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Price : Rs. 5/- or 10 shillings or \$ 1.50 per issue; annual subscription Rs. 20/- or 40 shillings or \$ 6.

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THE
INDIAN ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL HISTORY REVIEW

Vol. III No. 2

June, 1966

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*Indian Estate Labour in Ceylon
During The Coffee Period,
(1830 - 1880)*.*

M. W. ROBERTS

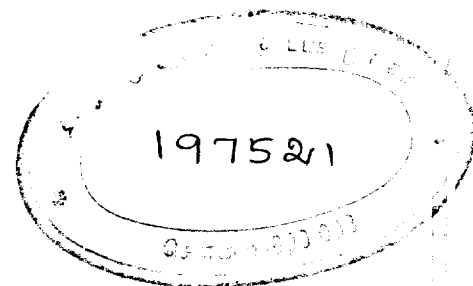
PART II

V. EFFORTS TO IMPROVE MEDICAL WELFARE AND TO
CONTROL THE KANGANY SYSTEM

Hitherto Muttuswamy's health had rested largely on the personal attentions of his employer though in some districts the planters had banded together to retain a doctor for their area. By the 1850's it is said the planters "invariably did all in their power for sick coolies",¹ while the worst cases were sent to the Government General Hospitals in the major towns (where the planter was charged for the maintenance of each immigrant). Dr. Charsley himself admitted that there were "scores of liberal and humane" planters who did not spare expense or attention in meeting the immigrants' medical wants.² But, obviously, conditions varied according to the personal caprice of each planter. At times, as in 1871, "a spirit of economy" prevailed among some of the planters to the detriment of such fringe benefits as medical attention.³ The constant complaint of Government Doctors in the General Hospitals was that sick immigrants came to them much too late for effective remedies, though this was largely the result of Muttusamy's antipathy to residence in hospitals. To meet this reluctance the Planters' Association suggested that the General Hospitals should provide outdoor relief for immigrants.⁴ Dr. Charsley retorted that this would be inadequate and advocated a more comprehensive scheme:

I have long been of opinion that this should be made, as, in Mauritius, a Government question and that every district of a

* The first part of this article was published in Vol. III No. 1 of this journal.



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Printed and Published by Dr. K. A. Naqvi
Delhi School of Economics, Delhi-7, India
at the PHOTO FLASH PRESS New Delhi

certain radius should be compelled to maintain a Hospital and medical man and the expenses should be borne by a rate levied by Ordinance.⁵

In subsequent correspondence the Planters' Association was at variance with Dr. Charsley on virtually every point and considered "the initiation of such a system as a calamity to the country"⁶ (by which they meant themselves). But the high mortality in the General Hospitals and the several critical despatches from London ensured that Government would stand firm. They did not go so far as Dr. Charsley and establish a Government-run medical scheme partly from a desire to avoid much responsibility and expense, and partly to placate the planters and win the co-operation that was essential for the success of any such scheme. Ordinance 14 of 1872 enacted that the planting areas were to be divided into manageable districts within which District Committees of planters would establish a hospital, appoint a doctor and run the medical scheme. Where the Committee recommended such a step or where, in the opinion of Government, they failed to meet their responsibilities, Government was authorised to take over the functions of the District Committees.⁷ The scheme was to be financed by an acreable tax on the plantations. It was, rather misleadingly, said to be based on "the voluntary principle". This was an allusion to the private rather than Government machinery used to operate the scheme. But it was no means dependent on voluntary acceptance nor did it mean lack of Government responsibility. It was a big step forward. The planters' obligation to care for its labour had been theoretically recognised under the master-servant law of 1865 but this brought matters to the level of practice and Government recognised its own obligation in enforcing this responsibility.

And what of its functioning in the practice? By March 1874 all the planting areas had come under the Ordinance. By late 1875 the first complaints against its working arose and in the next two years "both official and unofficial" complaints increased.⁸ Gregory agreed that it was unsatisfactory⁹ while the Planters' Association decreed it to be:

costly and vexatious to rate-payers and a source of increased disease and death among Indian labourers for whose special benefit it was framed

and asked for a mixed Commission to review its working "with a view to its revision."¹⁰ Though Government had intended taking over the

scheme it readily deferred to this suggestion.¹¹ The Commission's verdict confirmed that the scheme was unsatisfactory in its working.

Though contemporaries used the word "failure", this does not mean that medical treatment was worse than in the period preceeding 1872, as the planters implied, or that it was "a source of increased disease and death". The evidence taken by the 1878 Commission was virtually unanimous in showing that immigrants were better off in surgical cases. In other cases (i.e. the generality) there were conflicting opinions¹² but it is natural to expect planters to present a scheme they resented in an unfavourable light. Unfortunately the only kangany consulted gives views which contradict each other.¹³ Obviously, there was some regional variation. The position is best summed up in Longden's recapitulation: "Unhappily, from various causes, the [1872] Ordinance failed to benefit the coolies to the full extent that had been anticipated."¹⁴ This is not to deny that

as regards the early and consequent effective treatment of his disease, the sick cooly [was] worse off than under the "patriarchal" system, when the planter prescribed for labourers to the best of his ability.¹⁵

The "early and consequent effective treatment" hinged on the planters and they failed to maintain their former attention to simple ailments. Resenting as they did the 1872 scheme, one suspects that obstinacy led several to adopt such a policy.¹⁶ But it was also natural that many were reluctant to purchase medical supplies on the same scale as before when they were financing an immigrant medical service. The Commission asserted that the failure of the planters in this field worked to the detriment of the 1872 scheme¹⁷ but it is in the planters' extenuation that Government had not stressed this point when enacting Ordinance 14 in 1872. It is largely on these grounds that a recent study treats the "non-co-operation of the planters" as the major cause for the scheme's failure.¹⁸ This is an overdrawn picture. One need not go so far as to accept Longden's view that the planters worked the scheme "cheerfully"¹⁹ and it is true that in some districts some planters refused to undertake Committee work,²⁰ but this interpretation overlooks the fact that Committees were formed, hospitals erected, doctors appointed and numerous immigrants treated. In short, the machinery essential to its working (and which the personal attention of planters was meant to complement) was brought into action. At any rate there were several

other causes for its unsatisfactory working. As the Commission noted, the schemes had been implemented too hastily in that the inexperienced British doctors had few Tamil-speaking assistants available. Of greater relevance was the extreme strain put on their new hospitals in the years 1876-78 when the influence of the South Indian famine brought the number of the hospitalised to saturation point. Even in normal times it was asking much for 21 doctors in the 21 medical districts to effectively serve around 200,000 immigrants in 1,375 estates comprising 275,000 acres.²¹ Throughout, of course, the reluctance to enter hospital so characteristic of Muttusamy's outlook made matters the more difficult. As Longden added, the Ordinance itself "was defective" in that it did not vest any powers in the Medical Inspector of District Hospitals.²² Since this post was created as an afterthought in 1874 this is not surprising. Longden also made much of the fact that the man chosen for this post, Dr. Goghil, lacked "tact in dealing with others" and had constant quarrels with District Committees and medical officers alike, but some of the minutes in the Colonial Office throw doubt on this point.²³

These being factors which contributed to the disappointing operation of the 1872 scheme, what was the solution? Contemporary opinion saw the answer in terms of an alternative between improvements in the existing system based on the "voluntary principle" and that of a system completely in Government hands—in reality a choice between private, localised machinery or centralised machinery. The doctors were strongly in favour of the latter.²⁴ The Commission decided on the former. Longden felt that the

causes assigned [by the Commission did] not in general touch the principles upon which the Ordinance of 1872 was framed, but rather [lay] outside the law itself.²⁵

He made no bones about his personal predilections being in favour of the "voluntary principle". He agreed that a centralised Government scheme would be more "comprehensive" but in the same breath argued that the mountainous nature of the terrain "pointed to local administration as likely to be more efficient in securing the sanitary welfare of the coolies".²⁶ Above all, Longden stressed the greater expense Government machinery would entail. The latter point was made all the more vivid in that Dr. Kynsey, the P.C.M.O., had drawn up a white-elephant of a Government scheme involving an expenditure of £ 60,700 a year besides £ 1½ million capital expenditure on hospitals. Involving

additional taxation on the planters as this sort of scheme would have done, it is no surprise that the "majority of the planters were not in favour" of this idea.²⁷ The manner in which the Commission summed up the pros and cons of the two alternatives indicates the planters' main objections to a Government-run scheme:

It gives no voice in the scheme to those most interested in its working, while its inquisitorial nature and interference between master and servant would cause general discontent...while its great expense is prohibitive.²⁸

Having raised criticisms against the 1872 scheme in its working one now found planters agreeing to continue the same method. This seeming anomaly is easily explained. It is clear that their criticisms were motivated by a desire to return to the pre-1872 system for they argued that

the coolies were...better off when their trifling ailments were at once attended to by the Superintendence of the Estates... than they [had] been since [1872] and suggested that a real voluntary system should allow a return to the old custom.²⁹

Government would have none of it.

There is no objection to the revival or continuance of the old practice as, indeed, recommended by the Commission, but it is not of itself alone sufficient,

said Longden.³⁰ The argument that voluntary attention should supplement the district hospital system was irrefutable. Faced with the bitter pill of more Government interference and greater expense the planters preferred to adhere to the 1872 machinery.

But, as not uncommon with them, they began to have second thoughts within a few months. By the time Government presented a Bill to this effect (late 1879) a "large and influential section of them [had come] to the conclusion that the most expedient course [would] be to throw the whole working of the Medical Relief Bill into the hands of the Government."³¹ It had dawned on them that attendance at District Committee meetings was a time-killing nuisance, particularly at crop-time. This was an understandable objection but it is remarkable

that their hatred of Government interference had been so strong in the preceding period as to blind them to this disadvantage. One suspects that planters were so incensed at Government for forcing medical aid on them that they now resolved to wash their hands of the whole affair and let Government undertake the task.

