Khwaja Wajid to Clive, n.d., *ibid.*, II, 127.
[59] *Ibid.*, II, 130-31.
[60] *Ibid.*, II,133.
[61] I.O., Home Series, CXCIII, no. 18.
[62] *Hill Collection*, II, 184.

negotiations had a sobering influence on Clive. He replied on January 30th in very polite terms, attributing the English losses, not to the nawab's cruelty, but merely to his "displeasure," and extending faith in his generosity for the restitution of the English losses. [63]

The nawab replied on January 31st reiterating that while he was amenable to compensate for some of the losses, he was not prepared to provide restitution to all the losses of the English:

> You know very well that what plunder falls into the hands of soldiers in war cannot be restored, but let there be peace and friendship between us, and I will certainly allow you something in consideration of those losses. [64]

Another letter from Ranjit Rai on February 1st confirmed the nawab's peaceful intentions. [65] Two days later the nawab sent flowers and fruits as a gift to Clive, [66] to which Clive responded by writing a gracious letter on February 3d:

> I thank God that I have found you so graciously inclined. I shall send a relation of my own [Walsh] and another person [Scrafton] tomorrow morning to confer with your Excellency about our affairs . . . [67]

While these pleasantries were being exchanged, both sides were keeping their powder dry. The select committee had ordered a fortification of the Calcutta settlement, and batteries had been erected as well as the men-of-war alerted. Until January 29th Clive was inclined to attack Dacca. [68] The nawab, on his part, was marching at the head of a force of 45,000 and had urged the French to stand by him. [69] On February 3d he entered the confines of Calcutta on the ground that the place where he had been formerly encamped was unfit for the army. In a letter to Clive he declared:

> Let not this give you any uneasiness. . . . I have given orders to all *jemmidars* [sergeants] that they commit no disturbance. Do not be under any apprehension on this account . . . [70]

[63] *Ibid.*, II, 183.
[64] *Ibid.*, II, 208.
[65] Ranjit Rai to Clive, February 1, 1757, I.O., Home Series, CXCIII, no. 24.
[66] *Idem*, no. 27.
[67] *Hill Collection*, II, 208.
[68] Clive to Select Committee, Fort St. George, January 28-29, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 175-76.
[69] Sirajuddaullah to Renault, January 30, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 185.
[70] Sirajuddaullah to Clive, February 3, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 209.

Similar sentiments were voiced by Ranjit Rai in a letter to Clive. [71] However, both Watson and Clive were filled with suspicion because of this march of the nawab's forces. [72] On February 3d the select committee of Fort William decided, upon the advice of Clive, to add three more conditions for the pacific settlement of its dispute with the nawab. They were: that the nawab should grant complete autonomy to the settlement at Calcutta and not make any demand in future upon the natives residing in the English settlement; that the *dustucks* issued under the authority of the Company should protect the English goods from being opened in transit; and that the treaty of peace be countersigned by the principal courtiers of the nawab. [73]

The entry of the nawab's forces into the environs of Calcutta led to a skirmish on the evening of February 3d, when one of the English detachments opened fire on the rear flank of the nawab's forces. The nawab, however, let the incident pass unnoticed. The atmosphere was, however, already filled with suspicion when Scrafton and Walsh, the two emissaries of the Company, were presented to the nawab on the evening of February 4th. The nawab gave them audience in a state court, "attended by the best looking men amongst his officers," which Scrafton and Walsh construed to be an attempt to intimidate them. The nawab after this audience refused to receive the two emissaries privately and referred them to Ranjit Rai. This only strengthened their suspicion. Scrafton reports:

> His Excellency, judging from his own treacherous disposition, was so firmly persuaded that they [Scrafton and Walsh] had private arms about them and wanted to assassinate him. . . . He expected their [Scrafton and Walsh's] return in the morning . . . and desired [them] . . . to go to the tent of Jagat Seth's agent [Ranjit Rai], who had something to communicate to them that would be very agreeable to the Colonel [Clive] . . . [74]

Scrafton and Walsh considered this delay as an effort to detain them so that the nawab could attack the English by surprise the next morning. Scrafton claims that the nawab had given orders for the detention of the emissaries. [75] Harboring such suspicions, they escaped from the

[71] I.O., Home Series, CXCIII, no. 27.

[72] Watson to Sirajuddaullah, February 4, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 210; Clive to Secret Committee, London, February 1, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 205.

[73] I.O., Fort William Select Committee Consultations, February 3, 1757.

[74] Scrafton, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

[75] *Loc. cit.* Hill uncritically accepts Scrafton's claim that the nawab had given orders to detain the emissaries. *Hill Collection*, I, cxlv. It need hardly be stressed

nawab's camp in the night, and declared to Clive that the nawab's intentions were not sincere. [76]

C. The Attack on the Nawab's Camp and the February Treaty

Thereupon, Clive

> . . . went immediately on board Admiral Watson's ship, and represented to him the necessity of attacking the nawab without delay; and desired the assistance of four or five hundred sailors, to carry the ammunition and draw the artillery; which he assented to. The sailors were landed about one o'clock in the morning. About two the troops were under arms, and about four they marched to the attack of the nawab's camp. [77]

The force consisted of 600 sailors, 470 infantrymen, 70 artillerymen, 800 sepoys, six field pieces and one howitzer. One half of the sailors drew the artillery, the other half bore arms. Clive's aim was to capture the nawab's artillery and rout his camp. [78]

After two hours march the detachment reached the nawab's camp about six in the morning. The guides lost their way in the fog, and instead of reaching the nawab's headquarters, as Clive intended, the detachment found itself in the section where the nawab's cavalry was encamped. A skirmish ensued. About ten in the morning Clive retired. The English losses were twenty-seven soldiers, twelve sailors and fifty-five sepoys wounded. [79] Clive wrote: "It was the warmest service I ever yet was engaged in. . . . Our success was very great." [80] Robert Orme, however, was extremely critical of the strategy employed, and considered the expedition to be a failure, though he agreed that the

that Scrafton exaggerates his suspicions. There is nothing to suggest that guards were placed to detain the emissaries in the nawab's camp. The surprise with which Clive's forces caught the nawab's forces belies the suspicion that the nawab planned to attack the next day.

[76] The Bengali historian Karam Ali in "Muzzaffarnamah," pp. 71-72, maintains that the emissaries had been sent to spy on the position of the camp, and that the plans to attack the nawab had been laid much before the audience of Scrafton and Walsh with the nawab took place.

[77] Clive's Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1772, *Hill Collection*, III, 310.

[78] "Journal of Expedition to Bengal by one of Colonel Clive's Family [Walsh]," *ibid.*, III, 38.

[79] *Ibid.*, III, 39. Clive estimated the losses to be "67 military killed and wounded with 100 sepoys." Clive to Select Committee, Fort St. George, February 6, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 214.

[80] Clive to his Father, February 23, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 242f.

boldness of design terrified the nawab. [81] The nawab's forces retreated to a new site six miles away.

On February 6th Watson and Clive wrote angry letters to the nawab, accusing him of treachery, perhaps in anticipation of the nawab's protest. Ranjit Rai, likewise, wrote to Clive denoucing his action:

> I thought that the English were always faithful to their words . . . The nawab agrees to give you back Calcutta with all the privileges of your *farman* and whatever goods you lost at Kassimbazar or elsewhere, and will grant you permission to coin *siccas* [currency] in your mint at Calcutta . . . and that you may make what fortifications you please in Calcutta.
>
> Your conduct yesterday morning greatly amazed me and put me to shame before the nawab . . . If you think war necessary acquaint me seriously with your intentions, and I will acquit myself of any further trouble in this affair. [82]

Watson, on the other hand, boasted that he desired Clive "to show you [the nawab] what an army of Englishmen was capable of doing." [83] And Clive mockingly wrote that his expedition "cautiously hurt none but those that opposed me." [84]

A treaty was finally signed on February 9th. It had seven clauses. [85] The nawab agreed to allow the Company to secure the villages that had been promised by the *farman* of 1717. He freed the English goods, passing under English *dustucks,* from all kinds of taxes, duties and fees. He permitted the English to fortify Calcutta and to establish a mint there. He, however, refused to provide restitution for the English losses at Kassimbazar, Calcutta and other places, except to restore "whatever has been seized and taken by my orders and accounted for in my *sircany* [ledgers]." The nawab also agreed privately to pay Rs. 300,000 for the English losses, and 40,000 gold pieces to be distributed among Ranjit Rai, Omichund and others who had played a role in these diplomatic negotations. [86] However, the entire amount received from the nawab, Rs. 300,000 in cash and Rs. 360,000 in

[81] Orme, *Military Transactions,* II, 131-35.

[82] *Hill Collection,* II, 213-14.

[83] Watson to Sirajuddaullah, February 6, 1757, *ibid.,* II, 212.

[84] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, February 6, 1757, *ibid.,* II, 213.

[85] For the terms of the treaty see, *ibid.,* II, 215-17.

[86] Clive to Secret Committee, London, February 22, 1757, *Hill Collection,* II, 239; Watts to Clive, May 14, 1757, *ibid.,* II, 381. No mention was made of the Black Hole in the treaty.

40,000 gold pieces, was appropriated by the Company, and the Indian mediators did not receive any payment for their services. [87]

A few of the nawab's advisors and many of the Company's factors were dissatisfied with the treaty. Some of Sirajuddaullah's military commanders, after the incident of Febraury 5th, had advised him "to continue the war with better arrangements." [88] The nawab's desire to reach an accommodation with the English, however, seems to have been largely motivated by the threat of Abdali's advance towards Bihar. [89] Furthermore the terms of the treaty, from the nawab's point of view, were quite honorable. He had agreed to allow the English what they legitimately ought to have held according to the *farman* of 1717. It was a convenient face-saving device.

Clive was criticized by the English factors for concluding a treaty in haste without regard to their personal losses. To this Clive and Killpatrick replied in the following words:

> It would give us great pleasure, as being considerable sufferers ourselves, if terms advantageous to private persons could be obtained . . . but our present insignificant strength, the situation of affairs upon the Coast, the absolute recallment of Colonel Clive with the greatest part of the forces, obliges us to give it as our opinion that by insisting upon terms still more advantageous we expose the Company to the risk of losing those already granted them . . . [90]

In another letter to his friend Payne, Clive declared that a delay in the agreement with the nawab could have led to a Franco-Bengali alliance, and might have cost the English as much as five millions of rupees to fight a war with the nawab. [91] Clive was not unmindful of receiving further advantageous terms from the nawab, but he felt that these could be secured by a quiet diplomacy in the nawab's court. To this end William Watts was despatched to Murshidabad. He was to ask the nawab for the restitution of the losses of the inhabitants of Calcutta, and

[87] I.O., Home Series, LXVIII, fol. 87.

[88] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 72; *Riyaz*, p. 370.

[89] Clive to Secret Committee, London, February 22, 1757, *loc. cit.*; Sirajuddaullah to Clive, March 15, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 286. "Dasturul Insha," fol. 36, cited by Askari, "Raja Ramnarain," *op. cit.*, XIV, 24.

[90] Clive and Killpatrick to Select Committee, Fort William, February 15, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 222-23.

[91] Clive to Payne, February 23, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 244.

> . . . should private restitution be refused, you must press the nawab to take upon himself the discharge of all debts due from the English to his subjects . . . [92]

In general the treaty of February 9, 1757, was, in the eyes of the English merely a temporary arrangement. It had re-established them in Bengal, and it had given them the economic privileges they considered necessary to the carrying on of a profitable trade. Two important motives of the expedition to Bengal, however, still had to be fulfilled. The first was the destruction of the French economic and political influence in Bengal, the other was the replacement of Sirajuddaullah by a person wholeheartedly friendly to the English interests. To this phase of the Bengal expedition we shall address ourselves in the next chapter.

[92] Select Committee, Fort William to William Watts, February 16, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 226. By this appointment William Watts became the forerunner of the system of residents at Indian courts appointed by the East India Company. The Marquess of Hastings so described the work of a resident: "Instead of acting in the character of ambassador, he assumes the functions of a dictator, interferes in all their private concerns; countenances refractory subjects against them . . ." *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, ed. The Marchioness of Bute, I (London: Saunders & Otley, 1858), pp. 47-48.

CHAPTER V

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENGLISH PROTECTORATE OVER BENGAL

We have seen that Clive and Watson had been advised by the Fort St. George council to dispossess the French of Chandernagore at the first available opportunity. [1] With the French attack on Minorca on May 17, 1756, the Seven Years War began in Europe. This presented the opportunity that Clive and Watson were looking for to reduce the French influence in Bengal.

A. The Reduction of the French Settlements in Bengal

The French in Bengal were the first to receive the news of the commencement of war in Europe. They were interested in getting the English to agree to a neutrality in Bengal, regardless of happenings elsewhere, and in having the nawab enforce this neutrality. To this end, two French representatives, La Porterie and Sinfray, were sent to see Admiral Watson on January 4th. Watson agreed to enter into a neutrality with the French "provided they would immediately join the English to agree to a neutrality in Bengal, regardless of happenings elsethe French could only hope for a neutrality at the pleasure of the English. Not unnaturally, therefore, they declined to accept Watson's conditions. As Law, the French chief of the Kassimbazar factory, clearly pointed out:

> What confidence could we have in a forced neutrality, which had been obesrved so long only out of fear of the nawab, who for the general good of the country was unwilling to allow any act of hostility to be committed by the Europeans? . . . When the English were at war with the nawab himself . . . [and] managed to get the better of him, what would become of this fear, the sole foundation of the neutrality? [3]

The Calcutta council had a difference of opinion with Watson. It was prepared to enter into a simple treaty of neutrality with the French.

[1] *Supra*, p. 89.

[2] Clive to the Select Committee, Fort St. George, January 8, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 91.

[3] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 178.

To this Watson replied in anger that he could not agree to a neutrality without a defensive alliance against the nawab. [4] On January 12th, he officially received the announcement of the commencement of the war in Europe. This modified his attitude, and he suggested three policies for examination by the Fort William council, viz: simple neutrality; neutrality with an alliance against the nawab; and, complete extirpation of the French influence in Bengal by means of war. [5] The Council came out in favor of the first policy but no step was taken to enter into negotiations with the French because of the attention focussed on Sirajuddaullah. [6]

In the French camp, Jean Law, in the face of the rebuff by Watson, argued in favor of an alliance with the nawab against the English. Renault, the chief of the Chandernagore factory felt tempted to accept this advice, and wrote to his superiors in Paris:

> We shall not hesitate to ally ourselves with the nawab, whose friendship may procure us great advantages in the augmentation of our privileges and several other matters not to mention the injury we shall do to the special enemy of our nation in obliging her to retire perhaps with loss, and to abandon an enterprise for the accomplishment of whichh she has stripped her principal establishments [Madras, Bombay] in India. [7]

An alliance with the nawab was a necessity because

> . . . if the nawab makes peace with the English without having received any assistance from us, you [Renault] must not expect to receive any from him if you happen to be attacked . . . [8]

But before Law and Renault could offer their alliance to the nawab, a letter was received from De Leyrit, the superior councilor of the French in India at Pondicherry, informing Courtin not to engage in any kind of hostile activity against the English. [9]

While these deliberations were taking place in the English and the French camps, the English had secured from Sirajuddaullah the treaty of February 9th. The swiftness with which the nawab and the English

[4] Watson to the Select Committee, Fort William Council, January 12, 1757.
[5] *Idem*, January 13, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 103.
[6] Select Committee, Fort William Council, to Watson, January 14, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 105.
[7] French Council, Chandernagore, to the Directors of the Company, Paris, January 18, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 117-18.
[8] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 179.
[9] Renault to the Superior Council, Pondicherry, October 26, 1758, *ibid.*, III, 270.

were reconciled, however outwardly, led the English to believe that the French could be quickly reduced with the permission of the nawab. Clive took the matter up with Ranjit Rai, who, as we have seen had played an important role in bringing about the treaty. But Clive "met with no advocate in him with regard to this point." [10] Thereupon Watts and Omichund were entrusted to secure permission from the nawab for the attack upon Chandernagore. [11]

The nawab, fearing the extension of the Anglo-French conflict into his dominions, seemed determined to enforce neutrality. In the event of the commencement of hostilities by one company, he outlined for himself a policy of requesting the other company to assist him in repelling the aggressor. To achieve these aims he at first ordered his deputy, Nand Kumar

> . . . to assist the French with all his force, in case the English should attack Chandernagore, or if the French should attack the English, to assist them in the same manner, that there may be no quarrels or disputes in this country . . . [12]

However, on receiving intelligence that the French commander

> . . . Monsieur Bussy with a large army was coming [into Bengal] and that some French men-of-war were likewise expected . . . [13]

he sent a message to Clive, through Omichund, desiring that the British forces

> . . . prevent the French from entering his kingdom by land or water . . .[14]

Determined to play one company against the other, and pretending not to show favors to one over the other, he extended almost the same privileges to the French company that he had granted to the English by the treaty of February 9th. He refunded Rs. 100,000 of the Rs. 300,000 he had secured from the French after the fall of Calcutta, and granted the French two additional privileges

> . . . the one to coin money with the [Mughal] king's stamp at Chandernagore, the other liberty of trade for Frenchmen on the same footing as the [English] Company . . . [15]

[10] Clive to the Secret Committee, London, February 22, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 237.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Watts to Clive, February 18, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 228.
[13] Clive to the Secret Committee, London, February 22, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 240.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 9363, *ibid.*, III, 258; Renault to Superior Council,

In return for these privileges, the nawab secured an assurance from the French "to oppose the passage of the English past Chandernagore," were the English to make an attempt to attack the nawab. [16]

Ever since the treaty of February 9th the English had been determined to drive the French out of Bengal. An attack on Chandernagore would have immediately materialized but for the hesitation of Watson who refused to do so on three grounds — the absence of the permission from the nawab, the sickness among the English troops, and the shallowness of River Hughli in the absence of spring tides for the movement of the men-of-war. [17] Consequently the matter was dropped for some time. However, the extension of the French trade privileges immediately led the English to believe that the nawab was once again conspiring to expel the English from Bengal. [18]

The English responded to these moves by bribing Nand Kumar, through Omichund, and thus preventing him from coming to the assistance of the French in the event of an English attack. Nand Kumar, it may be added, agreed to betray his sovereign for a paltry sum of £ 1,500, though his annual salary was over £ 30,000. [19] On February 18th, Clive's forces began their march toward Chandernagore. That same evening they arrived at Baranagore.

On receipt of information about the march of the English forces, the nawab wrote a letter of remonstrance to Clive:

> I understand . . . that five or six [English] ships are newly arrived and more are shortly expected, that you have only made a peace in appearance with me, but your real intentions are to make war against me in the rains. [20]

In a letter to Watson, on the same day, he added:

Pondicherry, October 26, 1758, *ibid.*, III, 270; Letter from Chandernagore Council to the Directors of the India Company, Paris, March 29, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 301.

[16] Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 9363, *loc. cit.*

[17] Select Committee, Fort William, to Secret Committee, London, February 24, 1758, *Hill Collection*, II, 249; [William Watts], *Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal* (London: A. Millar, 1764), pp. 27ff.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Watts to Clive, February 18, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 229; Orme, *Military Transactions*, II, 137.

[20] February 19, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 229-30. The nawab gauged the English strategy well. Three English strategists, Scott, Rannie and Grant had pointed out how Bengal could be overrun during the rainy season by a marine power through the use of River Hughli, while the nawab's infantry remained paralyzed. See *ibid.*, III, 383, 391, and I.O., Orme Papers, O.V., VI, fols. 1487-99.