Government postponed its measure for a year to enable the planters to make up their minds, again illustrating a willingness to lean backwards so as to win their co-ordination. In 1880 Government brought forward Ordinance 17 to set up a Government scheme, on a cheaper estimate than Dr. Kynsey's. In response to protests from unofficial and official quarters as to the vexations caused by the acreage assessment, this Ordinance followed the 1879 measure in substituting an export duty on coffee, tea, cinchona and cocoa as the means of financing the project.³² Faced with this Ordinance the planters showed their true colours as well as some unscrupulous opportunism in argument. No doubt inspired by the depressed state of the coffee industry, they suggested that Government should return to the pre-1872 system; failing this, that Government should merely extend the Civil Medical Department and avoid special taxation on the planters, or if such taxation was essential, raise it through an increased import duty on rice entering certain ports in the island.³³ The amendments they proposed "attacked the first principle on which the bill [was] founded, namely, the liability of the planters to find medical aid at all for their immigrant labourer."³⁴ Among other points, the planting interest argued that the scheme

attached an unfair stigma to the coffee planter because it implied that special legislation was necessary to protect the coffee estates while in other districts it was not necessary.³⁵

They also opposed the export duty as bad in principle and as if it were a new imposition that raised costs of production, when, as Ramanathan and the Governor were quick to point out, it was merely an alternative form of taxation.³⁶

Government refused to reverse its established policy and allow the planters "to repudiate [an] obligation imposed on them by law", while the proposed increase in the rice duty was rejected as "inexpedient" and "radically unjust".³⁷ This stand aroused the planting representative, R. B. Downall, to a fiery promise of unrelenting hostility:

...if this bill becomes law it will sever that unanimity and good feeling which has so long...existed between the Government and

the planting community. We are very unanimous in opposing the principle of the bill. It is not the amount of money necessary, but the principle of imposing export duties on the produce of the country that we object to. As long as I have the honor of representing the planting community I shall oppose the principle of this bill by every means in my power.³⁸

While Longden laboured to counter their arguments, the Colonial Office hardly deigned to give them a thought. Ebdon went so far as to write:

I am not satisfied that the Ceylon employers ought not to pay a large proportion of the Rs. 120,000 annually spent by Government for the conveyance of these Coolies...But it will be best not to stir the point.³⁹

But to the new method of taxation there was objection. While Lucas, Ebdon and Wingfield accepted it as the most convenient,⁴⁰ Gregory's personal intervention and objections to a tax on the "nascent industries" of tea, cocoa and cinchona caused a fresh examination of this point.⁴¹ Grant Duff, Herbert and Kimberley now objected to it on principle.

I do not think we should sanction the export duty. It is quite indefensible and as the affairs of Ceylon are about to come before the House of Commons, to sanction it would be to invite defeat,

wrote Grant Duff.⁴² Like Gregory, they preferred assessment according to the number of labourers employed, in effect a capitation tax, though Colombo had rejected this very method as wholly impracticable, if fairer.

Colombo was forced to pass Ordinance 18 in 1881 to effect this change. The planters seized this chance to mount another attack on the basic principle behind Government policy. In the interim, declining market prices and the leaf disease had taken further toll on the coffee industry and their opposition was more violent than ever.⁴³ At this stage the local authorities modified their position.

It is unfortunately most true that burdens which were comparatively light in 1872, and for some years after, press with infinitely greater weight upon planters now in 1882...and I think that at the present critical conjuncture the planters may fairly ask for any relief which the Government can give,

wrote Longden.⁴⁴ The principal change was that Government would pay the salaries of the medical staff (the European complement being

reduced and other retrenchment made). The cost to Government was anticipated as Rs. 45,000 (£ 4,500). The change in policy was on grounds of expediency. Theoretically there was no concession on the principle that it was the planters' duty to pay for medical welfare.⁴⁵

The Colonial Office, however, was far less sympathetic and, one could perhaps say, less realistic. As usual Lucas gave no quarter to the planting interest:

I...want to call attention to the attitude taken by the planters and their threats.... I think it is a serious matter when a class of English for whom a great deal has been done by Government, and who are not called upon to discharge any new obligation, openly declare that they will do their best to evade and defy the law.⁴⁶

He was against Longden's concessions, wanted a categorical decision to resolve the "crisis" and an assertion that Government "[would] not listen to menaces on the part of the planters." His immediate senior, Wingfield, did not object to Government maintaining the six district hospitals because of the "new point" brought to their notice that there was a "large" local population in the vicinity of the hospitals.⁴⁷ He went on:

But this is only a small part of the question. The principle item of expense is the salaries of the medical officers and I can see no sort of reason for saddling the general community with this....

The two grounds on which the Governor bases his change of front are: 1. The bad times of the Coffee Planters. 2. The difficulty of carrying out any scheme in which the planters do not concur.

I agree with Mr. Lucas that both of these are very insufficient reasons for burdening the general revenue with the expense of providing medical aid to the planters' labourers and it is, I think, to be regretted that Sir James Longden has, throughout, laid so much stress on the necessity of obtaining the co-operation of the planters as they have, thereby, been naturally led to push their demands to the utmost limit.

But the plantation industry and the island were passing through "a serious crisis" and telegraphic pressure from Colombo forced London to allow Government to pay one half of the doctors' salaries in 1883.⁴⁸ Colombo did its best to work the capitation tax but found it impracticable⁴⁹ and successfully brought pressure to bear through various channels to

revert to an export duty.⁵⁰ Some of the leading officials in London had been obstinately unrealistic on this point and Kimberley gave way ungraciously:

When...there is a determined opposition on the part both of the Government and the planters to a scheme of taxation, it is hopeless to make it work. Those who work it, will not give it a fair chance. I should therefore resign the contest. The only question is how we can most gracefully surrender, and when.⁵¹

But the fact that Government had assumed around three-fourths of the cost of immigrant medical welfare is the salient point in these developments of 1882-1883. This was intended as a provisional expedient, while efforts were made to reduce costs through a greater reliance on "native practitioners".⁵² But it would appear that even in 1884 Government had to make good a deficit of Rs. 104,000 (£ 10,400).⁵³

On the whole, the history of these medical schemes in the 1870's shows a commendable effort on the part of the authorities to improve the medical condition of immigrant workers in the face of sustained opposition from the planters. While Colombo did its best to placate the planting interest, its deference was only on points of detail and questions of postponement. Official policy remained unshakable on the main question of the planters' liability to pay for such medical welfare. It was only with the practical realities of a depressed plantation industry that Colombo agreed to bear most of the burden. So it was that hard times in the early 1880's forced both Colombo and London to trim the sails of medical relief. The manner in which this mutilated system weathered the seas ahead falls outside the Coffee Period and beyond our ken.

So does the success or failure of attempts to regulate the kangany system, so ambitiously undertaken in 1870-1880.

This was the end product of a chain of events flowing from a mass influx of Tamils after the South Indian famine. This exodus from South India raised the question of quarantine measure for the first time in the island's history and the reactions to this problem are of significance in themselves. The great danger was the spread of cholera. But while the Colonial Secretary, A. N. Birch (acting as Governor) felt that it was Government's "first duty to see that [the] resident population [was] made as secure as (might) be possible from the ravages of cholera", he considered that

"Ceylon owe[d] a debt to India for the development of her resources through the instrumentality of the Malabar Coolie and [that], apart from the question of humanity, it would be unwise [to threaten Ceylon's labour supply]." ⁵⁴

In the circumstances Government temporised with a "middle course". Rather than close all the ports as counselled by some, they placed all immigrant-carrying vessels calling at ports outside the supervision of the Superintendent of Immigration—i.e. ports such as Colombo—under a fortnight's quarantine while subjecting their passengers to examination.⁵⁵ But even these very limited steps drew opposition from elements in the mercantile sector. With the ridiculously magnified fears so common to them, they passed a resolution against these measures at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on the ground that immigration "might be permanently checked" and argued that this opportunity afforded by distress in India should be seized to import "a large supply of cheap labour which, however, should be maintained by Government until required by the Planter."⁵⁶ It is no wonder that the authorities in Colombo were rather sick of the planters and that Birch should write:

the course of events has disposed me to receive with great caution the representations and suggestions of the Chamber of Commerce and the Planter's Association in regard to immigration.⁵⁷

As it was, cholera epidemics broke out and though Longden felt that the relief afforded by Government to the immigrants had been "successful", it was "a season of suffering" for the whole labouring population of Ceylon and "a time of anxiety" for Government.⁵⁸ By November 1877 at least 18,600 people had contracted cholera and 10,000 cases had proved fatal.⁵⁹ At the same time Government and planter were faced with the problem of excess immigrant labour, the ingress in the years 1876-78 being double the average while the egress remained at par. In this sphere the planters responded with humanitarianism and co-operated with Government in providing relief, largely by employing more hands than they needed. Government undertook more tasks in road extensions than they normally would have done and the Public Works Department employed all those who sought work. Nevertheless a surfeit of immigrants existed and these eked out a living till they succumbed to disease.⁶⁰

In the event the mortality rate among immigrants was high. As usual, many of them entered hospitals only as a last resort while many only reached hospitals when brought there in a state of collapse by the

police patrols which had been inaugurated in planting districts on Longden's arrival in 1877.⁶¹ The hospital statistics and doctors' reports again struck the eye of the Colonial Office. With many a misconception, they sent a despatch which

argued [that the immigrants] should not have been allowed to come or that they should have been taken better care of when they did come; and the Ceylon government was charged with having failed in controlling Immigration at a time of crisis...and with having allowed the kanganyes to allure people who were not able to get work and who consequently starved.⁶²

This sort of thing could only have been annoying to Colombo. The Governor patiently described the situation and pointed out that Government had never "at any time undertaken the entire control and management of the immigration in the same thorough manner as the West Indian Governments", that they had no means of controlling the influx and, though they would have liked to narrow it down if possible, they had deemed it "impossible to refuse an asylum" to a people fleeing from death. He laid great emphasis on the point that the high mortality was largely due to the semi-starvation suffered by the immigrant in South India. He also took considerable pains to dismiss the Colonial Office notion that Government exercised "a certain amount of control over the kangany system and the notion that kanganyes had lured many immigrants over."⁶³ But Longden was forced to admit the necessity for defining "the responsibility of the kangany in respect to the coolies" by some "positive enactment".

The personnel in the Colonial Office agreed with the implication that Colombo had been faced by uncontrollable forces and with the argument that starvation in India was responsible for many of the deaths in Ceylon, though with some doubts on the latter score. "I do not think, the Colonial Government has been in any great degree, if at all, to blame for what occurred", wrote the Permanent Under-Secretary of State.⁶⁴ But the reply sent to Ceylon was much more guarded on this point:

The peculiar nature of the crisis and the presumption that the great number of the Malabars contracted the seeds of disease and death before they crossed into the island, appear to exonerate the government from blame for this excessive mortality, although the statistics show that the death-rate was higher among those coolies

leaving Ceylon for India after a sojourn of some period in the colony than among those who had recently entered [which could support the conclusion] that the direct cause of death in the greater number of cases should be looked for not in India but in Ceylon.⁶⁵

But of greater significance was their decided and unanimous opinion that a greater degree of Government control was essential, particularly over the kangany system: "an efficient check should be put upon the kangany both in bringing coolies to the Estate and in dealing with them at the Estates", wrote one clerk.⁶⁶ The Colonial Office strongly supported the variety of recommendations by Dr. Kynsey pertaining to control of the immigrants entering Ceylon and to improvements on the immigrant-routes, including the suggestion that the North Road be abandoned in favour of the route through Colombo.

In the meanwhile, Colombo made arrangements with Madras for the sanitary inspection of coolies before embarkation; agreed to their registration on arrival; and took steps to license kanganies and make each "responsible under heavy penalties" for the welfare of all immigrants in his gang till they reached his estate. But they argued against Dr. Kynsey's suggestion that both the destitute and the sick and aged immigrants should be refused entry. Though Government would save considerable expenses (£ 11,200) if the North Road was abandoned, for the present they were "very loth indeed to force the coolies to give up their favourite route."⁶⁷

Of the measures instituted, that relating to the licensing of kanganies was the most important. But what is remarkable is that neither Colombo nor London seem to have noticed either Gregory's—in other words, Colombo's—view that this sort of thing was impracticable or the experiment with a "passes" system in 1871-72. The fate of this measure, however, falls outside the period under review.

As in the years 1869-1872, then, misconceptions and benevolence in combination inspired the Colonial Office to agitate for greater Government intervention and resulted in greater supervision on Government's part. It was a strange and regrettable omission that they did not press for additional executive measures in the form of Protectors of Immigrants, which would have helped in the supervision of kanganies as well as enabling inspections of estates and assisting immigrants to grasp the labour laws. Not only had the idea been accepted in 1847

but Murdoch had broached it in connection with the master-servant laws in 1862,⁶⁸ and it was a cardinal feature of the indentured system in the sugar colonies. If the answer lies in the fact that the labour laws of Ceylon were not brought under consideration at this stage—heavy mortality having been the actuating cause—this in turn remains a regrettable omission. Whether Protectors of Immigrants would have been of much benefit, of course, is a moot point.⁶⁹ It would undoubtedly have met firm opposition from the planters and some of that resistance which many of them afforded to the Medical Aid scheme.

Nevertheless it is clear that Government welfare measures and conditions on the immigrant routes in the 1870's were far in advance of the weak measures and pathetic state of affairs in the 1840's. But what of that other broad facet—the conditions on the estates in the period under review, so far touched on only in connection with the Medical Aid Measures of the 1870's and the planters' illtreatment in the 1840's?

VI.—THE CONDITION OF IMMIGRANT ESTATE LABOUR.

This hinged in part on the practical working of the master-servant laws. This is a large field of study and need not be reviewed in detail here.⁷⁰ Briefly summarised, the influence of the Council office was largely instrumental in ensuring that Ordinance 5 of 1841 was a fair one, even in advance of the contemporary law in England in that it treated employer and employee in the same way. Written engagements could only be entered into for the maximum period of a year and verbal contracts were deemed to be monthly engagements which could be terminated by either party on a week's notice. If tolerable in the letter, in the practice immigrants were too servile or ignorant to resort to law in defence of their rights. Many a planter spoke of its working with pleasure. Nevertheless there were inveterate grumblers and in the 1860's, they showed their ability to make much ado about trifles by raising intense agitation for a revision of the law. If Government did not bend completely to their will, the letter of Ordinance 11 of 1865 still pleased some planters. This was largely a consolidating law with Ordinance 5 of 1841 as its main basis. It reiterated an enactment of 1861 stipulating that three months arrears of wages were to be a first charge on estates; one month's arrears of wages clear of any debt (the immigrant's debt) would entitle an employee to leave the estate on two days notice. In normal circumstances both employers and employees were bound to give a month's notice rather than a week's notice. Another change was that written contracts for a maximum of three years

were permitted. But in the period under review written engagements were always rare and verbal short-term contracts were preferred by both parties, not unnaturally given the seasonal demands of coffee cultivation.

If in practice the planter rather than the immigrant took advantage of these laws, by the 1870's if not earlier, it would seem that the immigrant was

perfectly aware that the law [would] protect him; and the severe sentences passed by Magistrates in such cases [had] shown that illegal acts [could] not be committed with impunity.⁷¹

For much of the period under review there were other factors which counteracted the planters' position of authority and advantage, though in limited fashion. The most salient factor was that the labour supply was invariably short of the demand. This meant that plantations could not afford a bad name. By the 1850's at least planters saw that it was in their self-interest to treat their workers with some benevolence. With a ready demand for labour, moreover, the ill-treated immigrant had some room to risk deserting to another planting district. Unlike the indentured labourer in the sugar colonies he was also favoured by the short period of notice he was entitled to give, though Gregory overstated the case in writing that the immigrant was saved from harsh treatment because of this factor,⁷² for the immigrant could not give such notice if he was indebted to the planter or the kangany. In the last resort, however, it was the benevolence—or lack of it—of the planter that counted for most in determining conditions on an estate.

The evidence suggests that planters were treating their labourers much better in the 1850's and 1860's than in the 1840's. Much has been made of the fact that some of the planters of the 1840's were non-commissioned soldiers and "riff-raff" and it is said that a better class of planter brought better treatment in the 1850's.⁷³ Be that as it may, discussion on the best type of "lines" and other matters in 1857 certainly bespeak an attention to immigrant welfare.⁷⁴ A former surveyor stated that "the Coolies [were] well housed and cared for", and that "the greatest humanity and forbearance [were] shown to these men."⁷⁵ But evidence emanating from sources in sympathy with the planters is not to be wholly relied on. In contrast a missionary of the late 1850's stated that the

"accounts which the natives [gave] of the immoral practices of some [planters was] very painful."

and wished that there were more married planters, adding that

"some [were] said to resort to illegal and unjustifiable means in the management of the Coolies."⁷⁶

However it is clear that Reverend Septimus Hobbs was largely appalled by the sexual incursions of the planters. Official evidence from high quarters towards the end of our period was both discriminating and earnest in asserting that the planters treated their coolies well. Robinson stated that

complaints [were] occasionally made of harsh treatment of Coolies by their masters but such cases [were] rare; [and that, on] the whole, the relation between the employer and employed [might] be considered satisfactory.⁷⁷

He added that, "as a rule," the immigrants had "good accommodation" that was "clean and comfortable" and that Government Agents were

unanimous in reporting that it [was] believed that the Coolies [were] better fed, housed, and generally, better cared for [in Ceylon] than in their own country.

Rogers' comment on this point is instructive:

I do not doubt that coolies are better off in Ceylon than in India. Indeed if this was not so they would not go to Ceylon. And I dare say they are well-off—but one does not follow from the other.⁷⁸

Gregory, however, presented a very similar picture;⁷⁹ and writing privately, said:

I came here with my mind a piece of blank paper as regards the treatment of the coolies, but I have seen a great deal of the Island now and I am convinced there is not a labouring population in any part of the World so well off—Labour is of such importance here that a planter dare not illtreat his coolies for fear of his plantation getting a bad name.⁸⁰

Even so severe a critic of Government and planter as the Legislative Councillor, Coomaraswamy, felt "that the treatment of the coolies on the Coffee Plantations was, as a rule, kind and humane. Indeed, generally speaking, the coolies could not fare better."⁸¹ Another Tamil wrote that "happiness and privileges the coolies [enjoyed] on the estates [were] manifold".⁸² Such views clearly had a degree of exaggeration and must be viewed with circumspection but it appears that, in general, the treatment in the 1860's was satisfactory and certainly much improved. At least in some cases there was "undoubtedly a feeling of liking on the part of the employers towards their coolies" and this was reciprocated.⁸³

It may have been some comfort to the estate workers that "the position of the ordinary road laborers" in the Public Works Department was

unsatisfactory, inasmuch as in regard to pay, accommodation, food and medical care they were at a disadvantage compared with coolies in private employ.... [and that] desertions [were] of frequent occurrence [as a result].⁸⁴

On the other hand, in 1878 Government officers described the Pioneers (the elite among the P.W.D. workers) as well-housed in temporary lines in which scavenging was regularly seen to. Whether Pioneer or "road coolie", however, a P.W.D. worker was liable to corporal punishment and flogging was not unknown.⁸⁵ These forms of punishment were consciously re-enacted in Ordinance 2 of 1866. The Ordinance had been rejected by London under Rogers' inspiration but this decision was reversed by the new Secretary of State, the Earl of Carnarvon, after he had had an interview with Skinner;⁸⁶ for Colombo's view was that

the Tamil coolie [was] perhaps the simplest as he [was] certainly the most capricious of all Orientals.... in Ceylon [and that he was] like a child requiring the sense of the strong arm of power.⁸⁷

But the evidence on immigrant conditions on estates depicted above ignores one major aspect. The immigrant started estate life in debt to the kangany or the planter.⁸⁸ This was inherent in the "coast advance" system which was used in conjunction with the kangany system to recruit labour. As planter's agent, the kangany was provided with an advance to secure labour but this advance was debited against Muttusamy and the others he brought over. If Muttusamy needed a *cumbly* (a coarse

cape) that too was provided but debited against him. This was his initial debt even though many kanganies tended to spend "only a fraction of the 'coast advance' on the immigrant labourers, keeping the bulk or it for themselves".⁸⁹ The main point was that the kangany was

the leader and representative of the coolies composing his gang and artfully [bound] them to him in every conceivable way. He [was] their banker and their spokesman.⁹⁰