> It now appears that you have a design to besiege the French factory near Hughli, and to commence hostilities against that nation . . . if you are determined to besiege the French factories, I shall be necessitated in honour to assist them with my troops. [21]

To buttress his position, he despatched a letter to Bussy saying:

> These disturbers of my country, the Admiral and Colonel Clive . . . are warring against . . . the governor of Chandernagore. I, who in all things seek the good of mankind, assist him in every respect . . .
> I have wrote you before for 2,000 soldiers and musketry. . . . I persuade myself you have already sent them . . . [22]

The letter to Bussy further intensified the English suspicion. Watts tells us that he had bribed the nawab's secretary and the chief of his intelligence services, and was fully aware of the nawab's correspondence with Bussy. [23] The nawab's letters to Watson and Clive immediately drew confessions of the English plans to attack Chandernagore. The admiral wrote:

> Had I imagined it would have given you umbrage, I should have never entertained the least thoughts of disturbing the tranquility of your country, by acting against that [French] nation within the Ganges; and am now ready to desist from attacking . . . if they will consent to a solid treaty of neutrality, and if you . . . will under your hand guarantee this treaty . . . [24]

In a separate letter Clive confirmed the sentiments expressed by Watson, but also added:

> Mr. Watts was sent to acquaint you that it was for our mutual benefit that the French should be attacked. . . . I could have taken the [Chandernagore] Fort in two days. Your Excellency forbidding me to do it after everything was in readiness has put me to great shame . . . [25]

Watts, on the other hand, knowing of the nawab's correspondence with the French, advised a policy of attack on Chandernagore despite the nawab's remonstrances. On February 25th he informed the Fort William council:

> His [Sirajuddaullah's] governing principle or reigning passion is fear, and by that alone is he to be swayed, therefore if we attack and

[21] *Hill Collection*, II, 230.
[22] February (?), 1757, *ibid.*, II, 264. Sirajuddaullah's earlier letter to Bussy, mentioned in this letter, does not seem to be extant.
[23] [Watts], *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31.
[24] February 21, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 231.
[25] February 22, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 236.

> lake Chandernagore every part of our agreement will be fulfilled and more indulgences granted us. If we are unsuccessful we shall get nothing, and if a neutrality is concluded with French no chicanery, artifice, or cunning will be left untried to delay putting us in possession of what the nawab has assented to. . . . We shall never be able to get a public order or leave to attack the French. If he tacitly acquiesces in it and does not molest us it is all we can expect . . . [26]

The English, however, did not want to risk an attack on Chandernagore, which would have embroiled them with the nawab also, in the absence of the reinforcements from Bombay which were daily expected. Meanwhile Renault, hearing of the efforts of the nawab to oppose an attack at Chandernagore, and perhaps knowing of the letter Watson had written to the nawab on February 21, sent three emissaries to Calcutta. They were Le Conte, Nicolaas and Fournier. On February 25th they propesed a five point treaty of neutrality. These points were: (1) neutrality to be observed, by land and sea, throughout Sirajuddaullah's dominions during the period of the war; (2) this neutrality to extend to Cape Palmyras; (3) the treaty of neutrality to be guaranteed by the nawab; (4) the treaty to be countersigned by the French superior council at Pondicherry and by Admiral Watson, on behalf of the French and English respectively; and (5) until this treaty was signed a truce to be observed in Bengal. After a few modifications, the Council of Fort William agreed to the treaty in principle. [27] On March 2d, the Council wrote a letter to Watson asking his opinion of the draft treaty. Watson replied:

> I did suppose the committee at Chandernagore was invested with proper powers to make and confirm such a treaty of themselves . . . but I have been assured . . . they have not those powers . . .
>
> I can by no means think of agreeing to such a neutrality, whereby it is so evident the French will have every advantage and we subject to every uncertainty. [28]

He also declared himself in opposition to requiring the nawab to guarantee the treaty.

The Fort William council then asked Watson to "reconsider his objections or to assist us with his squadron to attack Chandernagore with-

[26] Watts to the Select Committee, Fort William, February 25, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 255.

[27] Both the draft treaties are in *ibid.*, II, 259-63.

[28] Watson to the Select Committee, Fort William, March 3, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 268-69. Monstuart Elphinstone comments: "These objections were perfectly well-founded, but they ought to have been brought forward before the terms were agreed to." *The Rise of the British Power in the East*, ed. Edward Colebrooke (London: John Murray, 1887), p. 293.

out delay.[29] But Watson would neither sign the treaty nor agree to attack Chandernagore without permission from the nawab.[30]

The differences between the Calcutta councilors and Watson were largely motivated by their diverse relations with the French in the past. Drake and his councilors had a period of friendly relationship with their counterparts, and they were not unmindful of the French refusal to assist the nawab against them in the previous year as well as in the preceding months.[31] On the other hand Watson had brought with him to Bengal the professional soldier's hatred of the French. Between the council and the admiral, stood Clive — part merchant, part soldier — vacillating between neutrality and war. In response to Watson's obduracy, Clive declared on March 4th:

> If the neutrality be refused, do but reflect, gentlemen, what will be the opinion of the world of these our late proceedings? . . . What will the nawab think, after the promises made him on our side, and after his consenting to guarantee this treaty? He, and all the world will certainly think, that we are men without principles . . .[32]

In the next two days two developments of considerable consequence took place. The first was the arrival of the Bombay troops via the *Cumberland*.[33] The second was a letter from the nawab to Clive:

> The advanced forces of the new king Ahmad Shah Abdali are endeavouring to make an eruption into Bengal and I purpose [*sic*] marching to Azimabad [Patna]. If you will join me upon this occasion and go with me, I will allow you every month a *lakh* of rupees . . .[34]

Clive's position immediately changed. If one refers to the minutes of the Select Committee meeting on March 6th, one finds the following account:

> Colonel Clive presents a translation of a letter from the nawab. As this letter shows that we may possibly get the nawab's permission to attack the French if we make it a condition of assisting him against

[29] I.O., Bengal Select Consultations, March 4, 1757.

[30] *Idem*, March 5, 1757.

[31] These diverse attitudes are examined by Spear in *The Nabobs*, chap. ii, *passim*. James Mill comments: "In return to the French for that neutrality of theirs which had saved the English [in February, 1757], Clive . . . sounded him [Sirajuddaullah] to know if he would permit the English to attack Chandernagore . . ." (*Op. cit.*, III, 177-78).

[32] Clive to the Select Committee, Fort William, March 4, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 267.

[33] Orme, *Military Transactions*, II, 142-43.

[34] March 4, 1757, *Hill Collection*, III, 270-71.

the Pathans, the question of writing again to the admiral is raised.

Mr. Becher is strongly in favour of establishing a neutrality and telling the admiral that the treaty was commenced with his consent, and that he is responsible for the results if he now refuses.

Colonel Clive and Major Killpatrick are in favour of advancing on Chandernagore on the chance of getting the nawab's permission.

The president [Drake] thinks . . . we should attack Chandernagore as soon as possible . . . [35]

Two days later, on March 8th, Clive, no longer waxing eloquent about the world's opinion of English plottings, began his march toward Chandernagore. The next day he reached Serampore.

The French were alarmed by Clive's actions and demanded an explanation. Clive, "whom deception, when it suited his purpose, never cost a pang," [36] replied on March 9th:

> I very sincerely declare to you, that at this present time I have no intention to attack your settlement. If I should alter my mind, I shall not fail to advise you of it. [37]

The French also took their case to Sirajuddaullah. Consequently Watts, the English agent, and Law, the French representative, both were summoned to the court. The nawab told them that

> . . . he was not in the humour to allow our two nations to make war in a country under his rule and that he was determined that the neutrality should be preserved as it had always been . . . [38]

When Watts remonstrated that the French officials were not empowered to enter a treaty with the English, the nawab, according to Law, proposed:

> . . . to draw up a paper in which I would promise in the name of my [French] nation that the treaty of neutrality would be ratified at Pondicherry. I agreed.
>
> Then he told Mr. Watts to draw up a paper promising that we should not be attacked from now up to a fixed date, within which time the ratification may be obtained. Mr. Watts appeared to consent, but

[35] I.O., Bengal Select Committee Consultations, March 6, 1757. Clive's testimony before the Parliamentary select committee in 1772 about this meeting is hopelessly inaccurate. See *Hill Collection*, III, 311. He said then that Beecher and Killpatrick were for neutrality, he himself for war, while nothing could be made of Drake's opinion. He added that after discussion Killpatrick changed his opinion, while Drake remained indecisive.

[36] Mill, *op. cit.*, III, 194n.

[37] Clive to the French Council, Chandernagore, March 9, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 277.

[38] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 195.

> [when] asked . . . if he could assure . . . that the admiral would be bound by the promise . . . he replied that he could not answer . . . [39]

The nawab thereupon had a letter sent to Watson, the intent of which was to appeal to him to accept the neutrality offer of the French. The letter was written on behalf of the nawab by his secretary, whom Watts, after making "a handsome present" asked "to pen this important epistle in a proper style, so as to permit the attack immediately, and to despatch it without delay." [40] The letter said:

> My forbidding war on my borders was because the French were my tenants, and upon this affair desired my protection . . .
>
> You have understanding and generosity: if your enemy with an upright heart claims your protection, you will give him his life, but then you must be well satisfied of the innocence of his intentions; if not, whatever you think right, that do. [41]

Watts and Ives claim that this last paragraph removed Watson's scruples with regard to attacking Chandernagore without the nawab's permission. [42] "The letter," opines Scrafton, "may be very well understood as a consent to our attacking Chandernagore though it certainly was never meant as such." [43]

It is, however, difficult to agree with the opinions of Watts and Ives that this letter paved the way for Watson's approval of an attack on Chandernagore. Before Watson ever received this letter from the nawab, he had sent his men-of-war to cover the advance of Clive's forces by land. [44] Watson had changed his mind on the receipt of "his Majesty's declaration of war against France with orders from the Right Honourable the lords commissioners of the admiralty to put the same into execution." [45] These orders called for distressing the French anywhere they could be.

On March 13th Clive summoned Renault "to surrender the fort of Chandernagore." [46] Renault's refusal led to the opening of hostilities the same night. Law received the news on the 15th and immediately approached the nawab for assistance. During the next week the nawab

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] [John Campbell], *Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal* (London, A. Millar, 1760), pp. 42-43; Law's Memoir, *Hill Collection*, III, 191n; Scrafton, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-74.

[41] Sirajuddaullah to Watson, March 10, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 279.

[42] [Campbell], *op. cit.*, p. 43; Ives, *op. cit.*, 125n.

[43] Scrafton, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

[44] Clive to Watson, March 11, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 280.

[45] Watson to the Select Committee, Fort William, March 12, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 283.

[46] Clive to Renault, March, 13, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 284.

ordered and counter-ordered reinforcements. This is graphically described by Law:

> I received the news on the 15th. . . . I hastened to the nawab. . . . He assured me he would give [orders for reinforcement] . . . that very evening. ,
>
> The night of the 15th . . . the nawab sent me his chief eunuch to give me the happy news that the English had been repulsed . . . When I appeared in the *durbar* the next morning the nawab flattered himself that all was finished . . .
>
> In the evening I learn in the *durbar* . . . that the town of Chandernagore was in the power of English. . . . The English had gained over Nand Kumar . . . who wrote to the nawab anything they thought proper to dictate him . . .
>
> The Seths and several of the *diwans,* who had been consulted on the change, had represented that it would not be proper to send any reinforcements, that the English . . . would be master of the Fort in less than two days, and would then come and attack the nawab in Murshidabad itself, and that it was the part of prudence not to irritate them, on which the order was given to Rai Durlabh Ram not to start [for Chandernagore]. That even brought back all the troops which had marched out . . .
>
> However, I continued my efforts. . . . Meanwhile the nawab is informed by his own spies that the English batteries have not damaged the fort. He recovers courage and gives fresh orders for the departure of his troops, who begin their march, commanded by Rai Durlabh Ram and Mir Madan . . . [47]

These troops reached a point twenty miles off Hughli on March 22nd. This advance immediately drew two letters from Clive. To Durlabh Ram he wrote:

> I hear you are arrived within 20 miles of Hughli. Whether you come as a friend or an enemy I know not. If as the latter, say so at once, and I will send some people out to fight you immediately . . . [48]

And to Sirajuddaullah, he warned:

> If you are determined to march this way I cannot forbid it, but I shall be very sorry to see the troubles renewed . . .
>
> Hitherto I have only made use of musketry against the French, but tomorrow early I shall open my batteries, and the ships will begin their fire, so that by the blessing of God I hope the place will be our own tomorrow. [49]

And, indeed, the next day the French surrendered. The siege of Chan-

[47] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 196-99.
[48] Clive to Durlabh Ram, March 22, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 288.
[49] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, March 22, 1757, *ibid.*, II 288.

dernagore had begun on March 14th. Nand Kumar, who had been ordered to defend the French, but had received a fresh bribe from the English wrote to the nawab:

> That as the French were unable to resist the English, he had therefore ordered his troops to Hughli, lest his victorious colours should be involved in their disgrace. [50]

To continue resistance in the face of overwhelming English strength and with no hope of assistance from the nawab would have been useless. [51] On March 23rd Renault signed a capitulation, its terms were drawn up by him but amended by Clive and Watson. [52]

By the terms of the capitulation the French were obliged to leave Chandernagore and to place all their factories in Bengal at the disposal of the nawab and Admiral Watson. The officers of the garrison became prisoners on parole, and the common soldiers, prisoners of war. With respect to Fort d'Orleans at Chandernagore, the decision was made to destroy it since there were not enough English troops to hold it. [53] Some forty of the French soldiers, however escaped and joined Law at Kassimbazar. In appreciation of the services of the native sepoys, rewards, *not exceeding ten rupees,* were made to the families of those killed in the service of the English at Chandernagore! [54] This sheds an interesting light on the expendable nature of the natives in the English employment.

B. The Fall of Sirajuddaullah

The French had fallen because, as Scrafton points out, the nawab floated between his fears and his wishes. He "shamefully abandoned those whom he was bound, both for his honour and interest, to sup-

[50] Cited by Scrafton, *op. cit.*, p. 70. Scrafton generally corroborates the mercurial changes in the attitude of Sirajuddaullah described by Law.

[51] Renault's forces numbered 794 (Renault to the Superior Council, Pondicherry, October 26, 1758, *Hill Collection,* III, 265-83; see also *ibid.*, for the French account of the attack). For a secondary account of the fall of Chandernagore, compiled from both English and French sources, see S. C. Hill, *Three Frenchmen in Bengal* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903), pp. 13-64.

[52] For the articles of capitulation, see Robert Beatson, *Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain, 1727-83* (6 vols.; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1804), III, 156-57. The copy in *Hill Collection,* II, 292-93, taken from a secondary source is slightly defective.

[53] Admiral Pocock to Earl Holderness, April 14, 1757, Pocock Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. (Cited hereafter as Pocock Papers.) Pocock was the commander of the *Cumberland,* and upon the death of Watson succeeded as the admiral of the English fleet in the Indian Ocean.

[54] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, April 7, 1757.

port. [55] The nawab's vaccilation, however, continued. In a letter to Clive, on March 26th, he declared his "inexpressible pleasure" at the English victory at Chandernagore. [56] At the same time he wrote to Bussy to come to his help to defend Law, whom the nawab had taken under his shelter. [57]

Clive, on behalf of the Company, was also no longer content with the policy of sending alternately haughty and submissive letters to the nawab. [58] He wrote to Watts to demand from the nawab "an strict alliance with us," with a view to driving the French out "root and branch" from Bengal and also to reaping greater political and economic advantages from the nawab himself. [59] On March 29th he declared in a letter to the nawab that Bengal was not large enough to contain the Anglo-French hostility, and consequently demanded "the persons and effects of the French at Kassimbazar, and their out-settlements." [60] This the nawab at first refused to do on the ground that the French had settled in Bengal with the permission of the Mughal emperor. He, however, advised Clive to secure a letter of surrender of the French factories from Renault, and also stipulated that the English should indemnify the emperor for the loss of duties received from the French. [61] To this Clive immediately agreed. However, in order to put further pressures on the nawab, he accused the nawab of failing to fulfill the provisions of the treaty of February 9th, and demanded:

> 1st. That the guns and ammunition taken at Kassimbazar and the other subordinates [factories] be restored.
> 2nd. *Parwanas* through the country, expecially at Dacca, for the currency of our business.
> 3rd. *Parwanas* for the currency of *siccas* coined at Calcutta alias Alinagar.
> 4th. *Parwanas* for the thirty-eight villages.
> 5th. *Parwanas* for returning everything taken at different aurangs and factories. [62]

Clive was definitely exaggerating the non-fulfillment of the treaty

[55] Scrafton, *op. cit.*, p. 76. And yet when he tried to support the French, the English accused him of "treachery."
[56] Sirajuddaullah to Clive, March 26, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 295.
[57] These letters are in *ibid.*, II, 313-14.
[58] Clive to Watts, March 24, 1757, I.O., Orme Papers, India, XI fols. 2752ff.
[59] *Ibid.*; Clive to Pigot, March 29, 1757, *Hill Collection* II, 303.
[60] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, March 29, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 304.
[61] Sirajuddaullah to Clive, April 8, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 313.
[62] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, April 10, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 321.

obligations by the nawab. On March 10th Watts had informed the Fort William council that the nawab

> . . . has ordered Jagat Seth to pay me twenty thousand gold *mohurs* [pieces] . . . ordered his *mutsuddies* [clerks] to be expeditious in delivering over the goods and effects he has in his possession, and his writers to write *parwanas* agreeable to his agreement; he desires . . . you will send for the *zamindars*, purchase, content them and take possession of the 38 villages . . . The nawab says you may coin *siccas* in Calcutta whenever you please . . . [63]

Clive himself, in a letter of March 11th, observed the "Kassimbazar factory with a considerable quantity of goods are restored." [64] And on March 29th, Clive had declared:

> He [the nawab] has already performed almost every article of the treaty; paid Mr. Watts the three lakhs of rupees; delivered up Kassimbazar, and all other factories, with the money and goods therein taken. The gentlement write from thence that little or nothing is wanting. [65]

Clive's demands were, therefore, mere excuses to harangue the nawab. Whatever accounts had not been settled with the nawab were not because of his bad faith but because of the general indolence of the Company's officials to settle the accounts. Watts complained:

> The 10th of March I wrote to the [Select] Committee to send up the *gomastahs* [agents] of the several *aurungs*; but not one has as yet appeared, which prevents our settling any of those accounts, as I know not what was seized from these several places; for these delays the nawab blames us, and says as soon as we have finished these accounts he will deliver over what was brought to his account in Calcutta. . . . The nawab is very earnest . . . [66]

Scrafton's letter shows that the English demands were never specifically stated and were always increasing. [67]

The nawab, however, in order to remove one excuse for English hostility towards him dismissed Law from Murshidabad. [68] Law

[63] Watts to the Select Committee, Fort William, March 10, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 278.

[64] Clive to Pigot, March 11, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 282.

[65] Clive to Pigot, March 29, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 303. Also see, Clive to the Select Committee, Fort St. George, March 30, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 306.

[66] Watts to Clive, April 11, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 323-24. According to Harry Verelst (*Rise, Progress and Present State of the English Government in Bengal* [London: J. Nourse, 1772], pp. 142-43), the nawab issued nineteen *parwanas* between March 9th and March 31st to the English. Five of these are reproduced by Verelst.

[67] Scrafton to Walsh, April 9, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 342; Scrafton to Clive, April 28, 1757, *ibid.*, III, 346.

[68] Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, III, 202-06; Sirajuddaullah to Clive, April 14, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 329. The author of *Seir* says that the nawab dismissed Law only for a temporary period and assured him that he would be recalled. Watts who was present at all of the nawab's interviews with Law does not make a mention of this.

retreated towards Patna, and Watts's efforts to secure his voluntary surrender failed. [69]

The nawab's step instead of appeasing the English only made them more pugnacious. Watts claimed that the nawab had no right to let Law and his party go away northwards, and insisted that they should have been handed over to the English as he demanded. When Watts sought permission to send an English force in pursuit of Law, the nawab declared, in the words of Watts:

> If we pursue them, he declares the agreement [of February 9th] will no longer subsist, and if I have sure intelligence that [English] forces are being sent [in pursuit of Law], I must depart [from the nawab's court]. [70]

The English, however, refused to take no for an answer. Watson declared:

> . . . while a Frenchmen remains in this kingdom I will never cease pursuing him. . . . I desire you will grant a *dustuck* for the passage of two thousand of our soldiers by land to Patna. [71]

The demand, coupled with the charge that the nawab had failed to carry out his treaty obligations, incensed the nawab. He turned the English agent out of his *durbar*, declaring:

> I will destroy them and their nation. . . . They are always writing me to deliver up the French . . . [72]

The outburst of the nawab, however, was followed the next day by a change of attitude. He recalled the English agent and gave him a token of his friendship. The threat of Abdali's invasion of his dominions was constantly with him. He declared:

> What shall I do to satisfy the English? Let me know their demand and I will comply with it; for I want to march to the northward. [73]

The fear of Abdali invasion was, indeed, a source of constant anxiety to the nawab. In February, 1757, the Afghan invader had sacked Delhi, Agra and Mathura, slaying and plundering wherever he went. Abdali retired from Delhi on April 3d, but the danger still remained. The best troops of the nawab were deployed under Raja Ramnarain

[69] Watts to Clive, April 18, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 344. For Law's career, see Hill, *Three Frenchmen in Bengal*, chap. iii.

[70] Watts to Clive, April 18, 1757, I.O., Orme Papers, India, IX, fol. 2296.

[71] Watson to Sirajuddaullah, April 19, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 345; Clive to Sirajuddaullah, April 20, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 348-49.

[72] Scrafton to Walsh, April 20, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 349.

[73] Cited in Scrafton to Walsh, April 21, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 351.

on the Bihar frontier to meet the attack, were it to materialize. [74] This had led to a serious division of the nawab's forces. What was left in the province of Bengal were troops under unreliable commanders.

Watts and Scrafton, the English agents at the nawab's court played on the nawab's fears both of the Afghan invasion, and of the English power. They were apprehensive of a possible alliance between the nawab and the French. They feared an attack on their settlements, with or without the help of the French, once Clive and his troops had embarked for the Coromandel Coast. Further, the economic benefits of the recapture of Calcutta and the sack of Hughli and Chandernagore were far below the greedy expectations of the Fort William councilors who had only accepted the February 9th treaty as a temporary expedient.

C. The Conspiracy Against Sirajuddaullah

Under such circumstances "the most effectual way of establishing a peace in the country and settling the English on a good solid foundation," lay in a *coup d'etat* against Sirajuddaullah. [75] On August 20th, Scrafton supported the idea of setting up Yar Khan [76] as the nawab. This effort was in line with the policy advocated by the Fort St. George council on the eve of Clive's expedition to Bengal. [77] The Fort William councilors, especially Drake, were also very happy to advocate the overthrow of Sirajuddaullah. [78] On April 23d the select committee of the Fort William council finally adopted a *coup d'etat* against the nawab as its official policy. [79] Clive was thereupon directed to enter into concert with some Bengali notables discontented with the nawab. Thus began the conspiracy which established the English protectorate over Bengal. [80]

[74] Askari, "Raja Ramnarain," *loc. cit.*

[75] Pocock to Holderness, July 16, 1757, Pocock Papers.

[76] Scrafton to Walsh, April 20, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 349.

[77] *Supra*, p. 88.

[78] Drake to the Secret Committee, London, July 14, 1757, in Great Britain, House of Commons, *Reports on the East India Affairs, First Report of the Select Committee, 1772*, p. 217. Also see G. R. Gleig, *Memoirs of the Life of Right Honourable Warren Hastings*, I (London: Richard Bentley, 1841), 41.

[79] I.O., Bengal Select Committee Consultation, April 23, 1757. Clive to the Select Committee, Fort William, April 29, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 368. Atul Chandra Roy in his valuable *The Career of Mir Jafar Khan* (Calcutta: Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., 1958) has neglected to emphasize the bold initiative of the English in entering into a conspiracy with the Bengali nobles.

[80] Roy, *op. cit.*, chap. ii, has traced the development of the 'conspiracy' by utilizing both the Indian and English sources. He has not used Pocock papers.

Yar Khan Latif was passed over in favor of Mir Jafar Khan, whom the Company proudly, though erroneously, claimed to be a man "held in great esteem by all ranks of the people." [81] Mir Jafar Khan was the choice of the Seth brothers, without whose support a *coup d'etat* was almost impossible. [82] Ghasiti Begum, "her heart . . . ulcerated by his [Sirajuddaullah's] having turned her out of her property and home," opened her purse to support the conspirators. [83] Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh Ram, Mirza Amir Beg, and Khadim Husain Khan promised the support of the soldiers under their command.

Three pretexts sufficed to rationalize collusion with Mir Jafar against Sirajuddaullah. They were: (1) the nawab's dishonesty and insolent behavior towards the Company; (2) his intrigues with Bussy and Law, which proved certainly that "he will break it [the treaty] upon the first occasion;" (3) and, the hatred felt by the people of Bengal, which portended a revolution anyway. It was, therefore, best to secure a successor who would act in the Company's interest. [84] Between May 1st and June 4th a treaty was concluded with Mir Jafar by which the Company was promised not only all that it had already secured by the treaty of February 9th but also the following: all French persons and property were to be delivered to the English; Mir Jafar was to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Company, but was to bear the expenses of English troops when used for defense the Company was to be paid 100 lakhs of rupees; the Europeans, 50 lakhs; the Hindus, 20 lakhs; and the Armenians, 7 lakhs for their losses at Calcutta; the Company was to be allowed an extension of its settlement at Calcutta; and the nawab was to desist from erecting any fortifications below the town of Hughli. [85]

While this treaty was being negotiated two complications arose. Omichund demanded that he be paid "5 per cent on all the nawab's treasure, which would amount to two crore [twenty million] rupees

[81] Pocock to Holderness, July 16, 1757, Pocock Papers.

[82] This argument is well developed by Little in his monograph (*op. cit.*) on the Seth brothers. Jadunath Sarkar calls their collusion an effort to purify the Bengali administration. (*History of Bengal,* II, 486.) The evidence is against Sarkar's verdict. The conspiracy and the Battle of Plassey were a business transaction. Little writes: "If they had organized a revolution themselves, without the aid of the English, it would have been a costly and dangerous business . . ." (*Op. cit.,* XXII, 52.)

[83] *Seir,* II, 228.

[84] Bengal Select Committee Consultations, May 1, 1757, *Hill Collection,* II, 370-71.

[85] For original proposals made on May 1st and the final treaty as signed on June 4th, see, *ibid.,* II, 373-74, 383-85.

[two million pounds], besides a quarter of his wealth." [86] If this bribe were not paid, he declared, he would reveal the conspiracy to the nawab. At Clive's suggestion the Company decided to deceive Omichund. Consequently two agreements were drawn up, one promising two million of rupees to Omichund, the other making no mention of it. The latter agreement was signed by Watson, and on the other Watson's name was forged with his tacit approval. [87] The other complication arose when Rai Durlabh Ram, as the revenue minister of Sirajuddaullah, declared that the nawab's treasures had been overvalued and doubted if the English could be paid as much as they demanded. Durlabh Ram's opposition was silenced by promising him a 5 per cent share of the nawab's wealth.

We must now return to the nawab's camp. On April 26th the nawab informed Clive that Abdali was returning to his country and that the danger of the invasion of Bengal by him had subsided. With the slightly increased confidence generated by the news about Abdali, he added:

> As by your army's marching this way [towards Murshidabad] the treaty must be infringed and the kingdom suffer; on this account I write you, so that if you send an army this way, it is you who break the treaty, and I am blameless. I have directed my generals, when they receive accounts of your having begun a march, to set out to meet you . . . [88]

Mir Jafar was ordered to Plassey with 15,000 men to join Rai Durlabh Ram, who had been there for a month. The nawab meant business, and Watts immediately requested Clive to withdraw from Chandernagore to Calcutta "and appear to give up all thought of war, and send your people nowhere but keep quiet." [89]

Since the conspiracy was still in an embryonic stage, Clive decided to back down a little. He replied to the nawab:

> That your Highness may have no longer any suspicion or doubt of the truth what I have often declared to you . . . I have ordered the greatest part of my army to Calcutta, and the rest to Chandernagore, and I expect to hear your Excellency has ordered your troops to return to Murshidabad.
>
> I act openly and fairly . . . [90]

[86] Watts to Clive, May 14, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 381.

[87] Mills (*op. cit.*, III, 194n) maintains that Watson's name was forged in spite of him. This is denied by Clive, Walsh, Cooke and Ives (*Hill Collection*, III, 317, 318, 320; Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 176ff). They maintain that Watson gave a tacit approval

[88] Sirajuddaullah to Clive, April 26, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 360-61.

[89] Watts to Clive, April 28, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 367.

[90] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, May 2, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 372.

In another letter on May 4th, he added:

> However, farther to satisfy you, I shall order down to Calcutta all my field cannon. I expect to hear that your army has retired likewise to Murshidabad. [91]

A few days later by an ironic incident Clive found another way to instill faith of his sincerity in the nawab's heart. About May 10th a representative of Peshwa Balaji Rao arrived with a letter from the peshwa to Drake promising the English the support of 120,000 soldiers and offering to reimburse the English for their losses by "double of its value," and proposing to divide Bengal between himself and the English to the exclusion of the French. [92] Clive, not knowing whether the letter was genuine, or forged by one of the nawab's spies, decided by a master stroke of diplomacy to send Scrafton with the letter to the nawab as one more proof of the English loyalty. [93] The policy had the desired effect. Sirajuddaullah wrote to Clive on May 27th informing him:

> I am now well assured . . . on this consideration I have wrote to . . . Durlabh Ram . . . and Mir Jafar . . . and to Mir Madan to return hither with their armies as soon as possible. They will accordingly speedily be with me . . . [94]

Mir Jafar returned to Murshidabad on May 30th, where he received a very cold reception from the nawab. The nawab suspected him of intrigues and dismissed him from service. In his place Khwaja Abdul Hadi Khan was appointed the paymaster of the forces. But

> Sirajuddaullah, in spite of the circulation of the news about his enemy's [preparations] remained sunk in negligence and enjoyment of pleasure. His confidants especially Mir Madan and Khwaja Abdul Hadi Khan grieved at this slothfulness and told him . . . 'Mir Muhammad Jafar Khan is treacherously bent on ruining this royal house.' [95]

Sirajuddaullah, however, did not listen to the advice of Mir Madan and Khawaja Hadi who had suggested:

[91] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, May 4, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 376-77.

[92] This letter must have been received in answer to a letter sent by the Fort St. George council asking the peshwa to use his influence on Sirajuddaullah to compose the matters with the English. A reference to this is made in Henry Dodwell, *Calendar of the Madras Despatches, 1754-65* (Madras, Government Press, 1930), p. 75. The letter is in Scrafton's book *(op. cit.,* p. 82); also see Clive to Watts, May 11, 1757, *Hill Collection,* II, 378-79. Clive sent a formal acknowledgment of the letter to Balaji Baji Rao (I.O., Home Series, CXCIII, fol. 189).

[93] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, May 14, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 380; Clive to Sirajuddaullah, May 20, 1757 *ibid.*, II, 390; Clive to Watts, May 19, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 388-89.

[94] Sirajuddaullah to Clive, May 27, 1757, *ibid.*, II 394.

[95] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 74.

> We ought to put them [Mir Jafar and Khadim Khan] down first, so that the English on hearing the news, will themselves take to flight. The presence of these two will be the cause of distraction and anxiety to us [the loyal generals] as they are sure to practice treachery. [96]

The warning proved to be prophetic. The nawab, in order to present a united front against the English, decided to conciliate Mir Jafar, who promised under oath his fidelity to the nawab, only to betray his master in the weeks to come.

The temporary eclipse of Mir Jafar at the court made him jittery. In order to get the *coup d'etat* under way at the earliest moment, he promised another fifty-two lakhs of rupees to the English councilors and military and naval officers. The final treaty was delivered to Clive on June 10th. Two days later Clive's forces began their march towards Murshidabad. On June 13th Clive sent his ultimatum to the nawab:

> I find you have not been true to your treaty. . . . You have discouraged the Company's business beyond what I am able to express . . . [97]

He demanded that Jagat Seth, Raja Mohan Lall, Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh and Mir Madan be asked to judge whether the nawab had remained faithful to his engagements. [98] The nawab replied:

> Something of this kind [ultimatum] . . . hindered me from recalling the army from Plassey for I knew some trick was intended. I thank God, however, the treaty has not been broken on my part . . . [99]

The nawab marched toward Plassey to meet Clive. By the 19th Clive had secured Katwa, the key to Murshidabad. On June 23rd Clive won his victory at Plassey, not merely as a result of the valor of his forces, but also because of the treason within Sirajuddaullah's camp. Though the nawab's total force consisted of 15,000 cavalry, 34,000 foot soldiers, war elephants and forty pieces of cannon, yet of them only 12,000 men with twelve guns faced the 3,200 men and eight guns of Clive. The battle ended in about eight hours. It also sealed the fate of the nawab. He fled northwards to Bihar to join his trusted lieutenant Ramnarain, who was also a host to Law. On the way he was caught by a partisan of Mir Jafar, surrendered to Miran, Mir Jafar's son, and was assassinated on July 2d. [100]

[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

[97] Clive to Sirajuddaullah, Jun 13, 1757, *Hill Collection*, II, 405-06.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] Sirajuddaullah to Clive, June 15, 1757, *ibid.*, II, 411.

[100] For the Plassey battle, see Roy, *op. cit.*, *chap* iii. E. O'Ballance, "The Battle of Plassey, 1757", *Royal United Service Institution Journal*, CII (August 1957), 363-371.

In the meantime, on June 29th, Clive crowned Mir Jafar as the new nawab of Bengal. The new nawab was led to his throne by Clive, and this gesture symbolized the beginning of the English protectorate over Bengal.

D. Causes of Sirajuddaullah's Failure

On June 23d, the day the Battle of Plassey was fought

> Colonel Clive . . . saw the morning break with increasing anxiety; at sunrise he went with another person upon the terrace of the hunting house, from whence having contemplated the enemy's array, he was surprised at their numerous, splendid and martial appearance. His companion asked him what he thought would be the event; to which he replied, "We must make the best fight we can during the day, and at night sling our muskets over our shoulders and march back to Calcutta." Most of the officers were as doubtful of success as himself . . . [101]

It is obvious that the English victory at Plassey was not anticipated to take place as easily as it did. Sirajuddaullah's military failure was due to the inactiveness of a large section of his forces, under the command of Mir Jafar and Durlabh Ram, who were in league with the English. As the battle progressed, the nawab did not know which section to trust and which not. His most loyal troops were in Bihar under Raja Ramnarain, and when the Battle of Plassey was over, it seems to have been his intention to join Raja Ramnarain and to engage the English in battle again.

Sirajuddaullah's failure was, therefore, a political failure. He failed to suppres the rebellious officers who colluded with the English, and of whose activities he had considerable knowledge. [102] In 1756 one of the reasons of his easy victory over the English was that he had suppressed the opposition of his rivals, Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jung. In 1757 he lacked resolution to suppress Mir Jafar and Durlabh Ram. It is true, that on the eve of the Battle of Plassey the Hindu compradors, who were his allies in his struggles against Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jung, had joined Mir Jafar and the English against him. However, one is tempted to agree with the advice given by Mir Madan to Sirajuddaullah that the nawab's first duty was to suppress Mir Jafar instead of appeasing him. And the opposition to him would have been considerably reduced.

[101] I.O., Orme Papers, O.V., CLXIV-A, fol. 115, cited by Dodwell in *Cambridge History of India*, V, 150.

[102] Roy, *op. cit.*, chap. i.

Another question arises as to why Mir Jafar and the Hindu bankers found themselves alienated from Sirajuddaullah. Mir Jafar and other Muslim nobles joined the conspiracy because they were ambitious and wanted to appropriate power to themselves. This was a common game at the Indian courts in the mid-eighteenth century. It is difficult to explain the Hindu participation in the conspiracy against him. Partly it was because the commercial interests bound the Hindus with the English. Partly it was due to the insulting attitude towards the Jagat Seth brothers, who had been threatened with circumcision by the nawab. Thus the elements that conspired to overthrow Sirajuddaullah did not have a common motive for their actions against their common enemy. This became evident soon after the accession of Mir Jafar when the new nawab found himself in opposition to the Hindu nobles and compradors. After Plassey, the English abandoned their alliance with the Muslim military aristocracy; in its place they developed bonds of common interests with the Hindu nobles and bankers.

E. Summary

From the foregoing account it is obvious that the treaty of February 9th was a stopgap agreement of convenience. The nawab agreed to it because he feared an invasion from the north; the English because they feared an alliance between the nawab and the French. However, the treaty neither restored mutual confidence between the nawab and the English nor removed the threats of the Afghan invasion or the Franco-Bengali alliance.

The English fear of the Franco-Bengali alliance was made worse by the half-hearted attempts of the nawab to enter into a 'defensive' alliance with the French to maintain Bengal's territorial integrity and political neutrality. However pious the hopes of the nawab, the English construed these attempts as being directed towards an "offensive" alliance against them, notwithstanding the fact that the nawab also wanted a defensive alliance with the English against the encroachments of the French. During the War of the Austrian Succession, Nawab Alivardi Khan had been able to insure the territorial integrity of his dominions because he had overwhelming power over the English and the French. In 1757, with the troops of Clive and the naval forces of Watson and Pocock present in the Hughli, and with the threat of Abdali's invasion from the north, the nawab no longer possessed this balance of power in his favor. The political neutrality of his dominion, therefore, could only have been maintained so long as

the French, the English and the nawab gave voluntary assent to it. There seems to have been a dim hope for this before the arrival of the reinforcements on the *Cumberland,* but after that Clive and other councilors, who had some moral compunctions against violating the treaty of February 9th, found themselves in favor of attacking the French at Chandernagore.

The invasion of Chandernagore was not only a violation of the treaty provisions but also an indication that the balance of power in Bengal had shifted in favor of the English. The territorial integrity of Bengal was violated the very minute the English attacked the French, and the nawab found himself unable to restore it. The defeat of the French foreshadowed the Battle of Plassey.