This was a position of unwholesome power, though accepted by the immigrants themselves. It even operated in the Pioneers Corps, the semi-military Government labour force, where the coolies "were absolutely in [the kangany's] power."⁹¹ It would appear that it was his natural rank as leader and middleman rather than that of creditor which resulted in such power. At any rate, contemporaries stated, that kanganies mis-used this power and deprived coolies of their legitimate gains;⁹² one official believed that desertions from estates were largely due to the ill-treatment of kanganies.⁹³ But this was a comfortable theory for planters. One suspects that its evils have been overstated. The planters themselves railed at the system. They felt that it placed them in the power of the kanganies and argued that, as creditors, they (the planters) were placed in an awkward position. They were worried by the extent of the advances and felt that this system and the system of contract work with payment by the job had increased the kangany's power as well as estate expenditure.⁹⁴ These men were looking at the matter from their own standpoint, not that of Muttusamy. Thus, in Gregory's view,

[t]he kangany system [was], no doubt, a bad one. There [was] hardly a planter in the island who would not abolish it if he could. But it [was].... impossible to do so. It [was] the custom.... The cooly [would] have his kangany.⁹⁵

Some planters did try to bypass the kangany and "coast advance" systems of recruitment by employing "private agencies" in India but in many cases only received "useless" coolies who fled on being made to work, "not having any leader to keep them in hand".⁹⁶ By this stage at least, it would appear to have been in the kanganies' interests to bring only able-bodied men.⁹⁷ Longden too gave the system his qualified support:

I do not desire to uphold the kangani system. I am very far from thinking it satisfactory, but it is a system that has grown up with the circumstances and in ordinary times seems to have worked well.⁹⁸

Much has been made of the fact that immigrants commenced estate life in debt.⁹⁹ The question hinges on the amount of their advance, their wages and how much they were able to save per month. According to a planter "the vast majority of [his coolies came] over deeply indebted to the Estate" and they "often [found] difficulty in repaying" the advances though planters "rarely" charged interest; and he has support from other quarters.¹⁰⁰ Even more significant is a kangany's admission, quite incidentally, that most of the hands on his estate were in his debt.¹⁰¹ But these views bear examination. Obviously these travelling advances varied since much depended on the size of the gang procured and how much money the immigrant desired to leave behind for his relatives in India. 4-6s. should have been ample for his journey¹⁰². It would seem that the advance was "seldom" under 10s. and 10-15s. can be taken as the normal sum.¹⁰³ The discussion which follows on the savings Muttusamy could make each month indicates that this debt could be worked off in three-four months assuming no illness or extravagance on his part—and the general impression is that the typical immigrant was not given to extravagance.¹⁰⁴

It is proposed to study the economic position of an immigrant in the 1860's first because more data is available for this period. Unfortunately quotations on the rate of estate wages vary but one can follow Robinson in stating that "adult males [earned]: . . . 7-9d. a day, the amount varying in different districts", while women and boys received 4½-7d.¹⁰⁵ Off season the labourers were liable to get only four days work¹⁰⁶ but in crop time a five-day, or more probably, a six-day week was common¹⁰⁷ and this would have brought the men roughly 13-14s. a month or 16-17s. a month. They could also earn 6d. for every bushel extra picked in crop time¹⁰⁸ but this is impossible to compute and is left out of our calculations. The earnings must be set against subsistence. A feature of the plantations in Ceylon was that planters issued rice, or rice money, at standardised rates, every week or every month. In the 1840s this was at 5-6s. a bushel,¹⁰⁹ in the late 1850's it varied from 6s. to 8s. 6d.,¹¹⁰ Through these years the planters made a "considerable profit" on this deal.¹¹¹ But prices rose. Even though "the standard rate of issue" in the mid 1860's was 8s. a bushel (in Kotmale it was 9s.),¹¹² the planters, it is said, found the "loss on rice" a regular item of expenditure and lying "like a huge incubus on coffee".¹¹³ A bushel was usually issued each month but some estates issued ½ of a bushel with 2s. for curry-stuffs.¹¹⁴ Thus 8s. can be regarded as the subsistence expenditure of each immigrant per month but one should note that they "invariably"

sold a portion of the rice.¹¹⁵ This was possible because immigrants maintained vegetable (and sometimes paddy) plots near their lines and because some even had a few cows which provided a useful by-income. Taking another shilling off for extras, this would have left an immigrant bachelor of the 1860's with 4-8s. (i.e. 2-4 Rs.) a month to pay off his initial debt, spend on clothing, on luxuries like arrack and toddy or to squirrel away as he pleased. A famished man might have needed most of the savings for his dependents in India but one should note that the advance, or initial debt, could well have fulfilled this task, even if partially. If the family was in Ceylon the women and elder children could generally earn their keep as well. On these calculations an immigrant could work off his initial debt in three to four months. But with about a thousand plantations and a galaxy of immigrants and differences in advances, circumstances varied greatly. Matters were further complicated by the fact that, apart from their initial debt, immigrants contracted other debts with their employers or the kanganies.¹¹⁶ A Tamil stated that there was "no way. . . for a kangany to cheat his coolies"¹¹⁷ but the fact is that they charged interest on these advances.¹¹⁸ Certainly in some cases immigrants must have been badly indebted. But whether this was solely due to their initial debt or to a combination of other debts is difficult to say. Neither can we determine how general it was. But our computations reveal that wages in the 1860's were adequate for subsistence and for savings as well though, obviously, on the basis of a very low standard of living and the very real assistance of vegetable plots, cows and poultry maintained by the immigrants themselves.

What of the 1840's? Wages varied as much. From 4d. a day at the outset they quickly rose to 7d. and even to 9d.,¹¹⁹ but 6-7d. can be taken as the average. Since rice was issued at 5-6s. a bushel and food was cheaper than in the 1860's it would seem that their economic position was similar—if, and when, they were paid.

Apart from these computations, there is some evidence as to the extent of an immigrant's savings in contemporary writings. The popular view in European circles of the 1840's was that the estate workers, as well as other labour, could easily save two-thirds of their pay and that wages were much too high.¹²⁰ This is clearly exaggerated and biased. In 1856 the *Colombo Observer's* more careful calculations depict the savings of an immigrant as 3-4s. a month.¹²¹ In the 1860's one planter placed it as 5s. 4. at a maximum, another at 6-7s.¹²² and a third felt that, a "coolie, if he [chose, could] live with every comfort and save 4s. to 5s. a month".¹²³ In 1873 an immigrant's wages per year on the basis of 20

days work per month was stated to be £ 9, and the savings possible, 50s, or 27 per cent. of the pay.¹²⁴ These statements seemingly contradict the opinions of planters themselves that immigrants were greatly indebted. This inconsistency stems from the variety in circumstances and relations between immigrants and kanganies and employers, and the improvidence of immigrants in contracting numerous other debts besides the initial advance. But at any rate our computation of 4-8s. savings a month gains support from these statements. Even if an immigrant worked for only five months, he could have saved 20-30s. if not imprudent—out of which his advance would have to be repaid. Many immigrants, however, tended to wait longer, particularly from the 1860's; estates retained at least one-third the labour force, if not half, during the seven months before the next crop;¹²⁵ there were many other avenues of employment as servants, horsekeepers, railway workers, menial hands in shops or working under Chetties or under Government.¹²⁶ Some immigrants were even leasing or purchasing land from the Kandyans, usually to grow coffee.¹²⁷ In the late 1860's an official found that immigrants returning to India were healthy and armed with numerous possessions like umbrellas in contrast to those on the way in.¹²⁸ These features lend support to our contention that, in general, Muttusamy was paid enough for subsistence and for some savings.

Like other employers at other times, however, many planters and officials of the 1840's and 1860's were convinced that labour was paid too much. So Skinner contended that: "labour throughout the colony [was] overpaid with reference to the cost of food and clothing of the labouring man".¹²⁹ This received the healthy scepticism it merited in the Colonial Office¹³⁰ and one can say with James Stephen: "so the rich invariably argue in all parts of the world".¹³¹ But these views too add support to our conclusion.

It is fruitless comparing Muttusamy's wages with those in South India where the scale was rock-bottom. It was said that the "wages of coolies in Ceylon [were] lower than in the West Indies and their ability to save less".¹³² In Mauritius wages and board amounted to about 10d. a day. But such comparisons hinge on the relative costs of living. The best line of comparison is that of other wages in Ceylon. As noticed earlier, the wages on the Railway soon rose to about 50 per cent more but in the P.W.D. they remained at par or less. In 1858 Doyne had considered 5d. a day a good living wage in Ceylon.¹³³ 7d. a day could be regarded as such a wage in the 1860's in so far as we can rely on his views and on the rate of pay in the P.W.D. Peons and messengers in

Government service received 15-20s a month, domestic servants 18-25s., policemen 20-25s. and "native teachers" 18-40s.¹³⁴ Horsekeepers in private employ received 25s.¹³⁵ In comparison our calculations for the 1860's place the monthly income of estate workers at 13-17s. (on top of free housing). As for the 1870's they received anything from 28-37 cents (7-9d.) a day whereas urban labourers working a similar period of ten hours a day received wages varying from 30 cents to 50 cents (7½-12d.)¹³⁶ Labourers were bottom of the scale socially and the fact that they were kept on this footing in wages too is no matter for surprise.