The English, Malleson points out, were restrained by no scruples in their attitude towards the nawabate of Bengal. The nawab's effort to fulfill his treaty obligations did not prevent the English from seducing and corrupting his generals or flagrantly accusing him of failing to fulfill his obligations. [103] Clive was understating the temper of political activity in Bengal during these fateful months, when he wrote to Orme: "I am possessed of volumes of materials for the continuation of your history, in which will appear fighting, tricks, chicanery, intrigues, politics, and the Lord knows what." [104]

The dismissal of Law from Murshidabad and the failure of the nawab to arrange an alliance with the French has been criticized by Dodwell as a folly. [105] This overlooks the fact that had Sirajuddaullah entered into an alliance with the French, and if by such an alliance he had been able to expel the English, then the logical result would have been the extension of a French protectorate over Bengal. Instead of Clive, Law or Renault might have become the protectors of the nawab of Bengal. In the mid-eighteenth century the dominions of Sirajuddaullah were threatened by the schism within Bengal and by the general breakdown of political authority in India. Sooner or later the Europeans were bound to take advantage of the situation. It may, therefore, be argued that Sirajuddaullah's policy of neutrality between the French and the English was the only hope of preserving Bengal's territorial integrity. If it did not succeed, it was because the power to enforce such a policy was lacking. In spite of his personal weaknesses,

[103] Malleson, *op. cit.,* pp. 48-49.
[104] Clive to Orme, August 1, 1757, *Hill Collection,* II, 464.
[105] *Cambridge History of India,* V, 146.

the nawab tried his best to be a patriot. It is, therefore, not difficult to agree in most respects with Malleson that Sirajuddaullah

> . . . was more fortunate, and certainly less to be despised, than was Mir Jafar. Whatever may have been his faults, Sirajuddaullah had neither betrayed his master nor sold his country. Nay more, no unbiased Englishman, sitting in judgement over the events that passed in the interval between the 9th February and the 23rd June, can deny that the name of Sirjuddaullah stands higher in the scale of honour than does the name of Clive. He was the only one of the principal actors in that tragic drama who did not attempt to deceive. [106]

Jadunath Sarkar, on the contrary, calls the defeat of Bengal at Plassey "the beginning, slow and unperceived, of a glorious dawn, the like of which the history of the world has not seen elsewhere. . . . It was truly a Renaissance." [107] To test the validity of this opinion one should examine the consequences of the Battle of Plassey on Indian history. As will be evident from the next chapter, Sarkar's judgment is highly erroneous and politically naïve. In this connection one is reminded of the words of Charles James Fox:

> It will be an ill lesson indeed for the people of India, that while they are subjects to [the Mughal] vizier or *subahdar*, we will protect in their rights, that while they hold of him [*sic*] we will stand forth in their favour. If the attempts to oppress you, we will rescue you from the hands of your lawful master; but if by conquest or by any other means we become your sovereigns, remember there is none that can guarantee the treaty between you and us. The power of the sovereign is all, the right of the vassal is nothing. You are persons without right, engagement, or any political existence, but our will and arbitrary pleasure. That this doctrine is unjust, that it is inequitable, that it is monstrous, that it is detestable is so clear that I am almost ashamed of having misspent time in showing how impolitic it is. [108]

[106] *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

[107] *Op. cit.*, II, 497-98.

[108] Speech on the Benares Charge, *Speech of the Managers and Council in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E. A. Bond (London: n.p., 1859-61), I, 197.

CHAPTER VI

CONSEQUENCES OF SIRAJUDDAULLAH'S DEFEAT

One may appropriately begin examining the consequences of Sirajuddaullah's defeat by recalling Clive's words before a committee of Parliament in 1772. He then declared:

> Consider the situation in which the victory at Plassey had placed me! A great prince was dependent on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels! Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my moderation. [1]

In deed, at the Battle of Plassey, Bengal had surrendered its destiny to the East India Company. The economic and political consequences of the defeat of Sirajuddaullah have become legendary in Indian history. Economically, the defeat marked the beginning of the impoverishment of the Indian economy and the establishment of an economic imperialism ruthless in its form. Politically, the extension of the protectorate over Mir Jafar paved the way for the creation of the British empire in India.

A. Economic Consequences [2]

We have seen in the earlier pages that Mir Jafar had promised substantial sums of money of the Company in lieu of the aid provided by it in deposing Sirajuddaullah. Between 1757 and 1760, the Company received from Mir Jafar Rs. 22,500,000 (£ 2,531,250) [3] to be applied to the accounts given on the following page. The deficiency of

[1] Cited by Forrest, *The Life of Lord Clive*, II, 394.

[2] This subject has been almost exhaustively treated by Romesh Chandra Dutt in *The Economic History of India from the Rise of British Power in 1757 to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837* (7th ed.; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950); by I. Durga Parshad in *Some Aspects of Indian Foreign Trade, 1757-1893* (London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 1932); by J. C. Sinha in *Economic Annals of Bengal;* and by N. K. Sinha in *Economic History of Bengal*, Vol. I. All these authors have generally relied on Verelst, *op. cit.*; Vansittart. *op. cit.*; and the various reports on East India affairs by the committees of Parliament between 1772 and 1812.

[3] The market value of this sum was 16 per cent higher than its book value. This raised the value of the receipts to Rs. 26,100,000. I.O., Home Series, LXVIII, fol. 87.

Rs. 400,000 in the amount promised and the amount actually given does not seem to have been made good. [4]

Losses sustained by the Company . . .	Rs. 10,000,000 [5]
Losses sustained by the European residents . . .	Rs. 5,000,000 [6]
Losses sustained by the Hindu and Armenian residents	Rs. 2,700,000
Contribution to the army, navy and the select committee	Rs. 5,200,000 [7]
Total	Rs. 22,900,000

In addition to Rs. 22,500,000, a total sum of Rs. 5,870,000 (£ 660,375) was given as cash gift to the principal officers of the Company. [8] In 1759 Clive also received a personal fief whose revenue in the year 1761-62 amounted to £ 34,567. [9]

Plassey had thus opened up a speedy way of making personal fortunes. In the period 1757-65, the business of making and unmaking nawabs brought to the factors of the Company from Mir Jafar and others, £ 2,169,665. This amount is exclusive of benefits to the Company, which in the same period amounted to £ 10,731,683—£ 3,770,883 in cash and £ 6,960,800 in territorial revenues. [10]

As a result of the amounts received by the Company, over and above its legitimate losses, it was left with sufficient funds to finance its trade and other operations not only in Bengal but also in other parts of India and in China. Prior to 1757, 74 per cent of the English trade in Bengal was financed by bullion imports from England. In the decade after Plassey these imports totally ceased. Instead bullion was exported from Bengal to other parts of India as well as to China, causing a drain of wealth from Bengal.

The value of this drain, consisting of both bullion and goods, can

[4] Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

[5] The Company's actual losses amounted to Rs. 1,949,489. *Supra*, p. 81.

[6] Their actual losses were Rs. 3,946,138. *Supra*, p. 80. Consequently, a premium of 20 per cent, over and above the actual losses, was declared and provided by the Company. I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Fort William Council to the Court of Directors, December 12, 1759.

[7] The actual expenditure on land and marine forces was only Rs. 1,550,000. I.O., Home Series, LXVIII, fol. 86.

[8] *Third Report of the Select Committee*, 1773, p. 11.

[9] *Fourth Report of the Committee of Secrecy*, 1773, p. 97.

[10] *First Report of the Select Committee*, 1772, pp. 19-22; *Fourth Report of the Committee of Secrecy*, 1773, pp. 19-22.

be computed by calculating the excess of the value of exports over imports. It is a little over five million pounds sterling for the decennium 1757-66:

Exports to England . . . . . (est.)	£	3,752,221 [11]
Exports to other establishments in India and in China . . . . . (est.)	£	2,733,610 [12]
	£	6,485,831
Imports from England . . . . . (est.)	£	977,366 [13]
Imports from other establishments in India and from China . . . . . (est.)	£	423,920 [14]
Total	£	1,401,286
Excess of exports over imports	£	5,084,545

One source of the loss to the Bengali economy was the Company's monopolization of the saltpetre trade (beginning in 1758); [15] and the opium and salt trade (beginning in 1761). Monopoly of saltpetre trade led to a reduction in the purchasing price from Rs. 6, 7 *as.*, 6 *ps.*, to Rs. 3,12 *as.*, per *maund*. [16] On the average the English purchased 100,000 *maunds* annually, this caused the Bengali dealers to lose Rs. 271,875 (£ 20,856) annually. [17] The losses to Bengal as a result of the English monopoly of the opium and salt trade are impossible to estimate since figures for them are not available.

Another loss to the Bengali economy was caused by the right the English secured from Mir Jafar to establish their own mint. They

[11] The value of exports for the period 1761-66 was £ 2,352,221, giving an annual average af £ 392,037. Taking a conservative average of £ 350,000 annually for the period 1757-60, we arrive at this figure of £ 3,752,221. *Third Report of the Committee of Secrecy*, 1773, pp. 60-61.

[12] The value of exports for the period 1761-66 was £ 1,385,814, of which £ 893,436 was in the form of bullion. This gives an annual average of £ 273,361. *Ibid.* The average for the years 1757-60 could not have been less than this.

[13] Macgregor, *op. cit.*, IV, 404-05.

[14] The value of imports for the period 1761-66 was £ 254,351, giving an annual average of £ 42,392. The average for 1757-60 could not have been more than this, since during those years the Madras establishment was engaged in a war with the French company and its exports were at their lowest ebb. *Third Report of the Committee of Secrecy, loc. cit.*

[15] This led to hostlities with the Dutch. *Infra*, p. 133.

[16] I.O., Home Series, LXVIII, fol. 87. One rupee is equal to sixteen annas (*as.*) and one anna, to twelve pies (*ps.*).

[17] *Ibid.*

coined over three million of rupees annually in this mint, and secured a 7 per cent saving. This saving amounted to Rs. 210,000 (£ 23,625) yearly. [18] Added to the losses to Bengal as a result of the English monopoly of saltpetre, the losses for the decennium 1757-66 on saltpetre and coinage come to £ 544,810.

We must now turn our attention to the commercial activities of the company's factors, many of whom had secured enormous personal gifts from the nawabs. We have seen that a few years before Plassey, the East India Company had changed its investment system, and in place of the *dadni* merchants had appointed its own factors as the agents for collecting goods for exports and for marketing goods imported into Bengal. This system gave opportunities to these factors to increase their private trade and to further abuse the Company's *dustucks* for their private trade. The nawab estimated the losses to his revenue caused by the abuse of *dustucks* and the traffic in inland trade to amount to two and a half million of rupees annually. [19] These agents bought and sold goods at prices that suited their fancy, and forced people to do business with them. The court of directors, which was not unaware of the abuses practiced by its agents in Bengal, tried to reform the system, [20] but in 1773 it could only lament that

> . . . almost every attempt . . . for the reforming of abuses has rather increased them and added to the miseries of that country. . . . [21]

It is really impossible to estimate the profits made by these factors. A single individual, William Bolts, reaped a handsome £ 90,000 in a six year period. [22] A parliamentary committee estimated the income of factors, transmitted to Europe through bills of exchange drawn upon European (including the English) companies to be one million pounds sterling annually in the decade following Plassey. [23] This figure does not include the exports of the private individuals to China, the proceeds of which were collected in Europe. In 1783 a parliamentary committee reported that one merchant alone had exported to

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Cited by Vansittart, *op. cit.*, II, 97-102.

[20] For example see I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Court of Directors to Fort William Council, April 7, 1760. For a discussion of the abuses committed by the English factors see Verelst, *op. cit.*, p. 48 and *passim*; and I.O., Bengal Select Committee Consultations, February 19, 1766.

[21] I.O., Bengal Correspondence, Court of Directors to Fort William Council, April 7, 1773.

[22] N. L. Hallward, *William Bolts* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1920), p. 3.

[23] *Ninth Report of the Select Committee*, 1783, p. 55.

China as much as £ 1,700,000. [24] Personal fortunes were also transferred through diamonds which were smuggled back to Europe.

Finally, we must take into consideration the loss experienced by the Bengali economy as a result of the cessation of bullion imports. Previous to 1757 Bengal imported bullion annually to the value of about one million pounds sterling as below: [25]

Through the Dutch Company . . .	£ 300,000
Through the English Company . .	£ 250,000
Through the French Company . .	£ 200,000
Through the Danish Company . .	£ 30,000
Total	£ 780,000

The Dutch company lost its importance in Bengal after its defeat in 1759. The English company, as we have noticed, stopped importing bullion because it was liberally furnished with money. The French had been defeated in 1757 and were not allowed to re-establish themselves in Bengal until 1765. Instead of importing bullion the remaining European companies were provided with funds for their investments by the Company's factors against bills of exchange payable in Europe. [26] Verelst writes:

> From the reduction of Chandernagore in 1757 to the commencement of gold coinage in 1766, Bengal had lost, by deficiency in the usual imports of bullion, and by exportation of silver more than eight million pounds sterling. [27]

Taking a conservative estimate that only 25 per cent of the value of the bills of exchange drawn upon the European companies by the factors of the East India Company represented a loss to Bengal, we can compute the loss to Bengal in the decade following Plassey to be approximately seventeen million pounds sterling, as follows:

Drain in the form of excess British exports over imports	£ 5,084,545
Losses due to private trade of the English factors (25 percent of the value of bills of exchange) . . .	£ 2,500,000
Losses due to the cessation of bullion imports into Bengal	£ 9,500,000
	£ 17,084,545

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Verelst, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.* The exports of bullion from Bengal during 1757-66 amounted to ap-

This estimate is conservative, and does not take into account the wealth drained out of Bengal in the form of smuggled diamonds and the exports to China by private individuals. The revenue of Bengal in 1758 was Rs. 25,051,118 (£ 2,818,251).[28] If this be taken as an average, it means that the losses to Bengal were at least equal to 60.7 per cent of the total revenues of Bengal in the decade following Plassey. Realistically they would be about 66 per cent.

Thus with Plassey began the ruin of the Bengali economy. The economy was further damaged by the economic maladministration of the English factors who set up a private administration parallel to the native administration. Mir Kasim, the successor to Mir Jafar, declared:

> From the factory [*sic*] of Calcutta, Kassimbazar, Patna and Dacca, all the English chiefs, with their *gumastahs* [agents], officers and agents, in every district of the government, act as collectors, renters, *zamindars,* and *talookdars* [senior zamindars], and setting up the Company's colours, allow no power to my officers. . . .[29]

Macaulay likewise opined:

> The servants of the Company obtained . . . a monopoly of almost the whole internal trade. They forced the natives to buy dear and sell cheap. They insulted with impunity the tribunals, the police, the fiscal authorities of the country. . . . Every servant of a British factor was armed with all the powers of his master; and his master was armed with the power of the Company. Enormous fortunes were thus rapidly accumulated at Calcutta, while thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the extremity of wretchedness. They had been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never under a tyranny like this. . . . Under their old masters they had at least one resource: When the evil became insupportable, the people rose and pulled down the government. But the English government was not to be shaken off. The government, oppressive as the most oppressive form of barbarian despotism, was strong with all the strength of civilization. . . .[30]

B. Political Consequences

The political consequences of the English victory were as profound

proximately £ 1,500,000 in value. (*Supra*, p. 128n.) This gives a total loss of £ 9,500,000 due to cessation of import.

[28] British Museum Additional MS 12564, Table 10.

[29] Cited by Vansittart, *op. cit.*, I, 178f.

[30] Macaulay, "Essay on Clive," *op. cit.*, I, 528. These humble servants of the Company upon return to England, with their ill-gotten fortunes became the 'nabobs.' For the social and political implications of 'nabobery,' see James M. Holzman, *The Nabobs in England* (New York: n.p., 1926).

as the economic consequences. In the previous section we have observed that the Company's factors, in pursuit of their personal trade, had appropriated a large number of economic functions usually performed by the native officials. This step had clear political implications. When the nawab's officers refused to obey the dictates of the English factors, they found themselves confronted with the violence of the latter. [31] Thus, the authority of the nawab's officers over the English factors came to an end with the Battle of Plassey. In other state affairs, both internal and external, the influence of the Fort William councilors likewise made itself felt, reducing the nawab "to a tool, a cypher in the hands of the foreigners." [32] After Plassey, as Burke has congently pointed out:

> The East India Company did not seem to be merely a Company formed for the extension of the British commerce, but in reality a delegation of the whole power and sovereignty of this kingdom sent into the East. . . . [33]

The position of dominance in the internal affairs of Bengal, which the English had come to occupy after the Battle of Plassey, can be seen readily by the role the Company's councilors played in local conflicts. Soon after his establishment on the throne of Murshidabad, Mir Jafar was faced with the opposition of the rajas of Purnea and Midnapore and the deputy governor of Bihar. These feudatories were reconciled to the nawab by English diplomacy and arms. Similarly when the nawab threatened the life and property of his two principal Hindu officers, Durlabh Ram and Ramnarain, again it were the English who provided these nobles protection and warned the nawab, in no uncertain terms, against committing any violence against their person. As a matter of fact an unwritten alliance with the Hindu nobles and the bankers against the Muslim military aristocracy became an important instrument in the policy of the East India Company. [34]

The Company was not content, however, to be just a mediator between the nawab and his dissidents. In 1760 it asked Mir Jafar to appoint Mir Kasim, his son-in-law, as the heir-apparent to the nawabship. When in October, 1760, the nawab refused to accede to the

[31] I.O., Bengal Select Committee Consultations, February 19, 1766; *Eighth Report of the Committee of Secrecy*, 1773, pp. 412-15.

[32] Malleson, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[33] *Speeches . . . in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, I, 15.

[34] Roy, *op. cit.*, chap. iv.

demand, the Fort William council ordered its forces under Major Caillaud to depose Mir Jafar, which was immediately done, and without any resistance from the nawab. Mir Kasim was, thereupon, established as the nawab. Troubles soon developed with Mir Kasim, who opposed the abusive economic practices of the English factors. Unable to check the abuse of the duty-free *dustucks* under which these factors traded, the nawab abolished the internal duties altogether so that the native merchants could trade in Bengal under the same conditions as did the English factors. Mir Kasim had, however, "displayed great political dexterity but little wisdom." [35] The English considered the independence exhibited by him as a serious blow to their privileges. They consequently restored Mir Jafar and took the field against the forces of Mir Kasim, who after some initial successes fled into Oudh. [36]

In the external affairs of Bengal, the Company as the protector of the nawab, opposed the Dutch in 1759. The latter had sought redress for their commercial and political grievances against the English. Having failed to preserve their ancient trade privileges in Bengal, especially in the face of the English monopoly of the saltpetre trade, and determined no longer to "be sheep towards the Moors to be swallowed up by the wolves [the English]," [37] they attacked the English. The Battle of Bidera on November 25, 1759 saw the Dutch humbled. This resulted in an agreement on December 5, 1759 by which they submitted to the English demands and the English economic dominance of Bengal.

Between 1759 and 1764 Bengal was also faced with repeated invasions by the pretender to the Mughal throne who later came to be known as Emperor Shah Alam II. Fleeing from Delhi in the face of the advance of the Afghan troops of Abdali and the intrigues at the imperial court, he sought to bring Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa under his jurisdiction in order to have a kingdom to rule. He found Nawab Shujauddaullah of Oudh a ready ally. In 1763 Mir Kasim, who had fled Bengal, also joined him. Until 1763 the English had contented themselves with repelling the attacks of Shah Alam II. However, in 1763 they pursued the troops of the invaders into Oudh. By 1765 the nawab of Oudh had been reduced to the status of a vassal, like Mir Jafar in Bengal, and the emperor had thrown himself upon the mercy of the

[35] *Cambridge History of India*, V, 173.

[36] Roy, *op. cit.*, chap. v, and *passim*.

[37] Cited by N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 59. See *ibid.*, chap. iv, for a discussion of the Dutch struggle against the English.

English for protection. By the Treaty of Allahabad (1765) the English secured important advantages in Oudh and additional economic privileges in Bengal. The emperor was permitted to stay in Allabahad under the protection of the English. Thus began a direct involvement of the East India Company in Mughal affairs and in the politics of northern India. [38]

The English victories over the Mughal emperor and the nawab of Oudh were in some measure made possible by the neutralization of the Maratha power in India. Since 1757, the Marathas had been busy in northern India against the invasions of Abdali. Soon after Abdali's retreat from northern India in April, 1757, the Marathas began their march into northwestern India. They crossed the Chenab and, in 1758, established themselves in Peshawar and Attock. The following year, however, they had to withdraw again from the northwestern provinces in the face of Abdali's reinvasion of India. The Maratha struggles against the Afghan invader culminated in the Battle of Panipat (1761) in which the Marathas were decisively defeated with tremendous losses. It took some years for them to recover from this defeat. Thus the Maratha preoccupation, first with the Afghan invasions, and next with the recuperation from the Battle of Panipat, gave to Clive and his successors time to establish English authority in the eastern provinces without fear of molestation from western India.

Bengal, however, was not totally immune from the Maratha raids. In 1760 the Marathas raided the western districts of Bengal and Bihar to exact the annual *chauth* of Rs. 1,200,000 which had been promised to them in 1571 and which had fallen into arrears since 1758. The Maratha aim was, however, neither a territorial occupation of Bengal nor any injury to the English economic and political predominance over the nawab. The Company, therefore, did not feel directly concerned with these raids, especially since the Marathas were careful to avoid any harm to English property. The raids came to a temporary halt in 1763 when, it seems, the English offered to meet the *chauth* obligations on their own in order to forestall an alliance between the Marathas and Mir Kasim, who had been deposed in that year. [39] The

[38] For the English struggles against Shah Alam II and Shujauddaullah, see Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 391-401; Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive*, 148-51, 190-95, 230-38, 246-48; and Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *Shujauddaullah*, I (Calcutta: S. N. Sarkar, 1939), *passim*. Dodwell has mainly relied on the English sources; Sarkar and Srivastava on the Persian.

[39] The evidence is not conclusive whether the *chauth* was actually paid by the English in 1763 or merely promised. See Kalikinkar Datta, "The Marathas in Bengal after 1751," *Journal of Indian History*, XV (1936), 387-409.

chauth, however, again lapsed. In 1765 Clive sought a permanent solution of the *chauth* question by proposing to the Marathas the arrears as well as the future obligations of the *chauth* would be met by the English on condition that the Marathas ceded the Cuttuck district to the Company. The Marathas rejected this outright. Their sporadic raids continued into Bengal until 1803, when Lord Wellesley, the English governor-general, settled the *chauth* affair.

It is obvious that soon after the Battle of Plassey, the English were able to establish their predominance in the affairs of the eastern provinces and effectively resist those powers which sought to challenge either their economic or their political privileges. In the period following the Maratha defeat at Panipat, the English consolidated their position in Bengal and Bihar and extended their protectorate over the Mughal emperor (though only temporarily), and the nawab of Oudh. Coupled with the economic resources of Bengal, the English predominance in the eastern provinces paved the way for the subsequent establishment of the British empire in India.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

My purpose in this study has been to examine the background, the causes, the nature and the consequences of the conflict between Sirajuddaullah and the East India Company. The study has not led me to develop any revolutionary thesis. However, in the process of this study I have discovered the need for revisions in the presently held judgments on the relations between Sirajuddaullah and the East India Company.

In the first two chapters which deal with the growth of English economic and political interests in Bengal, I have tried to show, though the evidence at times has been fragmentary, that the opulent nature of the Company's Bengal trade, in a period when both the central and the local authorities throughout India was undergoing the process of disintegration, carried seeds of the conflict between the nawab and the Company. The consequences of this growth in the Company's trade and the breakdown of Indian political authority are highly revealing. The importance of the English trade led to fortified settlements which caused friction between the nawabs and the Company. The profitable trade also led to a search for more economic privileges than those already enjoyed by the Company. To this end the Company exploited the concept of Mughal sovereignty of India by obtaining imperial decrees from the Mughal emperor, whose authority over Bengal in the eighteenth century had become a mere phantom. The nawabs of Bengal could neither honor these decrees, consistent with the interests of Bengal, nor reject them, consistent with the concept of Mughal sovereignty. They wanted to give the Company as few privileges as possible, whereas the Company demanded as many as provided in the *farman* of 1717. From time to time various *modi vivendi* were reached between the Company and the nawabs of Bengal. However, they failed to acquire any permanent nature. The factors of the Company continuously abused their privileges and the officers of the nawabs neglected to observe their engagements. With the extension of the European intrusion into Indian affairs, the economic conflicts between the Company and the nawab took a political turn.

In England, in the eighteenth century, the English Company had

become a national institution in its political and economic life. The foreign policy of England on Asian questions quite often reflected the interests of the East India Company. The East India Company and the English government became political allies; the former wanted to destroy French commercial activities in India, the latter French political influence in Europe. Likewise the French company and the French government became allies. This alliance of the European companies with their governments led to the importation of European troops in India. The extension of European rivalries to India led to the violation of the territorial integrity of some of the Indian states in south India. When the native princes tried to preserve their territorial integrity, they found themselves embroiled in the Anglo-French conflict. In the process the Europeans discovered another method of making commercial fortunes, i.e., the renting of European troops to the native princes and pretenders. The companies, commercial corporations by inception, soon became political entities as well.

The acquisition of political power by the European companies in India had psychological consequences for both parties. On the one hand, the native princes felt insecure, and on the other the Europeans developed a power complex. For a time in Bengal, nawab Alivardi Khan sought to contain the European power by prohibiting the European companies from extending their hostilities to his dominions. He succeeded not only because he was determined to enforce his directives but also because neither the French nor the English wanted to extend their hostilities to a second front. But after the defeat of the French in the South, the English began, in Bengal, to give expression to the power they had acquired elsewhere in India. They began fortifying their settlements and extended asylum to fugitives from the nawab. When Alivardi Khan died in 1756, prognosticating the evil that was to flow from the European intrusion in Indian politics, a long chain of economic and political tensions had prepared the ground for a conflict between his successor and the East India Company.

The Company's agents, however, overestimated their own powers as well as the extent of the political and economic schism that had entered into the Bengali society. They underestimated the chance of Sirajuddaullah becoming the nawab, and anticipated that his rivals, Shaukat Jung and Ghasiti Begum, would have the better of him. This led them to exteend asylum to Krishna Ballabh, a fugitive from the nawab. Even when Sirajuddaullah did succeed to the nawabship and soon quelled the opposition of his two rivals (although only temporarily of Shaukat

Jung), the Fort William council, nevertheless, rebuffed the diplomatic demands of the nawab that they pull down the new fortifications and surrender the fugitive. When the nawab displayed force by his seizure of the Kassimbazar factory, Governor Drake and his fellow councilors thought that the Company's force of a little over five hundred men, of whom approximately one-half were Europeans, could repulse the nawab's attack. This was another miscalculation.

In the third chapter, in discussing the above-mentioned first phase of the conflict, I have tried to show that Hill's estimate of the situation has been highly erroneous. He has failed to appreciate the nawab's attempt to resolve the dispute with the English through diplomatic means. Later when the nawab marched to Kassimbazar, Hill declares that the nawab resorted to force without trying diplomacy. Hill has paid scant attention to the diplomatic mission of Khwaja Wajid. In addition he declares that the nawab's officers secured the Kassimbazar factory by making treacherous promises to William Watts, the chief of the factory. I have shown on the basis of Watts's own admission that the nawab's diplomatic efforts were serious and had a peaceful intent, and further that the occupation of Kassimbazar was not intended to start a war but was in line with customary procedures for bringing pressure to bear on the Europeans. On the basis of Watts's own testimony I have stressed that the capitulation signed by him though not voluntary, had terms which he considered not inconsistent with the Company's interests.

It was Drake who began hostilities by ordering an attack on Sukhsagar and Thana. The nawab attacked Calcutta on the morning of June 16th, and by the afternoon of the 20th, he was its master. On the night of June 20th the so-called Black Hole tragedy took place. While most of the English historians accept the story, based primarily on Holwell's allegation that out of 146 persons confined in a room eighteen feet by fourteen feet, ten inches, 123 persons were suffocated, I have tried to show that it is virtually impossible that 146 persons could have been left in the fort on the evening of June 20th. After taking into consideration the desertions and casualties, I have concluded that not more than sixty-four persons could have been confined in that room, of whom *at the most* forty-three lost their lives.

The economic losses to the Company, to its agents and to other residents of Calcutta have also been highly exaggerated by Hill. He has accepted the statement of an unreliable witness that the losses amounted to over Rs. 25,000,000 a statement which is also accepted

by Jadunath Sarkar. On the basis of the commercial records of the Company, I have established that the total losses were only Rs. 7,644,411, of which the Company's losses amounted to Rs. 3,698,273. Of these losses the Company on reoccupation of Calcutta recovered property worth Rs. 1,948,787.

On the basis of the evidence cited by me in the third chapter, I have found it difficult to reconcile myself to the view of Hill that the nawab's campaign against the English was motivated by avarice and a desire for plunder. Not only did the nawab try to resolve the dispute without the use of force, but he also took good care of the English property that had fallen into his hands. Though Sirajuddaullah had exhibited cruel tendencies in his youth and had treated his subjects in a despotic fashion, I have not been able to find evidence of his deliberate brutality to the English. We do not find him inclined to avenge himself on Watts, Collet, Holwell or any other of the English agents whom he had captured.

In the fourth and the fifth chapters I have discussed the return of the English to Bengal. I have shown that the English forces invaded Bengal not only to reestablish the English factories but also to arrange a *coup d'etat* against Sirajuddaullah and to dispossess the French of their establishments in Bengal. From the very moment the English forces landed, English diplomacy was backed by shows of force. While Clive was engaged in diplomatic correspondence with the nawab's courtiers, who had indicated to him the nawab's intention to allow the English to resume their commercial operations, he was also busy impressing the nawab with the power of the English. He destroyed Hughli in retaliation for the nawab's seizure of the Fort William establishment. Soon after the sack of Hughli the nawab agreed to return all the property of the Company he had captured, to restore the privileges enjoyed by the Company by virtue of the *farman* of 1717, to grant them the right to fortify Calcutta, and to permit the establishment of a mint. He consistently refused to provide reparations for all damages suffered by the Company. The approach of the nawab's forces towards Calcutta aroused suspicion in Clive's mind. On the night of February 5, 1757, Clive's forces sought to surprise the nawab by attacking his headquarter and capturing his artillery. Some confused fighting took place but nothing decisive occurred. Sirajuddaullah was, nevertheless, shaken, and his army retired a few miles. Negotiations were again resumed and a treaty was signed on February 9, 1757.

The treaty was merely a stopgap agreement. The nawab agreed

to it because he feared an invasion of Bihar by the Afghan invader Abdali; the English agreed to it because they feared an alliance between the nawab and the French. However, the treaty neither removed the English fears nor those of the nawab.

The English fears of an alliance between the nawab and the French were made worse by the nawab's half-hearted attempts to enter into a 'defensive' treaty with the French to maintain Bengal's political neutrality in the Anglo-French struggles during the Seven Years' War. What the nawab sought to do was to act in concert with the English, if the French violated the territorial integrity of his dominions, or in concert with the French, if the English violated it. The English, however, considered the negotations between the French and the nawab as aimed at achieving an 'offensive' alliance against them.

In the spring of 1757 it was the nawab's turn to make political miscalculations. He underestimated the English opposition to any kinds of negotiations with the French. With the presence of a large body of English troops in Bengal, and with the threat of an invasion by Abdali from the north, the balance of power had shifted in favor of the English. They quickly took advantage of their position by neutralizing the French, whom they invaded and defeated at Chandernagore.

The defeat of the French made the English even more confident. The nawab's efforts to fulfill his treaty obligations did not prevent the English either from accusing the nawab of neglecting to fulfill them or from seducing his principal officers in an effort to arrange a *coup d'etat* against him.

In June, 1757, the nawab had two choices before him, to fight for his interests either in concert with the French or alone. He chose the latter for the former course would have meant the establishment of a French protectorate over him. He had to win alone. At the Battle of Plassey, however, he lost.

In the sixth chapter, I have discussed the economic and political consequences of Plassey. I have added some new information to substantiate the fact that the annual drain of wealth from Bengal after Plassey amounted to over a million pounds sterling. Both economically and politically, the country passed under an English protectorate. It is the thesis of Gierke and Maitland that corporations and states are a species of the same genus. The eventual transformation of the East India Company in Bengal into a political state supports their point.

Since the defeat of Sirajuddaullah marks the beginning of British rule in India, some more general questions about the nature of the

conflict in 1756-57 may be raised. First, had the interests of the nawab and the Company become irreconcilable? It is obvious from this study that these interests had become very difficult to reconcile. On one side stood a prospering Company, closely allied with the English government, with growing economic and political power in India; on the other was a nawab, beset with internal dissensions in his own dominions, and devoid of any support from the Mughal authority. The nawab, and sought more economic concessions. A conflict was porthe Company to pull down its fortifications and to regulate the *dustuck* privileges which its factors abused. The Company, on the other hand, felt confident of its own power, gave refuge to the fugitives from the nawab, and sought more economic concession. A conflict was protending.

At this point one may ask: could Sirajuddaullah have achieved a *modus vivendi* with the English to avoid a violent showdown? I have shown with conclusive evidence that the nawab did make an attempt to avoid a violent rupture with the English. However, Drake and his fellow councilors underestimated the nawab's power, overestimated the English strength, and chose to defy his authority. This resulted in the nawab's attack against Calcutta. The English defeat, however, proved only temporary. An expeditionary force under Clive invaded Bengal and re-established the Company.

It may also be asked: could the nawab have saved himself from Plassey after Clive's arrival in Bengal? Two factors made it difficult for the nawab to avert Plassey. The first was the commencement of the Seven Years War, the other was Abdali's threatened invasion of Sirajuddaullah's dominions. In order to eliminate any possibility of a Franco-Bengali alliance the Company felt constrained to wage war upon the French and to establish in Bengal a nawab who would be loyal to them. The nawab, on the other hand, was so endangered by the threat of Abdali that in order to preserve his resources he avoided giving any offense to the English and made every effort to appease his dissident nobles. This policy proved disastrous. It revealed further the nawab's own weakness. Perhaps Plassey could have been averted if the nawab had been able to suppress the dissensions in his court. The nawab's failure helped the English to enter into a conspiracy with the dissident nobles and the Hindu compradors and the nawab's defeat at Plassey.

It has been argued that the nawab should have entered into an alliance with the French against the English. This strategy was tried by

the Indian potentates in southern India and resulted in the establishment of a French protectorate over them. We must, therefore, reject this argument. The political integrity of Bengal could only have been maintained had the nawab won without any foreign support. His victory otherwise would have been of little consequence for in an effort to resist an English protectorate over Bengal, he would have fallen a prey to the French expansionist influences.

APPENDIX I

SIRAJUDDAULLAH'S STRUGGLES AGAINST GHASITI BEGUM AND SHAUKAT JUNG

Since the English calculations of Sirajuddaullah's power were based on the hope of his anticipated failure against Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jung, it might be useful to take a brief notice of Sirajuddaullah's struggles against his two rivals.

Alivardi Khan had three daughters and no son. These three daughters, the eldest of whom was Ghasiti Begum, were married to his nephews, Nawazish Muhammad, the governor of Dacca (1740-55), Sayid Ahmed, the governor of Purnea (1749-56), and Zainuddin Ahmed, the governor of Patna (1740-47).Nawazish Muhammad was childless; Sayid Ahmed had a son named Shaukat Jung; and Zainuddin Ahmed had three sons named Sirajuddaullah, Ikramuddaullah and Mirza Mahdi. Ikramuddaullah was subsequently adopted by Nawazish Muhammad and Ghasiti Begum.

In 1752 Alivardi Khan declared Sirajuddaullah to be his heir to the nawabship of Bengal, in spite of the seniority of Nawazish Muhammad, Sayyid Ahmed and Shaukat Jung. A series of deaths reduced Sirajuddaullah's rivals. Ikramuddaullah died in 1752; Nawazish Muhammad, on December 17, 1755; and Sayyid Ahmed, on February 26, 1756. When Alivardi Khan died on April 9, 1756, Sirajuddaullah faced only the opposition of Ghasiti Begum, who was the center of the opposition to Sirajuddaullah's succession, and Shaukat Jung, who had succeeded to the governorship of Purnea after his father's death. Another opponent was Mir Jafar, a brother-in-law of Alivardi Khan. Ghasiti Begum and Mir Jafar were in concert to advance Shaukat Jung's claim to the nawabship. The English considered the concert formidable and doubted Sirajuddaullah's peaceful succession.

During the last illness of Alivardi Khan, Ghasiti Begum had retired to *Motijhil*, her husband's palace. Resolving to oppose Sirajuddaullah she raised a private army under Mir Nazr Ali and Bairam Khan. [1] Her agents also sought to recruit English soldiers, and one Corporal Bailey was reported to have enlisted some European deserters for the Begum's forces. [2] Bailey's actions made Sirajuddaullah suspicious that the Company was inclined to actively support the Begum in her struggle against him. Though the English were opposed to Sirajuddaullah's succession, there is no evidence to indicate that they agreed to militarily support her.

Immediately on Alivardi Khan's death, Sirajuddaullah assumed the reins of government and moved against Ghasiti Begum. He despatched his grandmother (widow of Alivardi Khan, and the mother of Ghasiti Begum) and Jagat Seth to prevail upon Ghasiti Begum to surrender. The Begum

[1] *Riyaz*, p. 363; *Seir*, II, 185; "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 61.
[2] William Forth to Drake, December 16, 1756, *Hill Collection*, II, 66.

had planned a resistance but Mir Nazr Ali and Bairam Khan got cold feet and deserted their patron. [3] Sirajuddaullah, thereupon, secured her and her property acquiring "besides jewels, four *krors* [forty million] of rupees, forty lakh *mohurs* gold pieces [four million gold pieces], and a *kror* [ten million] worth of vessels of gold and silver." [4]

Sirajuddaullah. About May 22nd Sirajuddaullah received a message from from his post of paymaster-general of the nawab's forces, and placed under surveillance. [5]

The nawab marched against Shaukat Jung on May 16, 1756. Shaukat Jung on hearing of Sirajuddaullah's easy victory over Ghasiti Begum and the dismissal of Mir Jafar decided to temporarily compose his differences with

Sirajuddaullah next turned his attention to Mir Jafar. He was dismissed Shaukat Jung acknowledging him as the legal nawab of Bengal. The message came at an opportune moment, for at the same time the nawab received news of Drake's refusal to either surrender Krishna Dass or pull down the new fortifications at Fort William.