VII. APPRAISAL AND CONCLUDING SUMMARY.

While some immigrants and particularly the kanganies were able to indulge in the purchase of land, the savings seem to have been such as to limit social advancement. Retrospectively, it is clear that the immigrant in Ceylon did not advance economically or socially as much as his counterparts in Mauritius, Fiji and the Caribbean. In those lands the "horizontal short-term outlook" of the Indian villager gradually gave place to the "vertical long-term outlook" of Indians who had advanced to the position of "peasant proprietor or prosperous storekeeper"—with the second and third generations the main beneficiaries.¹³⁷ In Ceylon the meagreness of their savings may have possibly had something to do with this difference. There were other reasons. The flow to Ceylon was in large part migration rather than emigration, and so there were greater social and cultural obstacles to their advancement in Ceylon; again, this made it more difficult for them to adjust themselves to local society and they remained alien in spirit; the Kandyans themselves disliked the newcomers and if by the 1850's they had economic dealings with them, there was little social mixing. In the West Indies and Fiji however, while the immigrant came into contact with the resident peoples on terms which varied from friendship, mutual distrust, indifference or co-operation according to [the immigrant's] occupation or the colony concerned, . . . [adjustment] to life in a multi-racial society took place largely without antagonism. . . . In the [former] the attitude of the negroes to the newcomers was cordial [and] in Fiji social segregation was voluntary and complete.¹³⁸

According to Carnell the "lack of a socially organised indigenous people" in most of these colonies "diminished the possibility of conflict".¹³⁹ In Ceylon, on the other hand the immigrants faced an established indigenous culture besides some local hostility in a society where new status concepts were developing under British rule. Equally important would

have been the fact that the Moors and some of the Sinhalese, besides Ceylon Tamils and Chetties, entered into the new avenues of money-making in Government Service and the professions, and as shopkeepers, contractors and the like, far more readily than the Negro, and even perhaps the Creole and the Fijian seems to have done. As a result fertile avenues of advancement were largely closed to the ambitious immigrant. The cards were heavily stacked against any notable "vertical" ascent on his part. Furthermore, in the late 1870's and 1880's, an ill-wind blew no good for some budding progressives in the immigrant group. Coffee culture succumbed to a leaf disease. Those who had invested their hard-earned capital in coffee gardens and estates would have been wiped out.¹⁴⁰

Cash-nexus apart, the fact that most of the regular labour was immigrant posed numerous social implications for the future. These implications do not seem to have been deeply imprinted on officials or Europeans in Ceylon. This was so with regard to the sugar colonies too. James Stephen and the abolitionists "had objected to the multiplying of racial groups primarily on religious grounds" but the

sociological problems...were lightly held in the early years of immigration...and few besides Stephen and perhaps Russell [were] concerned with the future difficulties implicit in the official sanction to the creation of plural communities.¹⁴¹

This is no matter for surprise in a liberal era with an optimistic faith in mankind and in the transcendental benefits of western civilization. At any rate, the general belief in the mid nineteenth century was that the immigrants would not settle permanently.¹⁴² In Ceylon, in view of the largely migratory nature of the immigration this was particularly applicable. Neither did they have our advantage of hindsight.

The plantations were the agency which first introduced the cash-nexus on a large scale in Ceylon, if in an agricultural atmosphere as distinct from factory conditions usually set in urban areas. To borrow a point applied to an entirely different context, did "new capitalistic forms replac[e] traditional human bondage by a wage slavery still harder to endure"?¹⁴³ It hardly appears so in Ceylon of the 1850's, 1860's and 1870's. It is true the immigrant was under the authoritarian thumb of his master. But at this stage the demand for labour was great. He could desert. He could give notice and leave. This would hinge in part on the extent of his indebtedness and that of his savings, but the

evidence suggests that it would not take long to work off the initial debt; and that a thrifty cooly could save something, even if little. At any rate there can be little doubt that the immigrant preferred the "bondage" of estate life, kanganies and planters to the strait jacket of headmen, famine and misery in South India.

What is striking about the question of immigration in Ceylon is that neither evangelical or humanitarian bodies in Britain nor missionaries in Ceylon devoted any attention to the material welfare of the Indian—in contrast to the great interest in the immigrants to the West Indies and Mauritius. In those countries, the "critical scrutiny of colonial legislation" by these bodies

"their disparaging and deprecatory review of immigration schemes, was a constant goad to the vigilance of the Colonial Office and the Government in power, and their activities did not lessen in scope and intensity until their efforts had been crowned with success".¹⁴⁴

A recent study shows that there was absolutely no such interest in the Indian immigrant to Ceylon and builds up an indictment against the missionaries on the score,¹⁴⁵ for, in the 1840's, the condition of the immigrant on his journey to and fro and on the estates was quite dismal. The explanation for this failure lies in the fact that immigration to the other colonies followed on the abolition of slavery.¹⁴⁶ As we have seen, the Colonial Office consistently held that the immigration to Ceylon lay on a different footing to that elsewhere, particularly in that of expense, the way this expense was met and the length of the immigrant's stay or service. A contributory factor no doubt was the fact that immigration to Mauritius and elsewhere entailed a long journey—and the initial private efforts in transporting coolies had brought a mortality that was widely discussed.¹⁴⁷ The travails of the immigrant on his journey to the centre of Ceylon did not strike the public eye immediately or as forcibly, though it was well-known in Ceylon by the mid 1840's. The missionaries in Ceylon chose to ignore it—and it was largely they who could have drawn humanitarian sentiment in Britain on this subject. In the 1840's and early 1850's they were far more interested in severing all connections between Government and the Buddhism they heartily disliked.¹⁴⁸ They left the immigrant to his own devices and sufferings. When they did take some interest in him it was with the object of evangelization and that of ministering to Christians among them. The Baptists took a few steps in this direction in the early 1840's. It was left to the Church Missionary Society to establish a permanent interest in this task through the institution of a "Tamil Cooly Mission" begun

in 1854-56) with one full-time European minister and several "nature catechists."¹⁴⁹ The difference in attitude between missionaries in Ceylon and those in the West Indies sprang no doubt from the difference in tradition and history. The West Indian missionary of the 18th century had stepped into the hated climate of slavery and invariably taken up a position opposite to the planter, and the tradition had been sharpened in the course of the abolition campaign. But in Ceylon the missionaries were on much better terms with the planters.

It remains to evaluate Government activity towards the complex issue of the immigrant problem in Ceylon. Government had always been alive to the needs of the coffee interest. By the mid 1840's it accepted the dangers attendant on a capricious supply of labour as a matter of attention. But despite this, and despite the immigrants' sufferings on the northern routes, laissez-faire inhibitions were strong enough to make Government draw the line at sponsoring the recruitment and conveyance of immigrant labour till 1858, though the Colonial Office Committee in 1847 and Wodehouse in 1846 did moot the idea. It took a peculiar situation and heightened fears engendered by the commencement of the Colombo-Kandy railway works for Government to graduate to the role of sponsor; and strangely, Ward and Doyne were so convinced of the need for an immigration scheme that they, rather than the beneficiaries and the normal agitators, the planters, led the way in organising this scheme. If its inglorious failure burnt both planters' and Government's fingers, Government did not recede into its former position in this sphere. No recruitment was attempted and the kangany system continued; but a regular ferry was established in 1862 and considerably more attention was paid to the Mihintale route—the sinking of more wells and provision of some medical care being of particular importance.

Laissez faire had been abandoned on this point much earlier, partly on humanitarian grounds, and Colombo had in practice accepted its duty of seeing to welfare on the route in the early 1840's. But Government's performance was far short of the immigrants' needs and the mortality on the road was high in the 1840's and early 1850's though one cannot compute accurate statistics on this point. Ward acted far more energetically in this field but his measures fell short of what would have been adequate. At the same time much more was done in the 1850's to improve regulations pertaining to the condition of passengers on coastal vessels. Further improvements in welfare on the North Road

during the 1860's brought conditions to a satisfactory position by 1871-72 and this position was maintained by steadily increasing expenditure in the 1870's while at the end of the decade the South Indian famine indirectly resulted in a hopeful attempt to enforce greater responsibility on the kanganies.

Regarding welfare on the immigrant routes then, Government had changed from a lethargic performer to an active one. But it took considerable time to do so.

Even less can be said in its favour with regard to immigrant welfare on the estates. If the principle of inspection and regulation of conditions was eventually accepted in 1847, it died with the rebellion and the financial depression in the months that followed. Thus it was that the conditions on the estates in the 1840's were in general bad; and treatment of the workers, worse. For all Ward's activity, he chose not to interfere in this sphere and preferred to leave it to the planters to make conditions "attractive" so as to draw sufficient labour.¹⁵⁰ But this was, equally, to leave it to their caprice. The principle of intervention in this sphere having been accepted earlier, the return of good times by 1854-56 justified its implementation in one form or the other. It would undoubtedly have been difficult to work and there is grave doubt as to whether it would have been practicable or successful in the face of the planters' opposition. But one can argue that the need justified an attempt. Ward could well have answered that embittered relations did not justify it, and would have jeopardised both the Railway project and the immigration project of 1857-58. So it was that estate discipline and conditions on the estates were left to the planters, though within the practical orbit of the Labour Ordinance of 1841. Some improvements were made in these laws in the 1860's but they fell short of the body of laws in Mauritius and were such as to please the planters.¹⁵¹ The conditions of life and treatment on the estates had, in the meanwhile, improved with better times and more of the enlightened self-interest which experience of inadequate labour had taught planters. Though official evidence at the end of our period depicts conditions and treatment as highly satisfactory, their witness must be accepted with circumspection. The fact that the medical attention in planting districts was deemed inadequate in 1871-72 means that it was inadequate through the 1850's and 1860's as well—although one cannot be certain whether the hospitals of that day were better than intelligent amateur doctoring. As it was, Government's medical-aid scheme of the 1870's did not work smoothly or bring about the great improvements that were hoped for.

A more centralised system was adopted in 1880 while maintaining the principle that it was the planters' responsibility by taxing them for it.

While extending Government intervention and responsibility thus the authorities of the time never went so far as the sugar colonies in supervising conditions on the estates through specially appointed officials and suitable regulations. The failure to do so was probably due in part to Colombo's conviction that the workers were treated fairly.¹⁵² It may well have been due in part to a desire to avoid a pitched battle with the planting and mercantile sector. But the theory that the immigrant problem in Ceylon was not "analogous" to those in other colonies also had a considerable influence. It was certainly a very convenient theory for the authorities in Colombo. Both London and Calcutta did not press matters because they believed in it. Grey had accepted it in 1847; Calcutta in 1862.¹⁵³ It was, as we have seen, widely held in the Colonial Office. The theory was not without some basis but it seems to have been pushed too far. To apply Murdoch's comment on the master-servant laws (at a time of hardened attitude on the subject) to a wider context:

[the] affinity between Ceylon and India was scarcely sufficient ground for dispensing... with the precautions considered necessary in Mauritius and the West Indies.¹⁵⁴

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1. *Ceylon Times*, 13th March 1863, Letter to editor from "H.Y." 6 March 1863. This planter felt that this attention was inadequate in complicated cases and suggested that Government should secure professional attention for "coolies" on estates.

2. CO 54/468, Robinson — Earl of Kimberley, No. 289, 26 Nov. 1871, Encl., Charsley — Col. Sec., No. 232, 6 June 1871.

3. *Idem*.

4. *Ibid*, Encl., H. Byrde [The Secretary, Planters' Association]—Col. Sec., 18 May 1871.

5. *Ibid*, Encl., Charsley—Col. Sec., No. 232, 6 June 1871.

6. *Ibid*, Encl., H. Byrde—Col. Sec., 17 Oct. 1871.