While Sirajuddaullah was busy in his campaign against Kassimbazar and Calcutta, Shaukat Jung secretly secured a *farman* from the Mughal emperor appointing him as the nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa. [6] As we have noticed earlier, the Mughal emperor, though reduced to straits, was considered the dispenser of legitimacy. Mir Jafar, who had regained favor with Sirajuddaullah during the campaign against the English, secretly encouraged Shaukat Jung since he "looked upon Sayeed Ahmed Khan's son as . . . the only recourse against the growing and daily cruelties of Sirajuddaullah, and he pledged himself that he [Shaukat Jung] would be strongly and unanimously supported . . ." [7]

Shaukat Jung assembled an army of 6,000 cavalry and 15,000 infantry and prepared to resist the nawab. [8] Sirajuddaullah, in order to divine the intentions of Shaukat Jung, sent an agent Rai Ras Behari calling upon the latter to make over the *jagirs* of Gondwarah and Birnagar. Contrary to the advice of Ghulam Husain Khan, the author of *Seir*, and Shaikh Jahan Yar, a military commander, Shaukat Jung sent an impertinent reply saying that he had received the Mughal letters patent appointing him the nawab of Bengal and that Sirajuddaullah should make over the government to him and retire to Dacca. [9]

Sirajuddaullah immediately resolved to quell Shaukat Jung's rebellion. On October 9, 1756, he ordered his military commanders Mohan Lall, Dost Muhammad, Din Muhammad, Mir Muhammed and Mir Madan to advance to Purnea from the south, and Raja Ram Narain, the deputy gover-

[3] *Riyaz*, p. 363; *Seir*, II, 185.

[4] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 61.

[5] *Riyaz*, p. 364; *Seir*, II, 186-88.

[6] *Seir*, II, 196, 206. *Seir* is most reliable, since its author was an officer in Shaukat Jung's court.

[7] *Ibid.*, II, 196; *Scrafton, op. cit.*, p. 56.

[8] "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 65.

[9] *Seir*, II, 206.

nor of Bihar, to advance from the north.[10] From Purnea, Shaukat Jung advanced with an army led by Shaikh Jahan Yar, Karguzar Khan and Mir Murad Ali, burning and sacking Haiatpurgolah on the way.[11] Thirty miles south of Purnea, at Manihari, the two opposing forces met on October 16, 1756. Shaukat Jung, drunken, made a wild charge at Sirajuddaullah's forces, and a musket shot sealed his fate.[12]

[10] *Riyaz*, p. 368; "Muzzaffarnamah," p. 67.
[11] *Riyaz, loc. cit.*
[12] An eyewitness account is given in *Seir*, II, 215-24; also see *Riyaz*, pp. 368-70.

George Grey's Account

Captain Mills's Diary

Page 1.

June the 7th. We heard of Kassimbazar being delivered up to the nawab and Mr. Watts with other gentlemen made prisoners.

On the 15th the French sent us word of the nawab's army's march to Calcutta.

On the 17th [1] of June the enemy attacked the redoubt at Perrin's about noon, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon 40 men with 2 field pieces were sent to the assistance of that place, where in the engagement the Moors from behind the trees and bushes killed 2 Europeans, one of whom was Ralph Thoresby. About 8 o'clock an 18 pounder came out to Perrin's and the 2 field pieces with the reinforcement that had been sent in the afternoon went back to their former stations. In the night, Lieutenant Piccard, who had the command at Perrin's, sallied out upon the enemy, and having drove them from their guns spiked up 4 of them and brought away some ammunition.

On the 17th [1] the enemy attacked the redoubt at Perrin's about noon. At 3 in the afternoon 40 men with 2 field pieces were sent to reinforce the place where in the engagement the Moors, from behind the trees and bushes killed 2 of our men one of whom was Mr. Ralph Thoresby one of the Honourable Company's writers.

About 8 at night an 18-pounder gun was sent out to Perrin's and the 2 field pieces with the reinforcement that had been sent were ordered back to their former stations.

In the night Lieutenant Piccard, who had the command at Perrin's, sallied out with his party at the enemy, and having drove them from their posts, spiked up four of their guns, and brought away some of their ammunition.

Page 2.

On the 18th of June about 9 in the morning our outworks were attacked. Small parties were dis-

On the 18th about 9 o'clock in the morning our outworks were attacked by small parties in the

[1] This attack took place on the 16th, and not on the 17th. See the reports of Grant, Holwell and Drake.

George Grey's Account

patched to the tops of some of the houses, from thence to annoy the enemy on their approach.

Amongst those Messrs. Charles Smith and Robert Wilkinson had the misfortune to be killed. Monsieur Le Beaume, who with his small party was posted at Jail, bravely defended it for six hours, till himself and most of his men being wounded, they were obliged to retire within the battery at Court House.

In the evening the enemy killing and wounding several of our men, and surrounding us on all sides we were ordered to retreat from our outworks (after having spiked up our guns) and take possession of the Church, Mr. Cruttenden's, Mr. Eyre's and the Company's houses, which we quietly kept all night.

The enemy on the morning of

Captain Mills's Diary

skirts of the towns, we dispatched several small parties to the tops of the several of the highest houses near hand to annoy the enemy, and Monsieur Le Beaume with a party of militia and volunteers and two field pieces to guard the cross roads.

Amongst those small parties were killed Messrs. Charles Smith and Wilkinson. Monsieur Le Beaume, who retired to the Jail House with his party, bravely defended it for six hours, till himself and most of his party were wounded, were ordered to retire within the trenches at the Court House, after having spiked up their guns, and brought off all the wounded.

The enemy finding the firing to desist took possession of the post, but in the retreat many of the *buxerries* deserted us and went over to the enemy. This afternoon we sent most of the ladies on board the ships and several of the gentlemen deserted, with them in particular Colonel and Lieutenant, Mr. Manningham and Frankland, with several others.

Page 3.

In the evening the enemy attacked us smartly, killing and wounding several of our men with their small arms, they endeavoured to surround us. Were ordered to retreat from the outworks, after having spiked up our guns, and take possession of the Church, Mr. Cruttenden's, Mr. Eyre's, and the Company's houses which we quietly kept all night.

The morning of the 19th the

George Grey's Account

the 19th advanced upon us, and still surrounding us killed and wounded some of our men; we were ordered to retire from the Church and houses we had taken possession of the night before and came within the fort. The ladies and wounded men were sent on board the ships.

The governor, Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, Mackett, Commandant Minchin, Captain Alexander Grant, Messrs. Cruttenden, Mapletoft, Summers, Billers, O'Hara, Rider, Tooke, Senior, Ellis, Vossmer, Orr, Leycester, Charlton, with several of the military and militia fled on board the ships and went down the river which greatly dispirited our men.

Captain Mills's Diary

enemy advanced to us, and attacked vigorously on all sides, having got into Mr. Eyre's compound and outhouses, several volleys of small arms were fired by those that kept that post and as readily returned, but they having made a hole through the east end of the church, and firing their cannon through at the same time, which killed two men, were ordered to retire from the outworks into the garrison, upon which Lieutenant Blagg set fire to Mr. Cruttenden's house and retired to the garrison. This morning sent the remainder of European women with all the wounded on board the shipping.

Page 4.

19th. About 10 the Governor, Messrs. Mackett, one of our captains, the Commandant Minchin, Captain Grant, Messrs. Cruttenden, Mapletoft, Sumner, Billers, Rider, Tooke, Senior, Ellis Vossmer, Charlton, Leycester, Dr. Fullerton, Lieutenants O'Hara, Wedderburn, Messrs. Hugh Baillie, Edward Ridge, attorney, Robert Baldrick, supercargo, Henry Summers, Elves, Lange, Smith, Whaley, Ling, the fidler, Whatmore, Thomas Barnard, Abraham Jacobs, Francis Child, Robert Carr [2]

Page 5.

fled on board the ships, and weighed anchors, and dropped down the river taking with them all the boats, sloops and vessels. Being cut off from a retreat, and

[2] This is only a partial list and duplicates Holwell in all but five names. These five are: Barnard, Child, Carr, Jacobs and Smith.

George Grey's Account

Immediately upon the Governor's going off, Mr. Holwell was unanimously chosen in his room (Mr. Pearkes who was his senior in council delivering him up the charge of the factory till the troubles should cease). The new Governor made a public declaration of his detesting Mr. Drake's base flight, at the same time encouraging the military to hold out the seige with a promise of the Company's treasure containing 24,000 rupees among them if they could keep the place. But upon so many of the principal officers leaving us, the soldiers could not be hindered from breaking into the rooms of those that were gone, and taking from thence what wine or spirits came in their way, by which getting drunk they began to be mutinous and unruly. In the night a corporal and 56 men, most of them Dutch, deserted us and went over the walls to the enemy.

Captain Mills's Diary

the principal officers deserting with so many along with them greatly dispirited the people in the garrison.

Upon which Mr. Holwell was at the Governor's absconding, made General and Governor of Calcutta, Mr. Pearkes who was senior in council, giving it up to Mr. Holwell for the time being, Mr. Holwell expressing his hearty intentions to defend the fort till the last extremity, and made public declaration upon the bastions of his detesting Mr. Drake's flight, at the same time encouraging the military to stand to their arms and hold out the siege with a promise of 3 chests of the Honourable Company's treasure, containing 24,000 rupees, amongst them if they would keep the place.

But for the want of a sufficient number of officers, so many having left the place

Page 6.

the Dutch soldiers could not be hindered from breaking into the rooms of the officers that had absconded, the military and gunroom [*sic*] mostly consisting of that country, and taking from thence what wine and spirits they could lay their hand on, by which means they began to be mutinous and unruly. In the night a corporal and several private men, most of them Dutch, deserted us by dropping over the walls and going to the enemy.

We remained firing as opportunity required; in the meanwhile the enemy continued plundering

George Grey's Account

Next morning the enemy having got possession of the top of the church and houses round the fort, from thence galled our men with their small arms, killing several of them (among whom was Captain [P.] Smith) and wounding many of our officers. The church commanded our walls in such a manner that the men could not stand to their guns, and the officers were obliged to go about and present cocked pistols at the soldiers to make them mount the walls which were almost deserted; but they, whenever they were out of sight, sulked and would not go up. About noon the Governor and Council thought it proper to write to the nawab and diwan, demanding a truce and accommodation, but had no answer returned. The ship *Prince George* which had hitherto lain before Perrin's (from whence our forces had been sometime withdrawn) was ordered down abreast of the fort, but in the way unluckily ran ashore by the misconduct of the pilot Francis Morris and was taken by the Moors.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the enemy called out to us not to fire, in consequence of

Captain Mills's Diary

the town, and burning the houses in sundry places.

Next morning on the 20th the enemy got possession of the top of the church and houses round about the garrison which being loftier than the walls, and commanding all the bastions and them (for their small arms) they killing or wounding all that appeared in sight, amongst whom was Lieutenant [P.] Smith, Captain Pickering.

Page 7.
and wounding most of our officers, Adjutant Talbot who after died of his wounds &c.

The surviving officers were obliged to exert themselves pistol in hand to keep the soldiers to their quarters. At noon the Governor and Company thought it proper to write to the nawab and diwan demanding a truce, but he disdainfully threw it away and would not give us an answer.

The Honourable Company's ship *Prince George* which had hitherto lay before Perrin's Gardens was ordered down abreast of the fort, but in the way unfortunately by the bad conduct of the pilot, Francis Morris, a Dutchman, ran ashore and some time afterwards was taken by the enemy, the captain and his officers, who got up to Chinsurah after the fort taken was by the Dutch delivered up to the Moors in three hours after their arrival.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the enemy called out to us not to fire,

George Grey's Account	*Captain Mills's Diary*
which the Governor showed a flag of truce, and gave orders to us not to fire, upon which the enemy in vast numbers came under our walls, and at once set fire to the windows which were stopped up with cotton bales, began to break up the fort gate, and scaled our walls on all sides. This put us in the utmost confusion. Some rushed out at the gate towards the river to take possession of a boat that lay half in and half out of water, and in an instant it was so laden that it was impossible to get it off. In the meantime the Moors surrounded us and showed them signs of quarter, upon which they delivered themselves up. Some of them went to the nawab himself and were by him pardoned, and others whilst the enemy were busy about the plunder got into a boat and went down the river to the ships at that time lying off the Surman's Gardens.	*Page 8.* in consequence to which the Governor showed a flag of truce, and gave orders to the garrison not to fire. Upon which the enemy in vast numbers came under our walls, and at once began to set fire to the windows and gates of the fort which were stopped up with bales of cotton and cloth, and began to break open the fort gate, scaling our walls on all sides. This put us in the utmost confusion, some opening the back gate and running into the river, others to take possession of a boat that lay ashore half afloat and half dry was so full in an instant that she could not be got off. In the meanwhile the Moors surrounding us on all sides, and showing signs of quarters to all the people in the water, they went on shore and delivered themselves up to the Moors, some of them went to the nawab and were by him pardoned, others in the confusion got into a budgerow, while the enemy *Page 9.* was plundering, and escaped down on board the ships at the time lying little below Surman's Gardens.
But most of those that remained in the fort were put into the Black Hole to the number of 146, of whom 123 were miserably suffocated by the heat occasioned by so many being shut up in so small a place.	But most of those that remained in the fort were put into the Black Hole, to the number of 144 men, women and children. Of whom upwards of 120 were miserably smothered by the heat occasioned by so many being shut up in so small a place, as to be obliged to stand one upon the other.

George Grey's Account

Among those that unhappily suffered were Messrs. Eyre, Baillie,[3] Coales, Dumbleton, Jenks, Reveley, Law, Jebb, Carse, Valicourt, Bellamy Senior, Drake, Byng, Dalrymple, P. Johnstone, Street, Stephen and Edward Page, Grubb, Dodd, Torriano, Knapton, Ballard, Captains Clayton, Witherington, Buchanan, Lieutenant Hays, Simpson, Blagg, Bishop, Piccard, Bellamy, Ensign Scott and Wedderburn.[4]

Among those that had been in the Black Hole, but came out slive, were Messrs. Holwell, Court, Burdett, and Ensign Walcott, who were sent up to Murshidabad in irons, and Messrs. Cooke and Lushington, who got down to the ships.

At the time the fort was taken

Captain Mills's Diary

Among those that unhappily suffered were Messrs.. Eyre, Baillie Senior, Coales, Dumbleton, Jenks, Revely, Law, Jebb, Carse, Vallicourt, Bellamy Senior and Junior (Thomas Bellamy shot himself on the wall), Drake, Byng, Dalrymple, Patrick Johnstone, Street, Stephen and Edward Pages, Grubb, Dodd, Torriano, Knapton, Ballard, Captain Clayton, Buchanan, Witherington, Lieutenants Simpson, Hays, Blagg, Bishop, Piccard, Ensign Scott, Wedderburn, James Guy, carpenter, Captain Hunt.

Page 10.

Robert Carey, Thomas Leach, the two Stopfords, Porter, Hillier, Cocker, Carse.

Page 11.

Amongst those that had escaped death in the Black Hole and came out alive were John Holwell, Esq., Governor, Court, Burdett, Walcott, Ensign, who were taken away by the nawab's party and put into irons both legs. Messrs. Cooke, Lushington got down on board the ships, the rest remaining is: Mr Mills, Mr. Dixon, Patrick Moran, Thomas Meadows, John Angell, John Burgaft, John Arnt, John Jones, Philip Coaall, Peter Thomas, John Gatliff, John Boirs, Bernard Clelling, Richard Aillery.

Page 12.

At the time the fort was taken,

[3] William Baillie died before the confinement in the Black Hole took place, see *infra*, Appendix IV.

[4] Carse, Edward Page, Blagg, Bishop. Piccard and Guy were not in the Black Hole. (See *infra*, Appendix IV.) Pearkes and Lewis escaped when the mishap to the *Prince George* took place. (See *supra*, p. 69).

George Grey's Account

there was not above the number of 20 men upon the walls. The greatest part of the soldiers were drunk, and those that were sober were quite fatigued with continual hard duty, and want of regular distribution of provisions.

Captain Mill's Diary

there were escaped the two Doctors Knoxes, Doctor Grey, Paul Richard Pearkes Esq., Dr. Taylor, Dr. English, Captain Collins, Captain Lewis, James Andrews, George Grey Junior, George Alsop, Edward Savage, James Johnstone, William Tedcombe, Thomas Henderson, Thomas Hirwood.

Page 13.

Having no men on the bastions but two or three sentinels, the greatest part of the soldiers for want of provisions and having plenty of drink could not be prevailed on to mount the bastions any more. Those that were, otherwise, were excessively fatigued, having been on duty ever since the first of the siege.

The garrison was so reduced for want of relief, was most untimely overcome with plenty of ammunition at hand.

Page 14.

An account of the powder at the fort with other ammunition:

Europe barrels .	37	
do ½ do . . .	13	
Bombay do	187	
Bengal do	159	396

Powder of Captain Witherington:

Bengal . . .	45	
do barrels .	50	95

do of the Success Galleys

Barrels . .	5	
do Carr .	9	14

(747 maund 30 seer)

George Grey's Account — *Captain Mills's Diary*

This is except the powder belonging to the vessels and the merchants.

Page 15.

An account of the iron round shots large and small 40,760

do of ready shells large and small	Ins.		
	10½	50	
do of ready filled	4½	36	
	3½	300	
Hand Granades		500	886
Large empty shells	13½	150	
	10½	150	
	8	50	350
Small shells empty			6,200
Grape shot			
18 lb.		50	
12 .		28	
9 .		250	
6		600	
4		150	
3		300	
2		250	
1		80	2293

Page 16.

On the 1st of July was ordered out of Calcutta.

NOTE

Page 4 is half-blank, which indicates that the space was left to add further names, as they came to Mills' notice.

Similarly, page 10 contains only a few names in continuation of the names on page 9, and most of the page has been left blank, for further entries.

Likewise, page 12 is half blank, for further addition of the names of those persons who left soon after the fort fell to the nawab.

Page 13 opens abruptly and has no connection with the previous page.

Pages 14 and 15 are one-third blank.

Page 16 is written in a different hand writing, and there are additional notes in the handwriting of Robert Orme to whom the diary was given after the deposition of Mir Jafar Khan.

APPENDIX III

LIST OF EUROPEANS WHO SURVIVED THE SIEGE OF CALCUTTA

We have positive evidence of the survival of 142 persons. The names of fifty-two of these survivors are provided by Holwell, and S. C. Hill in his *List of Europeans* has provided corroborative evidence.[1] Five additional names are provided by Mills,[2] one by Tooke,[3] and another by Drake.[4] Of the six men who escaped to Chinsurah after the mishap to the *Prince George*, we know the names of four.[5] Then we have the name of Hedelburgh who betrayed the fort to the enemy.[6] Of the persons who escaped after the fort surrendered, we have the names of fifteen.[7] And finally we have the names of twenty-one persons who survived the Black Hole. These are: Aillery, Angel, Arnd, Boirs, Burdett, Burgaft, Clelling, Cooke, Cosall, Court, Dickson, Gatliff, Jones, Lushington, John Meadows, Thomas Meadows, Moran, Roop, Thomas and Walcott.[8] This gives us a total of 100 names.