The debates in the Legislative Council reveal that they disliked Government interference but one can also perceive fears regarding the question of expense though this was not openly voiced. They deployed several other arguments and even invoked the freedom of the immigrant, arguing that the scheme "would stultify all previous legislation in the island which had been to make the coolie a free man." [*Ceylon Hansard* 1872-73 6 Nov. 1872, H. M. Leake's speech, pp. 38-41].

7. *Sessional Paper V of 1879*, Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the subject of the Medical Wants of the Coffee Districts, 18 March 1879, pp. v-vii, which summarises the scheme.

8. *Ibid*, p. vi.

9. *Governor's Addresses*, Vol. II, Gregory, 7 May 1877, pp. 485-86.

10. *Sessional Paper V of 1879*, *op. cit.*, p. vi.

11. *Ceylon Hansard* 1878 and 1879, Speeches by John Douglas [Col. Sec], 14 Dec. 1878 and 19 Nov. 1879 respectively, pp. 71, 97.

12. *Ibid*, Minutes of Evidence, pp. 11 (A. Caley), 39 (J. Shipton), 43 (Grant), 65 (Dr. Donald) and 96 (G. H. D. Elphinstone) for some opinions that it was better; pp. 14 (Ingleton) 19 (Chippendall) 31 (H. A. Clarke) for contradictory opinions, all in reply to question ten.

13. *Ibid*, Sundaram Kangani's evidence, 10 June 1878, p. 92.

14. CO 54/529, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 287, 30 Dec. 1880.

15. *Sessional Paper V of 1879* [Report of the Medical Aid Commission], 18 March 1879.

16. See *infra*,

17. *Ibid*, pp. vii-ix. But the new Governor, Longden, usually more genial than his predecessors in his outlook towards the planters, could not bring himself to believe that this "prevailed widely", [CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 356, 10 Sept. 1879].

18. B. Bastiampillai, "The Governorship of Sir William Henry Gregory in Ceylon", (London, 1963) M.A., History, pp. 67-71.

19. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 356, 10 Sept. 1879.

20. *Sessional Paper V of 1879*, *op. cit.*, J. L. Shand's evidence, 28 May 1878, p. 4.

21. John Ferguson, *Ceylon in 1884*, (London, 1884) App. VI, Principal Results of the [1881] Census, p. 265.

Ceylon Hansard, 1879, 10 Dec. 1879, Ramanathan's speech, pp. 130-31 [some figures here are wrong].

22. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 356, 10 Sept. 1879.

23. *Ibid*, Minute by C. P. Lucas [a clerk], 24 Oct. 1879, and marginal comment by Wingfield, who was Assistant Under Secretary of State for the Colonies.

24. *Sessional Paper of 1879*, *op. cit.*, Appendix.

25. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 356, 10 Sept. 1879.

26. *Idem*.

27. *Sessional Paper V of 1879, op. cit.*, pp. vii-viii.
28. *Idem.*
29. CO 54/522, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 506, 20 Dec. 1879, alluding to the arguments before presenting Government's standpoint. One should also note that the Commission found that "there [was] a very general desire on the part of the planting community to revert to the old voluntary system." [*Sessional Paper V of 1879, op. cit.*, p. xi].
30. CO 54/522, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 506, 20 Dec. 1879.
31. CO 54/522, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 506, 20 Dec. 1879. Despite his personal distaste for such a scheme, Longden said he could not refuse this request if they put it forward.
32. CO 54/529, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 287, 30 Dec. 1880. In 1879 R. B. Downall (planting representative) strongly advocated an export duty as the best method of financing the scheme, [*Ceylon Hansard* 1879, 10 Dec. 1879, pp. 130, 134].
33. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1880, 27 Oct. 1880, J. Douglas's speech, p. 53. Douglas was the Col. Sec. and Lieut. Governor. He acted as Governor when Longden was on leave.
34. CO 54/529, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 287, 30 Dec. 1880.
35. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1880, 27 Oct. 1880, H. Bois' speech, p. 94.
36. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1880, 24 Nov. and 8 Dec. 1880, pp. 92-95, 98, 100.
37. CO 54/529, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 287, 30 Dec. 1880.
38. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1880, 8 Dec. 1880, p. 126.
39. CO 54/529, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 287, 30 Dec. 1880, Minute by Richard Ebdon, 8 Feb. 1881. R. P. Ebdon was the Chief Clerk.
40. *Idem.*
Ibid., Minute by Lucas, 8 Feb. 1881; and Minute by Wingfield 12 Feb. 1881.
41. *Ibid.*, Minute by Herbert, 22 Feb. 1881.
42. *Ibid.*, Minute by Grant Duff, 23 Feb. 1881.
43. CO 54/537, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 78, 20 Feb. 1882, Minute by Lucas, 5 April 1882.
Ceylon Hansard, 1881, 23 Nov. 1881, Speeches by J. L. Shand and W. W. Mitchell, pp. 52 ff. Apart from a motion in Council and resistance to Ordinance 18 of 1881, a memorial was presented to the Queen. Also see CO 54/538, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 177, 25 April 1882, Encl. George Wall—The Secretary of State, 27 March 1882.
44. CO 54/537, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 78, 20 Feb. 1882.

45. *Idem.*
Ceylon Hansard, 1882-83, 18 Oct. 1882, J. Douglas's speech pp. 34-35. As proposed in 1880 Government was to permit estate-workers to use the General Hospitals in payment of 30 cents a day but it was now proposed to take over and maintain six of the old district hospitals as well, freeing the planters of the maintenance costs and subjecting them, instead, to the 30 cents charge for any of their workers who entered hospital.
46. CO 54/537, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 78, 20 Feb. 1882, Minute by Lucas, 5 April 1882.
47. *Ibid.*, Minute by Wingfield, 7 April 1882. Also see Minute by Kimberley (13 April 1882): "Proceed as Mr. Wingfield proposes". The reply, No. 137 of the 20th April 1882, was drafted by Wingfield. The reference to Longden and Lucas' point on "menaces" were omitted.
48. CO 54/539, Longden—Kimberley, No. 231, 25 May 1882, which refers to the telegram of 17th May and Kimberley's telegraphic reply.
49. *Ibid.*, No. 244, 3 June 1882. 725 estates—i.e. half the total—did not send in the required returns while there were several problems of detail (for example whether contract labour on 'piece' work should be included) besides the knowledge that future reassessments would also be called for.
50. *Ibid.*, No. 231, 25 May 1882, having bound with it: private letter, T. M. O'Brien [an official in Ceylon]—C. P. Lucas, 1 June 1882.
CO 54/537, Longden—Earl of Kimberley, No. 51, 2 Feb. 1882, Minute by Lucas, 3 March 1882.
Colombo was fortunate in having an earnest supporter on this point in Lucas.
51. CO 54/539, Longden — Earl of Kimberley, No. 244, 3 June 1882, Minute by Kimberley, July 1882.
52. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1882-83, 8 Nov. 1882, J. Douglas in reply to Mackwood's query, p. 45.
Governor's Addresses, Vol. III, Longden, 20 Sept. 1882, pp. 127-28.
53. I. Vandendriesen, *History of the Coffee Industry in Ceylon*, (London, 1954) Ph.D., Economic History, p. 309. [I am indebted to Dr. Vandendriesen for leading me to several of the despatches cited above].
54. CO 54/507, Birch—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 78, 15 March 1877. In the Colonial Office the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Robert Meade, retorted:
It is all very well to say that Ceylon owes a debt to India on account of the contiguous source of cheap labour but that argument cuts both ways. The benefit is not all on the side of Ceylon, [*Ibid.*, Minute, 10 April 1877].
55. CO 54/508, Birch—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 95, 5 July 1877.
CO 54/507, Birch— " " " " No. 78, 15 March 1877.
56. *Idem.*

57. CO 54/508, Birch—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 95, 5 July 1877.
58. CO 54/509, Longden—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 50, 8 Nov. 1877.
59. *Ibid*, Encl., State of Cholera in the Island as reported this 5th day of November, 1877. Of these 13,066 cases and 6,841 deaths were in Jaffna District.
60. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 314, 13 Aug. 1879. Several immigrants refused the work offered by the P.W.D. and insisted on heading for the coffee districts, [*Ceylon Hansard* 1877, J. Douglas' speech, 5 Dec. 1877, p. 80].
61. *Idem*. In 1878 4,664 were sent in by the Police as against 7,869 who entered on their own and 616 sent by the estates, [*Sessional Paper II of 1879*, *op. cit.*, Table III, p. 67].
62. *Ibid*, Minute by C. P. Lucas [a clerk], 2 Oct. 1879, which sums up the main points made in despatch No. 280 of the 12th November 1878.
63. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 314, 13 Aug. 1879.
64. *Ibid*, Minute by Herbert, 25 Oct. 1879.
65. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 356, 10 Sept. 1879, Draft, Sir M. Hicks-Beach—Longden, No. 383, 16 Dec. 1879.
66. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 314, 13 Aug. 1879, Minute by C. P. Lucas, 2 Oct. 1879.
Also see the Minute by De Robeck [First Class Clerk] dated 10 Oct. 1879 and that by Wingfield of the 23rd October. Despatch No. 383 sent by Hicks-Beach was largely in the sense of Wingfield's minute.
67. *Ibid*, No. 356, 10 Sept. 1879.
On one of these points C. P. Lucas wrote [*Ibid*, 24 Oct. 1879]
... if Dr. K. is wrong in objecting to 'destitute' coolies coming over,
he is right in wishing to prohibit the immigration of sickly and aged
... it is absurd to suppose that Ceylon is to be the workhouse of India.
In modified language these views were largely incorporated in despatch No. 383.
68. CO 54/472, Murdoch—Rogers, 24 April 1862.
69. Take conditions in the Mauritius estates in the 1860's and early 1870's: by the early 1860's the Protectors of Immigrants hardly exercised any inspection and by 1868, none; housing and the treatment of labour were bad; and the laws were "effectively evaded or subverted". This was in large part the result of official prejudice being highly in favour of the planters, [J. K. Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon*, (Toronto, 1964) pp. 118-120, 128-29].
70. I have covered this subject in an article "The Master-Servant Laws of 1841 and the 1860's and their Immigrant Labour," *The Cey. Jour. of Hist. and Social Studies*, Vol. No. (1965). For citations for the summary that follows I would refer the reader to this article.