In determining the names of other survivors an investigator is confronted with two problems. He must, in the first place, establish the presence of the survivors in Calcutta during the siege, and in the next place, he must present proof of their survival after the siege. Robert Orme has left us a "Summary List of Inhabitants, &c., Who Bore Arms in the Late Siege of Calcutta, dated 1 July 1756." This list contains 190 names.[9]

On the basis of Orme's list and Hill's scholarship it is possible to say that the following thirty-three persons survived the siege.[10] They are: John Aston, Atkinson (attorney), Robert Baldwin, Beanto, Thomas Best, Thomas Blaney, Peter Carstairs, Caytano, Cockylane, Peter Cole, Martin Costelly, William Coverley, Francis Cozens, Richard Dean, George Dundas, Fletcher, David Freze, Captain Iver Joam, John Johnson, John Law, James Macpherson, Archibald McLaughlane, Fabian Montague, Montro, P. Nicholson, Peter Parson, John Pennatz, Robert Sanders, Surman, John Tod, John Toole and John Witherington.

I have discovered an additional six names of the survivors on the basis of a petition signed by them on July 10, 1756. The petition was addressed

[1] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 94; Hill, *List of Europeans*, passim.
[2] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 94; corroborative evidence in Hill, *op. cit.*
[3] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 94; corroborative evidence in Hill, *op. cit.*
[4] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 94; corroborative evidence in Hill, *op. cit.*
[5] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 97; corroborative evidence in Hill, *op. cit.*
[6] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 105.
[7] *Supra*, chap. iii, n. 112; corroborative evidence in Hill, *op. cit.*
[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.
[9] *Hill Collection*, III, 415-16.
[10] *Ibid.*; Hill, *List of Europeans*, passim.

to Governor Drake, and it mentions that the signatories were in Calcutta when the siege began. These six persons are: John Coatsworth, Peter Duncan, John Moor, Marner, William Prider and Thomas Raitt. [11]

There is strong circumstantial evidence of the presence of Thomas French, Samuel Howitt and George Williamson, during the siege, and positive evidence of their survival. The General Journal for July 1756 says that French was paid salary for June and July 1756, so he must have arrived in Calcutta before the siege and must have been present during the siege or part of it. [12] Samuel Howitt was an assistant in the cutcherry of Calcutta, and in the Public Consultations of December 4, 1759, is mentioned for having made a claim to the Company for having suffered during the siege. [13] George Williamson's name is mentioned in the Public Consultations for June 6, 1757, and again in the Consultations for February 29, 1760. [14]

All these names give us a total of 142 survivors.

[11] The petition is reproduced without signatures in *Hill Collection*, I, 66. The original is to be found in I.O., Orme Papers, O.V., XIX, fol. 59. Another copy is in I.O., Home Series, Vol. DCCCIX.

[12] I.O., Bengal General Journal, July 1756.

[13] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, December 4, 1759.

[14] I.O., Bengal Public Consultations, June 6, 1756; *idem*, February 29, 1760.

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF PERSONS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE SIEGE OF CALCUTTA

On the basis of various newspaper accounts, and the narrative of Holwell, Mills, and Grey, and the scholarship of Hill, it is possible to trace the names of 76 persons who lost their lives during the siege of Calcutta either in actual fighting or in the Black Hole.

Twenty-two persons definitely died during the course of fighting. They were: William Baillie, Thomas Bellamy, Richard Bishop, Thomas Blagg, Bruce, Peter Carey, John Carse, Joseph Derrikson, James Guy, Daniel Macpherson, Montrong, William Park, John Piccard, John Pickering, Charles Smith, Peter Smith, Francis Stephenson, Robert Talbot, Ralph Thoresby, Whitby, Robert Wilkinson and George Wilson. [1]

Holwell has claimed that fifty-two persons died in the Black Hole. Of these as mentioned above, eight died during the course of fighting. They were: Baillie, Bishop, Blagg, Carse, Guy, Parker, Piccard and Stephenson. Of the remaining forty-four, two, Atkinson and John Law, were alive after the Black Hole incident.[2] The remaining forty-two were: Bernard Abraham, George Ballard, Joseph Bendall, Gervas Bellamy, John Bellamy, Jacob Bleau, John Buchanan, Robert Byng, Robert Carey, Cartwright, William Caulker, David Clayton, Thomas Coles, Stair Dalrypmple, John Dodd, Nathan Drake, William Dumbleton, Edward Eyre, Francis Gosling, William Grub, Almyer Harrod, Henry Hastings, Francis Hays, Hunt, John Jebb, John Jenks, Patrick Johnstone, William Knapton, Thomas Leech, Michael Osborne, Edward Page, Stephen Page, Joseph Porter, Thomas Pudnell, Robert Reveley, William Scott, Collen Simpson, John Street, Richard Torriano, James Valicourt, Charles Wedderburn and Lawrence Witherington. [3]

To the above list Hill adds thirteen more names. Of them Meadows survived the Black Hole. [4] The remaining twelve are: Alsop, William Barnett, Burton, Frere, Hillier, Jennings, Lyon, John Reid, Henry Stopford, William Stopford, Tilley and George Wilson. [5] The authorities for these are the newspaper accounts. Added to the forty-four names of the alleged Black Hole victims given by Holwell, this would raise the number of such victims to fifty-four. It is impossible that so many people could have died in the course of fighting. As Hill points out, "in the careless talk of Calcutta the Black Hole and Fort William seem to have been often confounded." [6]

[1] Hill, *List of Europeans, passim.*

[2] *Supra,* Appendix III, n. 10.

[3] *Hill* Collection, III, 153-54.

[4] *Supra,* Appendix III, n. 8.

[5] *Hill Collection,* I, xciv. It is strange to find Hill declaring Meadows as a survivor of Black Hole in his *List of Europeans* and as a victim of Black Hole in his introduction to *Hill Collection.*

[6] *Hill Collection,* I, xcvi.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AIDS

Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum [in progress]. London: British Museum, 1831- .

Catalogue of Manuscripts in European Languages Belonging to the Library of India Office [in progress]. London: Oxford University Press, 1916-

Vol. I, pt. i: The Mackenzie Collection, ed. C. O. Blagden.

Vol. II, pt. i: The Orme Collection, ed. S. C. Hill.

Vol. II, pt. ii: Minor Collections and Miscellaneous Manuscripts, ed G. R. Kaye and E. H. Johnston.

Catalogue of the Home Miscellaneous Series of the India Office Records. ed. S. C. Hill. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1927.

Foster, William. *A Guide to the India Office Records, 1600-1858*. London: India Office, 1919.

Index-Catalogue of Indian Official Publications in the British Museum, ed. F. Campbell. London: British Museum, n.d.

Storey, C. A. *Persian Literature. A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*. Sec. II. London: Luzac & Co., 1939.

ORIGINAL SOURCES: MANUSCRIPTS

1. *Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*

MS Rawlinson A. 257: "War with the Mogul."

MS Rawlinson C. 912: "The Embassy of William Norris."

2. *Manuscripts in the British Museum*

Additional MS 12564: "Papers Relating to Revenue and Statistics (of Bengal), 1756-1768, from a Book Given to Lord Grenville by Lord Clive in 1769."

Additional MS 18469: "Evidence Taken before the Committee of the House of Commons on the State of East India Company, 24 March to 13 April, 1767."

Additional MS 28943: "Embassy of Sir William Norris to the Emperor Aurangzib, 1698-1702."

Additional MS 29132: "Correspondence of Warren Hastings, 1758-71."

Additional MS 29209: "Memoirs and Papers Relating to History, Geography and Trade of India and the Adjacent Countries."

Additional MS 34123: "Reports on the East India Company's Affairs in Bengal, 1661-80."

Additional MS 38872: "East India Company's List of Shipping to India, 1673-1794."

3. *Manuscripts in the Commonwealth Relations Office (formerly India Office Library)*

Abstract of Despatches to Bengal.

Abstract of Letters Received from the Coromandel Coast and Bay of Bengal.

Abstract of Letters Received from Bengal.

Bengal Civil Servants.

Bengal General Journals and Ledgers.

Bengal Muster Roll and Casualty Return.

Bengal Public Consultations.

Bengal Secret and Military [Select Committee] Consultations.

Court Minutes.
Despatches [from the Court of Directors] to All Presidencies.
Despatches [from the Court of Directors] to Bengal.
Despatches [from the Court of Directors] to Madras.
Dutch Records—A.
Embarkation Lists.
Factory Records: Dacca.
Factory Records: Kassimbazar.
Home Miscellaneous Series:
Vol. XLVII: Collection for a History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
Vol. LXVIII: Accounts of British Settlements in Bengal, Orissa and Patna, &c.
Vols. LXIX-LXXI: Consultations, Diary, Correspondence and Account of Surman's Embassy.
Vols. LXXXIII: Papers and Correspondence Regarding the Distribution of Booty &c. in the Expedition to Recover Calcutta and Subsequent Operation against the French and Moors in Bengal, 1756, and Other Papers.
Vol. XCII: The Inland Trade of Bengal.
Vols. XCIV-XCV: Operations during 756-57.
Vol. CXCI: Papers Concerning Bengal and Clive.
Vol. CXCII: Loss of Calcutta and Revolution in Bengal.
Vol. CXCIII: Clive's Letter Book (15th December, 1756, to 30th June, 1758).
Vol. CXCV: Fortifications and Buildings in Bengal.
Vol. DCCXXXIX: Transcripts from Letters in the Possession of Captain Bryn Cooper.
Vols. DCCLXXIII-DCCLXXIV: Papers Concerning Bengal used by Mr. S. C. Hill in Compiling His Account of Bengal in 1756-57.
Vol. DCCCIV: Papers Concerning Bengal and Madras, 1756-85.
Vols. DCCCVII-DCCCXI: Clive's Correspondence.
Mayor's Court, Calcutta: Proceedings, Wills &c.
Miscellaneous Letters Received.
Miscellanies.
MS Eur[opean]. D. 281-84.
Original Correspondence.
Orme Manuscripts:
India Series — Vols. II, IV, V, VII and J.
O.V. (Others and Various) Series — Vols. XII, XVIII-XXI, LIV, and CLXX.

4. *Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*
San Marino, California

Admiral Pocock's Letter Book.

5. *Manuscripts in the Public Record Office*
London

Ledgers of Imports and Exports, 1700-57.

Original Sources: Printed

Documents

A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Compiled by C. U. Aitchison, 14 vols. Calcutta: Government Printing, 1929-33.

Bengal and Madras Papers from the Records of the Imperial Record Department, 1670-1785. Edited by George W. Forrest. 3 vols. Calcutta: Government Printing, 1928.

Bengal in 1765-1757. Edited with Notes and Historical Introduction by S. C. Hill. "Indian Records Series." 3 vols. London: John Murray, 1905.

Bengal Manuscript Records: A Selected List. Edited by William W. Hunter. 4 vols. London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1894.

Correspondance du conseil supérieur de Pondichéry avec le conseil de Chandernagor. Edited by E. Gaudart and Alfred Martineau. 3 vols. Pondichéry: Société de l'histoire de l'Inde française, 1918-19.

Correspondance du conseil supérieur de Pondichéry avec la Compagnie. Vol. V (1755-59). Edited by Alfred Martineau. Pondichéry: Société de l'histoire de l'Inde française, 1928.

Dodwell, Henry H. *Calendar of Madras Despatches, 1744-55*. Madras: Government Press, 1920.

——. *Calendar of the Madras Records*, 1740-44. Madras: Government Press, 1917.

——. *The Madras Despatches, 1756-65*. Madras: Government Press, 1930.

The English Factories in India, 1618-69. Edited by William Foster. 13 vols. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1906-27.

The English Factories in India (New Series), 1670-84. Edited by Charles Fawcett. 4 vols. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1936-55.

The First Letter Book of the East India Company. Edited by George Birdwood and William Foster. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893.

Great Britain, House of Commons, *A Collection of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament in 1694 and 1695 upon the Inquiry into the Late Briberies and Corrupt Practices* (1905).

——. *Fifth Report from the Select Committee of House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company*. 1812. Edited by W. K. Firminger. 5 vols. Calcutta: R. Cambray & Co., 1917.

——. *Fourth Report from the Select Committee of House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company*, 1808-12.

——. *Hansard's Parliamentary History of England*, Vols. XVI-XVIII.

——. *Journal of the House of Commons*, 1693-1700.

——. *Reports on the State of East India Company. First, Second . . . Ninth Reports from the Committee of Secrecy*, 1772-73.

——. *Reports on the State of East India Company First Second . . . Fifth Reports from the Select Committee*, 1772-73.

——. *Sessional Papers, 1812-13*, Vol. VIII, no. 152.

——. *Supplement to the Fourth Report from the Select Committee of House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company*. 1812.

Hill, S. C. *An Abstract of the Early Records of the Foreign Department, 1756-62*. Calcutta: Government Printing, 1901.

India, Records of Fort St. George, *Diary and Consultation Book (Public Department), 1672* [in progress]. Madras: Government Press, 1910- .

——. *Diary and Consultation Book (Military Department), 1752-58*. 7 vols. Madras: Government Press, 1910-15.

Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East, 1602-17. Edited by F. C. Danvers [Vol. I] and William Foster [Vols. II-VI]. 6 vols. London: Simpson, Law, Marston & Co., 1896-1902.

Lettres et conventions des gouverneurs de Pondichéry avec différents princes hindous, 1666-1793. Edited by Alfred Martineau. Pondichéry: Société de l'histoire de l'Inde française.

Proceedings of the Select Committee at Fort William in Bengal, 1758. Edited by W. K. Firminger, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Room, 1914.

Sainsbury, Ethel B. *A Calendar of the Court Minutes etc. of the East India Company, 1635-76.* 10 vols. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1907-35.

Selections from the Letters, Despatches and Other State Papars Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat (Maratha Series). Vol. I. Edited by George W. Forrest. Bombay: Government Press, 1885.

Selections from the Letters, Despatches and Other State Papers Preserved in the Madras Secretariat (Clive Series). Edited by George W. Forrest. Madras: Government Press, n.d.

Selections from the Unpublished Records of the Government of India, 1748-67. Edited by J. Long. Calcutta: Government Printing, 1869.

Wheeler, J. Talboys. *Early Records of British India, 1600-1770.* London: Trübner & Co., 1878.

Wilson, C. R. *Annals of the Early English in Bengal. 3 vols.* [In four.] Calcutta: W. Thacker & Co., 1895-1917.

——. *Old Fort William.* "Indian Records Series." 2 vols. London: John Murray, 1906.

Contemporary Works

A Collection of Papers Relating to East India Trade wherein Are Shown the Disadvantages to a Nation by Confining Any Trade to a Corporation with a Joint Stock. London: J. Walthoe, 1730.

Anonymous. *A Complete History of War in India from 1749 to 1761.* London: M. Cooper, 1761.

——. *A letter to a Friend Concerning East India Trade.* London: Stationers Hall, 1696.

——. *Transactions in India from the Commencement of the French War in 1756 to 1783.* London: J. Debrett, 1786.

Bernier, François. *Travels in the Mogul Empire.* Translated by Archibald Constable and revised by Vincent A. Smith. 2d. ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1934.

Blochmann, Heinrich. "Notes on Sirajuddaullah and the Town of Murshidabad taken from a Persian Manuscript of Tarikh-i-Mansuri." *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal,* XXXVI (1867), pt. ii, 85-104.

Bolts, William. *Considerations on India Affairs.* 3 vols. London: J. Dodsley, 1772-75.

Burnell, John: *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne.* "Hakluyt Society Publications." London: 1933.

Cambridge, Richard Owen: *An account of the War in India between the English and the French.* Dublin: George & Alexander Ewing, 1761.

[Campbell, John.] *Memoirs of the Revolutions in Bengal.* London: A. Millar, 1760.

[Child, Josiah.] *A Treatise Wherein Is Shown That the East India Trade Is Most National of All Foreign Trades.* London: R. Boulter, 1681.

Davenant, Charles. *Works.* Edited by Charles Whitworth. 5 vols. London: R. Horsfield, 1771.

Dow, Alexander. *A History of Hindostan (translated from the Persian [of Firishtah]).* 2 vols. 2d ed. London: T. Becket, 1770.

Downing, Clement. *A History of the Indian Wars.* Edited by William Foster. London: Oxford University Press, 1924.

Emin, Emin Joseph. *Life and Adventures of Emin Joseph Emin Written by Himself.* London: Privately Printed, 1792.

Fakir Muhammad. *Jami-ut-Twarikh.* Lucknow: Munshi Nawal Kishore, 1874.

Gentil, Jean Baptiste Joseph. *Mémoires sur l'Indoustan.* Paris: Chez Petit, 1822.

Gladwin, Francis. *See* Salimullah.

[Greville, C.] *British India Analyzed.* 2 vols. London: E. Jeffery, 1793.

Grose, *A Voyage to the East Indies*. 2 vols. London: S. Hooper, 1772.

Gholam-Hossein-Khan, Seid. *Seir-ul-Mutaqheerin*. Translated by Nota Manus [Raymond Mustapha]. 4 vols. Calcutta: T. D. Chatterjee, 1902.

Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies*. Edited by William Foster. 2 vols. London: The Argonaut Press, 1930.

Hedges, William. *The Diary of William Hedges*. Edited by Henry Yule. "Hakluyt Society Publications." 3 vols. London: 1887-89.

Hickey, William. *The East India Chronologist*. Vol. II, Calcutta: Author, 1801.

The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians. Vol. VIII: The Muhammadan Period. Edited by John Dowson. London: Trübner & Co., 1887.

Holwell, John Zephaniah. *India Tracts*. 3d. ed. London: T. Becket, 1774.

——. *Interesting Historical Events Relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan*. London: T. Becket, 1765.

[Ibrah.] *Ibrat-i-Arbab-i-Basr*. (A History of Bengal from A. H. 1151 to A. H. 1170.) Benares: n.p., 1824.

Ives, Edward. *A Voyage from England to India in the Year 1754 &c*. London: Edward & Charles Dilly, 1773.

Johnstone, John. *A Letter to the Proprietors of East India Stock*. London: n.p., 1766.

Kalyan Singh. "Khulasat-ut-Twarikh." Translated by Sarfaraz Husain Khan, *Journal of the Bihar and Orrisa Research Society*, V (1919), 218-34.

Karam Ali. "Muzzaffarnamah." Translated by Jadunath Sarkar in *Bengal Nawabs*. "William Jones Bi-centenary Series." Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1952.

Khojamall, Thomas. *Industan*. Allahabad: n.p., 1764.

Law, Jean. *Mémoire sur quelques affaires de l'empire Mogul*. Edited by Alfred Martineau. Paris: Edouard Champion, 1913.

Lettres édifiantes et curieuses. Vol. XI, Paris: Nicolas le Clerç, 1734.

Manucci, Niccolao. *Storia do Mogor*. Translated by William Irvine. "Indian Text Series." 4 vols. London: John Murray, 1906-08.

Master, Steynsham. *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*. Edited by Richard Temple. "Indian Records Series." 2 vols. London: John Murray, 1911.

Moodie, John. *A History of the Military Operations in Hindostan from the Commencement of War with France in 1744 to the Conclusion of Peace with Tipoo Sultan*. Vol. I, London: Author, 1788.

Morellet, André. *Mémoire sur la situation actuelle de la Compagnie des Indes*. Paris: Chez Desaint, 1769.

Orme, Robert. *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*. London: F. Wingrave, 1805.

——. *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*. Vols. I-II. London: John Nourse.

Papillion, Thomas. *A Treatise Concerning the East India Trade*. London: n.p., 1696.