71. CO 54/477, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 99, 9 July 1872.
72. *Idem*, Cf. Mauritius: in the 1840's and 1850's the shortage of labour would appear to have ensured a degree of humane treatment, [Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 128].
73. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965) p. 264.
74. *Colombo Observer*, 19 Jan., 16 March and 6 April 1857, Letters to the editor.
Contemporary ideas on what was good for the immigrant may not accord with modern notions—a liberal planter, Sabonadiere, suggested that a room 12 feet square with a small verandah should house ten immigrants [*The Coffee Planter of Ceylon*, 2nd edn., (Colombo, 1870) pp. 76-77]. But on the evidence of planters it would appear that the immigrant workers "preferred" smaller rooms because they were "warmer and more cosy", [*Idem*. And also Sampson Brown, *Life in the Jungle*, (Colombo, 1845) Letter III] Even present-day "lines" would probably dismay many people.
75. CO 54/332. W. Ferguson—Labourchere, 22 Aug. 1857. See also the description in ode-form in W. Skeen, "*The Knuckles and other poems*". (1868. Cbo.) pp. 114-15.
76. C.M.S. MSS. C. Ce/o. 70/1. Rev. S. Hobbs—Rev. Venn. 22 Jan. 1856. In another letter—to Rev. Chapman, 24 Nov. 1859—he wrote that "the Planters cannot endure any approach to reproof especially in that tenderest of all points to them, the treatment of their coolies" but that he had had to do so recently.
77. CO 54/425, Robinson—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 57, 6 March 1867. See also CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of the Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*.
78. CO 54/425, Robinson—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 57, 6 March 1867, Minute by Rogers 22 May 1867.
79. CO 54/477, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 99, 9 July 1872.
80. CO 54/476, Private letter, Gregory—R. G. W. Herbert, 10 June 1872 enclosed in volume with his despatch No. 69, 7 June 1872.
81. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1872-73, 6 Nov. 1872, p. 44. Also see his speech on the 14th of December, 1878, [*Ceylon Hansard*, 1878, p. 70].
82. *Ceylon Observer*, 12 March 1869, "A Tamil's Account of the Districts of Ceylon", A. Joseph. This article is highly eulogistic.
83. CO 54/477, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 99, 9 July 1872. Fred. Lewis, *Sixty-four years in Ceylon*, (Ceylon, 1926) p. 5: "The coolies regarded their master as their 'father and mother'.... I am not exaggerating when I say that coolies loved their master and would go to the world's end for them."
84. *Sessional Paper I of 1864*, Report from a Sub-Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to report upon the Public Works Department, 5 July 1864, p. 7.

85. CO 54/389, O'Brien—Duke of Newcastle, No. 91, 7 May 1864, Encl. 2, Churchill, Acting Director of Public Works—Col. Sec., No. 278, 15 March 1860.

86. CO 54/416, Robinson—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 241, 29 Oct. 1866. Minutes by C.O. personnel.

87. CO 54/412, Robinson—Cardwell, No. 104, 27 May 1866.

88. *Colombo Observer*, 10 July 1856, Letter to editor from "L.M.E.". *Ibid*, 21 Sept. 1865.

But note that some immigrants were not under kanganies and contracted directly with planters—at least in the 1860's, [A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for 1866-68*, (Colombo, 1868) "Labour Laws of Ceylon and relations between the planters and coolies on estates", p. 127].

89. K. M. De Silva, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-65.

90. 1869 *Administrative Reports*, Report of the District Judge, Badulla, A. A. King 5 July 1870, p. 195. This was very similar to the role of the *sirdar* among Indian immigrants in Mauritius. Numerous evils were ascribed to "sirdar omnipotence" by Governor Gomm and others in the mid 1840's [Mellor, *British Imperial Trusteeship*, 1783-1850, (London, 1961) pp. 187-88] but here too the standpoint seems more that of employers than interest in the employees.

91. CO 54/380, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 171, 30 Sept. 1863.

92. A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for 1866-68*, (Colombo 1868) Wall—The Secretary, Planters' Association, 26 May 1866.

93. 1869 *Administrative Reports*, Report of the District Judge, Badulla, A. A. King, 5 July 1870, p. 195.

94. A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for 1866-68*, (Colombo, 1868) Wall—The Secretary, Planters' Association, 26 May 1866; and the discussion on Estate Expenditure, pp. 60-79. Note what is said on the subject by Kondapi. [*Indians Overseas*, 1838-1949. (1951. Madras) p. 6]:

"The system [in Burma, Malaya and Ceylon] came to be so devised as to almost exculpate the actual employer and throw the blame on the middlemen, who whatever his sins, was blessed by the employers themselves for reasons of expediency. Despite the technical difference between the [Kangany and Maistry] system on the one hand and the indenture on the other, the fundamental problems of the Indian worker remained the same".

95. CO 54/477, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 99, 9 July 1872.

96. CO 54/492, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 7, 8 Jan. 1874.

97. CO 54/521, Longden—Sir M. Hicks-Beach, No. 314, 13 Aug. 1879.

98. *Idem*.

99. Kondapi, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

Colaco, Labour emigration from India 1850-1921, (London, 1957) M.Sc., Economics, pp. 71-75, 82.

100. A. M. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, "Labour Laws of Ceylon and the relations between the planters and coolies on coffee estates": a letter from a Ceylon planter to a friend in Wynaad, p. 121. This was in support of his thesis that planters lost a great deal on the advance system because indebted coolies ran away.

Also see *ibid*, Letter from "A Superintendent", 1866, p. 108.

101. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1875-76, 23 June 1876, p. 181.

102. 1s. for the ferry; and the overliberal estimate of $\frac{3}{4}$ bushel of rice [i.e. 2s.] for a 5 day journey in Ceylon since they could cover 30 miles a day [CO 54/468, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 289, 26 Nov. 1871, Encl., Memo by L. Liesching, A. G. A. Nuwarakalawiya, 16 Aug. 1871]. The journeys within India to the Indian coast could take even longer, but varied and are difficult to cater for. Rice, however, was cheaper in India. A planter calculated the journeys to take 7-10 days but he put down only 3 days for the Ceylonese section, [Ceylon Observer, 23 June 1870, Letter to editor from "Antiquary"].

103. *Overland Ceylon Observer*, 3 July 1871, letter to editor from "Ne Festina Loqui", 28 June 1871. Tytler put it as 10 Rs. or 20s [*Ibid*, 28 Jan. 1871, Tytler—The Secretary, Planters' Association, 5 Jan. 1871] and others at 30s. [A. M. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, Letter from "A Superintendent", p. 108.] and "a full month's wages" [The Examiner, 7 Oct. 1865, Memorial of the Planters' Association (on the Labour Law)]. Note that planters were trying to build a case for tighter legislation against deserters.

104. On the other hand one finds a planter complaining that the old hands lived "so well" that they were "much indebted to their kanganies", [Ceylon Observer, 16 June 1870, Letter to editor from "W.S." in Pussellawa].

105. CO 54/425, Robinson—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 57, 6 March 1867. On the basis of returns from 96 estates Ferguson found the wages varied from 7.30-10.44d. and took 8½d. as the average, [Ceylon Observer, 16 Sept. 1869]. On some estates wages varied with the quality of the man.

106. *Ibid*, 28 June 1870, Letter to editor from "Antiquary", 21 June 1870.

107. Controversy about working on Sundays in newspapers of the 1860's indicates that 7 day weeks were indulged in on some estates but one should also note that a planter complained that they refused to work 6 days a week, [*Ibid*, 16 June 1870, Letter to editor from "W.S." in Pussellawa].

108. *Ibid*, 12 March 1869, "A Tamil's Account of the Coffee Districts of Ceylon", A. Joseph.

109. Millie, *Thirty Years Ago*, (Colombo, 1878) Chapter III, no pagination.

110. CO 57/25, Executive Council Minutes, 13 Nov. 1858. [as against 8s. 10d.—11s. in the Public Works Department.]

111. *Idem.*

Millie, *Thirty Years Ago*, (Colombo, 1878) Chapter III.

112. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, No. 4, Russell—Col. Sec., 6 Dec. 1869, p. 12. A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for 1866-68*, (Colombo, 1868) Letter from a Kotmale planter, p. 73.

113. *Ibid.*, "Increased Estate Expenditure: Superintendents not to blame", by J.B.P.B.C., p. 76. The last phrase quoted is obviously exaggerated. *Colombo Observer*, 19 March 1866, Letter from P. D. Millie.

114. *Ibid.*, 26 Sept. 1864, Leake [The Secretary, Planters' Association]—"Ceylon Times", n.d.

It is said that "starving themselves for the sake of increasing their savings was a common fault among the first immigrants", [CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, No. 4, Russell—Col. Sec., 6 Dec. 1869, p. 12]. But from the 1850' with the exception of misers, they became "moreliberal" in their eating habits, [*Idem.*; and *Colombo Observer*, 6 April 1857, Letter from "Old Caledonian"].

Note that many of them were vegetarians.

115. *Ceylon Times*, 10 July 1863, Planting correspondent.

116. *Ceylon Observer*, 16 June 1870, Letter to editor from "W.S." in Pussellawa.

117. *Ibid.*, 13 March 1869, "A Tamil's Account of the Coffee Districts of Ceylon" A. Joseph—because they would pay off their debts and contract directly with the planter. [But Joseph was probably a kangany himself].

118. A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for 1866-68*, (Colombo, 1868) Letter from "An Old Planter", Oct. 1865, p. 97.

Ibid., "A Superintendent", Oct. 1865, p. 97.

Ibid., "A Superintendent", p. 108. He speaks of debts of 2-5£ being "by no means uncommon and besides which the debt due by the Cooly to the Estate [was] a mere trifle".

119. *The Examiner*, 16 June 1852, "On Coffee Planting in Ceylon" C. R. Rigg.

120. CO 54/248, Torrington—Earl Grey, No. 120, 4 July 1948. W. Austin, "General views on the commencement and progress of coffee planting in Ceylon" in Lee's edition of *Ribeyro's History of Ceylon*, (Colombo, 1847) p. 228.

121. *Colombo Observer*, 12 June 1856. Wages were taken as 7d. a day and a month's earnings at "not much more than 12s." with allowance for sickness, rainy days etc; subsistence was calculated at 7-8s.

122. "*Colombo Observer*", 26 June 1866, Letter to editor from Peter Wallace, 18 June, 1866.

CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *op. cit.*, No. 9, Encl., W. A. Swan—Byde. 25 Nov. 1869, p. 29.