Pillai, Annandranga. *Private Diary of Annandranga Pillai, 1736-61*. 12 vols. Translated by J. F. Price and H. H. Dodwell. Madras: Government Press, 1904-28.

Pollexfen, John. *England and East India Inconsistent in Their Manufactures*. London: n.p., 1697.

Pyrard de Laval, François. *Voyages to the East Indies, the Maladives, Malucca and Brazil*. "Hakluyt Society Publications." 3 vols. London: 1887-90.

Raynal, Abbé. *A Philosophical and Political History of Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*. Vols. II-III. Translated by J. O. Justamond. London: W. Strahan, 1783.

——. *Atlas de toutes les parties connues de globe Terrestre dressé et Tableaux*. [Genève: n.p., 1780.]

Salimullah. "Tarikh-i-Bangla." Translated by Francis Gladwin as *A Narrative of*

Transactions in Bengal during the Soobahdaries of Azeem-us-Shan . . . Alyvirdy Khan. Calcutta: Bangbasi Office, 1906.

Scrafton, Luke. *Reflections on the Government &c. of Indostan.* London: A. Millar, 1760.

Stavorinus, John. S. *Voyages to the East Indies.* Translated by Samuel H. Wilcocke. 3 vols. London: C. G. J. Robinson, 1798.

Steuart, James. *Principles of Money Applied to the Present State of Coin in Bengal.* London: n.p., 1772.

Tavernier, Jean Baptiste. *Travels in India.* Edited by William Crooke. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1925.

Vansittart, Henry. *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal from 1760 to 1764.* 3 vols. London: J. Newberry, 1766.

——. *Original Papers Relative to the Disturbance in Bengal, 1759-64.* London: J. Newberry, 1765.

Verelst, Harry. *Rise, Progress and Present State of the English Government in Bengal.* London: J. Nourse, 1772.

Watts, William. *Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal.* London: A. Milar, 1764.

Yusuf Ali. "Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jung." Translated by Jadunath Sarkar in *Bengal Nawabs.* "William Jones Bicentenary Series." Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1952.

Secondary Works

Anderson, Adam. *An Historical Deduction of the Origins of Commerce.* Vols. II, IV. London: J. White, 1801.

Askari, S. H. "Raja Ramnarain." *Indian Historical Quarterly,* XIV (1938), 74-95, 755-78; XV (1939), 13-38.

Ascoli, F. D. *Early Revenue History of Bengal and the Fifth Report of 1812.* Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1917.

Auber, Peter. *Rise and Progress of the British Power in India.* Vol. I. London: William H. Allen & Co., 1837.

Banerjea, Parmathanatha. *Indian Finance in the Days of the Company.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1928.

Banerjee, Anil Chandra. *Peshwa Madhav Rao I.* Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Brothers, 1943.

Banerji, B. N. *See* Barman, S. C.

Barman, S. C., and Banerji, B. N. *Begams of Bengal.* Calcutta: Mitter & Co., 1915.

Basu, B. D. *Rise of the Christian Power in India.* Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1931.

Beale, Thomas W. *The Oriental Biographical Dictionary.* Revised and edited by H. G. Keene. London: W. H. Allen, 1894.

Beveridge, H. *A Comprehensive History of India.* Vol. I. London: Blackie & Son, 1862.

Bhattacharya, Sukumar. *The East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1704-40.* London: Luzac & Co., Ltd., 1954.

Bingham, Hiram. *Elihu Yale.* New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1939.

Blochmann, Heinrich F. *Calcutta during Last Century.* Calcutta: T. S. Smith, 1868.

Broome, Arthur. *The History of the Rise of the Bengal Army.* London & Calcutta: W. Thacker & Co., 1851.

Bruce, John. *The Annals of the Honourable East India Company.* 3 vols. London: Black, Parry and Kingsbury, 1810.

Burges, Bartholomew. *A Series of Indostan Letters.* New York: W. Ross, n.d.

Burgess, James. *The Chronology of Modern India.* Edinburgh: John Grant, 1913.

Busteed, H. E. *Echoes from Old Calcutta.* 3d. ed. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1897.

Bysack, R. L. *Some Incidents in Bengal during the Eighteenth Century.* Nawabpore (India): Author, 1906.

Cambridge History of India. Vol. IV. Edited by Richard Burn, and Vol. V, edited by H. H. Dodwell. Cambridge at the University Press, 1909.

Cambridge Modern History. Vol. VI. Edited by A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero and Stanley Leathes. Cambridge at the University Press, 1909.

Caraccioli, C. *Life of Robert, Lord Clive.* 4 vols. London: T. Bell, 1855.

Carey, W. H. *The Good Old Days of the Honorable John Company.* Vol. I. Calcutta: R. Cambray & Co., 1906.

Chatterjee, Nandlal. "Clive and the Company's Gomastahs." *Indian Historical Quarterly,* XXVIII (1952), 290-92.

Cultru, Prosper. *Dupleix, sans plans politiques, sa disgrâce.* Paris: Librarie Hachette, 1901.

Dalgliesh, Wilbert H. *The Perpetual Company of the Indies in the Days of Dupleix.* Philadelphia: n.p., 1933.

Dalton, Cornelius N. *Life of Thomas Pitt.* Cambridge at the University Press, 1915.

Das, Harihar. "The Mission of George Weldon and Abraham Navarro to the Court of Aurangzib." *Indian Antiquary,* LVIII (1929), 71ff.

Datta, Kalikinkar. *Alivardi and His Times.* Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1939.

——. "The Company's Servants." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* X (1947), 464-68.

——. "Durlabh Ram: A Prominent Bengal Officer of the Eighteenth Century." *Indian Historical Quarterly,* XVI (1940), 20-39.

——. *The Dutch in Bengal and Bihar, 1740-1825.* Patna: University of Patna Press, 1948.

——. "Sirajuddaullah and the English before 1756." *Indian Historical Quarterly,* XXII (1946), 155-56.

——. *Studies in the History of Bengal Subah, 1740-70.* Vol. I. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1936.

Davies, A. Mervyn. *Clive of Plassey.* London: Nicholson and Watson, 1939.

——. *Strange Destiny: A Biography of Warren Hastings.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935.

Dighe, V. G. *Peshwa Baji Rao I and Maratha Expansion.* Bombay: Karnatak Publishing House, 1944.

Dodwell, Henry H. *Dupleix and Clive.* London: Methuen & Co., 1920.

Duff, James Grant. *See* Grant Duff, James.

Dunbar, G. D. S. *Clive.* London: Duckworth & Co., 1936.

Dutt, Ramesh Chandra. *The Economic History of India from the Rise of British Power in 1757 to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837.* 7th ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950.

Elphinstone, Monstuart. *The History of India.* 6th ed. London: John Murray, 1874.

——. *The Rise of the British Power in the East.* Edited by Edward Colebrooke. London: John Murray, 1887.

Esdaile, Katherine A. *Walpole and Chatham, 1714-60.* London: G. Bell & Sons, 1918.

Fischel, Walter J. "Abraham Navarro: Jewish Interpreter and Diplomat in the Service of the English East India Company, 1682-92." *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research,* XXV (1956), 39-63.

Forrest, George W. *The Life of Robert Clive.* 2 vols. London: Cassel & Co., Ltd., 1918.

Foster, William. "Gabriel Boughton and the Trading Privileges in Bengal." *Indian Antiquary,* XL (1911), 247-57.

——. *John Company.* London: John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1926.

Francklin, W. *The History of the Reign of Shah Aulum.* Allabahad: Pannini Office, 1934.

Furber, Holden. *John Company at Work.* "Harvard Historical Studies." Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Garrat, G. T. *See,* Thompson, Edward, and Garrat, G. T.

Goetz, H. *The Crisis of Indian Civilization in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century.* 'Calcutta University Readership Lectures." Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1938.

Gleig, G. R. *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon. Warren Hastings.* Vol. I. London: Richard Bentley, 1841.

Grant, J. *An Inquiry into the Nature of Zemindary Tenures in the Landed Property of Bengal &c.* London: J. Debrett, 1801.

Grant, Robert. *A Sketch of the History of the East India Company.* London: Black, Parry & Co., 1813.

Grant Duff, James. *History of the Mahrattas.* 3 vols. Bombay: Times of India, 1873.

Griffiths, Percival J. *The British Impact on India.* London: Macdonald & Co., 1952.

——. *The British in India.* London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1946.

Gupta, Hari Ram. *Studies in the Later Mughal History of Panjab.* Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1934.

Hallward, Norman L. *William Bolts.* Cambridge at the University Press, 1920.

Hamilton, C. J. *The Trade Relations between England and India, 1600-1896.* Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1919.

Hastings, The Marquess of. *Private Journal.* Edited by the Marchioness of Bute. 2 vols. London: Saunders & Otley, 1858.

Hertz, Gerald B. "England and the Ostend Company." *English Historical Review,* XXII (1907), 255-79.

Hill, S. C. *List of Europeans and Others in the English Factories in Bengal at the Time of the Siege of Calcutta in the Year 1756.* Calcutta: Government Printing, 1902.

——. *Three Frenchmen in Bengal.* London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903.

The History of Bengal. Vol. II, Edited by Jadunath Sarkar. Dacca: University of Dacca, 1948.

Hosten, H. "Some Old Records of the Madras Army, 1757-59." *Journal & Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* XII (New Series), 273-86.

Hodivala, Shahpurshah H. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History.* Bombay: Author, 1939.

Holzman, James Mayer. *The Nabobs in England.* New York, n.p., 1926.

Hough, (Major) W. *Political and Military Events in British India from 1756 to 1849.* Vol. I. London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1853.

Hunter, W. C. *The Fan-Kwae at Canton before Treaty Days.* London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1882.

Hunter, William W. *A History of British India.* 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899-1900.

——. *A Statistical Account of Bengal.* 20 vols. London: Trübner & Co., 1875-77.

——. *Annals of Rural Bengal.* London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1897.

——. *The Indian Empire.* London: Trubner & Co., 1886.

Hutchinson, Lester. *The Empire of the Nabobs.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1937.

Hyde, H. B. *The Parish of Bengal, 1678-1788.* Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1899.

Irvine, William. *Later Mughals.* Edited by Jadunath Sarkar. 2 vols. London: Luzac & Co., 1922.

——. "The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad." *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal,* XLVII (1878), 259-384; XLVIII (1879), 49-171.

Ilbert, Courtenay. *The Government of India.* 3d ed. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1915.

Jenkins, Alexander H. *The Political Causes Which Led to the Establishment of British Sovereignty in India.* Cambridge: John Deighton, 1851.

Jones, M. D. Monckton. *See* Monckton Jones, M. E.

Joseph, Charles. "Topographical Survey of River Hooghly from Bandel to Garden Reach," *Calcutta Review,* III (1845), 428-62.

Kedleston, Marquis Curzon of. *British Government in India,* 2 vols. London: Cassel & Co., 1925.

Keene, H. G. *The Fall of the Mughal Empire of Hindustan.* London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887.

Khan, Shafaat Ahmad. *The East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century.* London: H. Milford, 1923.

Kincaid, C. A., and Parasnis, D. E. *A History of the Maratha People.* 3 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1918.

Kincaid, Dennis. *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937.* London: George Routledge & Sons, 1938.

Krishna, Bal. *Commercial Relations between India and England, 1601-1757.* London: George Routledge & Sons, 1924.

Lajpat Rai. *See* Rai, Lajpat.

Lecky, William Edward Hartpole. *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century.* Vol. I. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1879.

Lipson, E. *The Economic History of England.* Vol. II. *The Age of Mercantilism.* London: Adam & Charles Black, 1943.

Little, J. H. "The Black Hole: Question of Holwell's Veracity." *Bengal Past and Present,* XI (1915), pt. i, 75-104.

——. "The Black Hole Debate." *Bengal Past and Present,* XII (1916), pt. i, 136-49.

——. "The House of Jagat Seth." *Bengal Past and Present,* XX (Jan.-June, 1920), 141-200; XXII (Jan.-June, 1921), 1-119.

Lockhart, L. *Nadir Shah.* London: Luzac & Co., 1938.

Low, Charles R. *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863).* Vol. I. London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1877.

Lyall, Alfred C. *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India.* London: John Murray, 1894.

Macaulay, Thomas Babington. *Critical and Historical Essays.* Vol. I. "Everyman's Library." New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1920.

McAuliff, R. Martin. *The Nizam: The Origin and the Future of the Hyderabad State.* London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1904.

MacGregor, John. *Commercial Statistics.* Vol. IV. London: Whittaker & Co., 1848.

Macpherson, David. *Annals of Commerce.* Vol. II. London: Whittaker & Co., 1805.

Malcolm, John. *Life of Robert Clive.* 3 vols. London: John Murray, 1836.

——. *The Political History of India from 1784 to 1823.* Vol. II. London: John Murray, 1826.

Malleson, G. B. *Decisive Battles of India.* London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887.

——. *History of the French in India.* London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887.

——. *Lord Clive.* London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1882.

Marriott, John A. R. *The English in India.* Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1932.

Martin, R. Montgomery. *The Indian Empire.* Vol. I. London: The London Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd., 1859.

Martineau, Alfred. *Dupleix et l'Inde française.* 4 vols. Paris: Société d'Editions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1920-31.

[Mason, Philip.] *See,* Woodruff, Philip.

Mayhew, Arthur Innes. *Christianity and the Government of India.* London: Faber & Gwyer Ltd., 1929.

Milburn, W., and Thornton, T. *Oriental Commerce.* London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1825.

Mill, James. *History of the British in India.* Edited and completed by Horace Hyman Wilson. 10 vols. London: James Madden & Co., 1840.

Mitra, Akshaya Kumar. "The Black Hole Debate." *Bengal Past and Present,* XII (1916), pt. i, 136-49.

Monckton Jones, M. B. *Warren Hastings in Bengal.* "Oxford Historical and Literary Series." Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1918.

Monahan, E. J. "The Black Hole Debate." *Bengal Past and Present,* XII (1916), pt. i, 155-56.

Moreland, W. H. *From Akbar to Aurangzeb.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1923.

Morse, Hosea Ballou. *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire.* Vol. I. London: Longmans, Green & Co., n.d.

Muir, J. Ramsay B. *The Making of British India, 1756-1858.* Manchester: Victoria University, 1915.

Namier, L. B. *Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1929.

Oaten, E. F. "The Black Hole Debate." *Bengal Past and Present.* XII (1916), pt. i, 149-55.

Owen, Sidney J. *The Fall of the Mogul Empire.* London: John Murray, 1912.

Panikkar, K. M., *Asia and Western Dominance.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953.

——. *India and the Indian Ocean.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1945.

Pant, D. *The Commercial Policy of the Moguls.* Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1930.

Parasnis, D. B. *See,* Kincaid, C. A., and Parasnis, D. B.

Parshad, I. Durga. *Some Aspects of Indian Foreign Trade, 1757-1893.* London: P. S. King & Co., 1932.

Pearson, R. *Eastern Interlude.* Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1954.

Phillips, C. H. "The Secret Committee of the East India Company." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies of the University of London,* X (1940), pt. ii, 299-315.

Poole, Stanley Lane. *Medieval India from Contemporary Sources.* Bombay: K. J. Cooper, n.d.

——. *Medieval India under the Mohammedan Rule.* London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903.

Pritchard, Earl H. *Anglo-Chinese Relations during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.* "University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences." Urbana: University of Illinois, 1929.

——. *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800.* "Research Studies of the State College of Washington." Pullman (Washington), 1936.

Rai, Lajpat. *England's Debt to India.* New York: B. W. Heubsch, 1917.

Ranade, M. G. *Rise of the Maratha Power.* Bombay: Punalekar & Co., 1900.

Rapson, Edward J. *Struggle between England and France for Supremacy in India.* London: Trübner & Co., 1887.

Reynold, Reginald. *The White Sahibs.* London: Martin, Secker & Warburg, 1937.

Roberts, Paul E. *History of British India.* 2d ed. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1933.

Robinson, Frederick P. *The Trade of the East India Company, 1709-1813.* Cambridge at the University Press. 1912.

Roy, Atul Chandra. *The Career of Mir Jafar Khan.* Calcutta: Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., 1953.

Russell, Francis. *A Short History of the East India Company.* London: John Sewell, 1793.

Ruthnaswamy, M. *Some Influences That Made the British Administration in India.* London: Luzac & Co., 1939.

Samuelson, James, *India: Past and Present.* With a bibliography by William W. Hunter. London: Trubner & Co., 1890.

Sardesai, Govind Sakharam. *The Main Currents of Maratha History.* Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar & Sons, 1926.

——, *New History of the Marathas.* Bombay: Phoenix Publications, 1940.

Sarkar, Jadunath. *Fall of the Mughal Empire.* Vols. I-III. Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Ltd., 1932-35.

——. *A Short History of Aurangzib.* London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930.

Scott, William R. *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint Stock Companies to 1720.* 3 vols. Cambridge at the University Press, 1910-12.

Sen, Surendra Nath. *Administrative System of the Marathas.* 2d. ed. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press.

Sharma, Sri Ram. *The Making of Modern India.* Bombay: Orient Longmans Ltd., 1951.

——. *Mughal Empire in India.* Part III. Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1935.

Shejwalkar, T. J. *Panipat: 1761.* Poona: Deccan College, 1946.

Sinha, J. C. *Economic Annals of Bengal.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1927.

——. "The Plassey Drain." *Calcutta Review,* 3d. Series, I (1921), 385-92.

Sinha, Narendra K. *The Economic History of Bengal.* Vol. I. Calcutta: Author, 1956.

Spear, T. G. Percival. *The Nabobs.* London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

——. *Twilight of the Mughuls.* Cambridge at the University Press, 1951.

Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy. 1750-1921. Vol. I. Edited by A. B. Keith. London: Oxford University Press, 1922.

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal. *The First Two Nawabs of Oudh.* 2d. ed. Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala, 1954.

——. *Shujauddaullah.* Calcutta: S. N. Sarkar, 1939.

Stephen, James J. *The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1885.

Stevens, Robert. *The New Complete Guide to the East India Trade.* London: D. Steel, 1775.

Stewart, Charles. *The History of Bengal.* London: Black, Parry & Co., 1813.

Strachey, Ray and Oliver. *Keigwin's Rebellion.* "Oxford Historical and Literary Series." Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1916.

Sulivan, Richard J. *An Analysis of the Political History of India.* London: T. Becket, 1784.

Sutherland, Lucy S. *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics.* Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1952.

Thompson, Edward, and Garrat, G. T. *Rise and Fulfillment of the British Rule in India.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1934.

Thompson, Virginia M. *Dupleix & His Letters (1742-54).* New York: R. O. Ballou, 1933.

Thornton, Edward. *The History of the British Empire in India.* Vol. I. London: W. H. Allen & Co., Ltd., 1841.

Torrens, W. M. *Empire in Asia: How We Came By It.* London: Trübner & Co., 1872.

Toynbee, Arnold J. *A Study of History.* 10 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1934-54.

The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, 1799-1803. London: Longmans, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1810.

Tupper, Charles L. *Our Indian Protectorate.* London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1893.

Whitworth, Charles. *State of the Trade of Great Britain.* London: G. Robinson, 1776.

Willson, Beckless. *Ledger and Sword*. Vol. II. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903.
Wilson, W. J. *History of the Indian Army*. Vol. I. Madras: Government Press, n.d.
Wint, Guy. *The British in Asia*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., n.d.
Woodruff, Philip [Mason, Philip]. *The Men Who Ruled India*. Vol. I: *The Founders*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1953.