123. *Ceylon Observer*, 16 June 1870, Letter to editor from "W.S." of Pussellawa.

One planter said a cooly could only save 2d. a week and criticised the fact that planters kept the wages for 4-5 months in their hands, thus forcing coolies to borrow money [*Ibid.*, 23 June 1870, Letter to editor from "Antiquary", 21 June 1870], but he calculates earnings on a 4 day week. Note that immigrants preferred to let wages accumulate, [*Ibid.*, 12 March 1869, A. Joseph's account. *op. cit.*].

124. CO 54/485, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 68, 24 March 1873, Encl. 1, The Secretary, Planters' Association—Col. Sec., 19 Feb 1873.

125. *Ceylon Observer*, 13 Feb. 1868, "Jottings" from "B.W.", 6 Feb. 1868.

126. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, *passim*.

127. M. W. Roberts, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Policy in Ceylon, 1840-1871*, (Oxford, 1965) D. Phil., History, pp. 301, 331.

128. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *op. cit.*, No. 2, L. Liesching—Col. Sec., 11 Oct. 1869.

129. CO 54/412, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 104, 27 May 1866, Encl. 3, Memo on the Pioneer Corps by T. Skinner, n.d.

130. *Ibid.*, Marginal comment beside the above quotation: "i.e. paid more than employers like".

131. K. M. De Silva, *Development of Social Policy in Ceylon, 1840-1855*, (London, 1961) Ph.D. History, p. 463.

132. CO 54/485, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 68, 24 March 1873, Minute by an Emigration Commissioner, 10 May 1873.

133. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1854, Encl., Memo on the Supply of Labor to Ceylon, W. T. Doyne, 13 May 1858.

134. CO 57/29, Executive Council Minutes, 27 Feb. 1861, Minute by the Col. Sec., W. C. Gibson; and Minute by Skinner [Director of Public Works].

135. CMS MSS, C. Ce o/o 102/2, Revd. Pickford—Col. Dawes, 6 April 1864.

136. CO 54/492, Birch—Carnarvon, No. 8, 28 April 1874, Encl. 1, Planters' Association, Analysis of returns of Artisans [and Cooly Wages in 1873]; and Encl. 2, Statement showing the ordinary pay of Coolies in Towns.... The Director of Public Works, 6 Feb. 1874. In Nuwara Eliya wages were 62-75 cents and in the Eastern Province [the Northern Province is not included in this list] it was 25 cents but these regions can be considered peculiar.

137. I. M. Cumpston, *A Survey of Indian immigration in British tropical colonies to 1910*, (pamphlet reprinted from Population Studies, Vol. X, Nov. 1956) pp. 160-61.

138. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-62.

139. I. M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories*, (London, 1953) p. 179 fn. para-phrasing F. G. Carnell.
140. Any comparison of village population statistics in the Central Province between the Census of 1881 and that of 1891 will show that whereas some villages and districts had Tamils resident in them (not as estate workers) in 1881 the numbers had dwindled to little or none by 1891. See A. C. Lawrie, *A Gazetteer of the Central Province*, (Colombo, 1896 and 1898) Vol. I, pp. 188-89, 322, 344-46; Vol. II, pp. 543-47, 857.
141. I.M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories*, 1834-54, (London, 1953) pp. 178-179.
142. *Ibid*, pp. 113, 178.
143. W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition*, (The Hague, 1956) p. 238.
144. Cumpston, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
145. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965) pp. 270, 280-81.
146. *Ibid*, p. 21.
Evangelical interest in—and antipathy to—Indian immigration stemmed from their anxiety to see that the transition of the slave to the status of a free labourer should not be thwarted by unfair competition from immigrant labour. Because of the absence of this situation in Ceylon the immigration problem never attracted the same public attention in England.
147. F. H. Hitchins, *The Colonial Land and Immigration Commission*, (Philadelphia, 1931) p. 243. That on the journeys to Mauritius in the 1830's seems to have drawn the Indian Government's attention rather than that of the Evangelicals, [*Ibid*, p. 235; Mellor, *British Imperial Trusteeship*, 1783-85), (London, 1951) p. 187].
148. K. M. De Silva, *op. cit.*, Chapter I to III.
149. *Ibid*, pp. 522-29, 331-32, 539.
C.M.S. MSS, Ce/o 70/, Letters from Rev. S. Hobbs, *passim*.
150. *Governor's Addresses*, Vol. II, Ward, 19 Dec. 1859, p. 501.
151. CO 54/372, Murdoch—Rogers, 8 March 1862.
A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for 1866-68*, (Colombo, 1868) p. 89.
Colombo Observer, 3 Sept. 1866, Letter from "B.W".
152. *Supra*, pp. 93-94.
153. CO 54/369, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 87, 24 April 1862, Encl. in Encl., The Secretary to the Govts. of India—The Chief Secretary, Fort St. George, 31 March 1862. For further details see my article in *The Cey. Jour. of Hist. and Social Studies*, (1966) entitled "The Master-Servant Laws of 1841 and the 1860's and Immigrant Labour".
154. CO 54/372, Murdoch—Rogers, 8 March 1862.

British Policy Towards Indian Historical Research and Writing 1870—1930

JOHANNES H. VOIGT

Introduction

The American historian Carl Becker stated that only towards the end of his career had he discovered the most intriguing subject of history, which was "neither the study of history nor history itself but rather the study of the history of historical studies". We have every reason to assume that it is not only the most intriguing, but a very important, though much neglected, branch of historiography.¹

There has been a lot of writing and research on the growth of historical consciousness in Europe; one may refer to the works of F. Meinecke, Benedetto Croce and Collingwood, to mention only a few. But it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that there has been too great a concentration on *ideas*, with the result that historians very often tended to come close to, or even penetrate into, that field which is customarily held to be the realm of philosophers. Of course, there is no historian without a philosophy, even if he himself does not recognize it or struggles to be free from it—the belief in and an adherence to "mere facts" is also a philosophy—but what is needed above all is an investigation into the environmental conditions that promote or hamper historical research and writing.

The social, economic, academic and, above all, the political conditions in which a historian is trained and has set to work on history are of great significance in the actual result of his writing and research. What Karl Mannheim termed as "sociology of knowledge", meaning the social conditioning of knowledge and science, offers a key to the development of historical studies, particularly in a country like India, where modern historical research was developed during a period when she was subject to a foreign rule that influenced largely the intellectual development of the country.

The conditions created by the *raj* affected not only the ideas, i.e. the particular historical interpretations, of historians, but the very technique of historical research and writing. The immediate impact of political conditions on historical research is most obvious in the historian's need for sources. We are all aware that historical sources are the bread and butter of a historian's profession—without them he is as lost as a brick-layer is without bricks. During the British *raj*, the accessibility to certain sources was highly dependent on the British-India Government. Grants for money to collect sources, scattered all over the country, and the permission to work in archives were regimented by the Imperial Power.

The explanation of many a peculiarity of Indian historical writing in the past may be found—though, of course, not necessarily!—in a particular Government measure or omission. It may, therefore, be a legitimate endeavour to look closer into the features of British policy towards Indian historical research and writing, and thus lay bare some of the external forces that were determining the development of modern Indian historiography. This article contains only brief and preliminary hints.

A study of this kind is, indeed, a desideratum for any attempt to trace the history of Indian historiography. Yet the difficulties involved are considerable. One of the major difficulties to be tackled is the tracing of source-material, for in such an undertaking there are no pre-arranged groups of sources available. They are widely scattered. The observations in this paper are based on records to be found in:

1. The Government of India Resolutions and Proceedings of the Home, Revenue, Archaeology and Educational Departments in the National Archives.
2. The records of the Revenue, General and Education Departments of the Government of Bombay in the Bombay State Archives.
3. The records of the Alienation Office, Poona.
4. The private collections of Jadunath Sarkar and G. S. Sardesai.

The first thing to be observed is that the British rulers of India were not indifferent to history as such. They were not merely "history-conscious" but in fact "history-friendly". In spite of the constantly

repeated cliché that India never had had a history, the British administration as a whole and the administrators as individuals had, ever since William Jones, been directing their interests with enthusiasm towards the elucidation of India's past. The Asiatic Societies in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were Government-sponsored associations, the Archaeological Survey was an institution created and run by the Government, and the search for Sanskrit texts in the second half of the nineteenth century was largely financed by the provincial administrators. The enthusiasm of Government was greatest in matters relating to the study of Ancient India; it was less towards subjects relating to Mediaeval India.

The ideological foundation and justification of the British Empire in India was, since the second half of the nineteenth century, increasingly sought in history: the belief in "the work of providence" was substituted by a resort to India's past. Lord Curzon imagined his rule to be in the line of the great rulers of India, Ashoka, Akbar and Aurangzeb. Hunter's "Rulers of India" series included British administrators besides Indian kings and emperors of the past.² The District Gazetteer histories are another expression of the growing historical awareness of the rulers, a perfect example of an imperial historicism. It is hardly surprising then, that historical matters were attended to with great care and caution by the British-India Government.

The question that arises, and that will have to be answered is the following: If the British rulers kept a watchful eye on the development of writing and research on Indian history by Indians, did they do so for fear of a challenge to their empire-oriented image of India's past, which was essential to their imperial ideology, or did they interfere merely from reasons of practical expediency? In other words: Did their policy consist in tactics or in strategy?

Already as early as 1882 the Secretary of State for India recognized the Government's obligation to train Indian students in historical method and make them familiar with historical criticism.³ It is interesting to note that the aim was limited to the training of two or three Indians only, "in such habits of accuracy and critical judgement as should fit them hereafter for taking a prominent place in the prosecution of historical research". The concept of historical research lurking through the veil of words is clear: historical research was conceived as something mechanical, or additional to rather than integral to historical studies. The practical proposal to train Indian epigraphists who could

support the work of the Government epigraphist James Fleet, found, once the latter pressed the different universities to endorse the proposition,⁴ only a discouraging reception from the provincial Governments.⁵ The golden opportunity to institutionalize historical research in Indian universities in the '80s of the nineteenth century was lost.

In matters relating to mediaeval and modern Indian history, the British administration was less liberal and broad-minded than in the field of Ancient India. When the movement for a search of documents on Maratha history was started in Maharashtra in the late '70s of the nineteenth century, the Bombay Government kept their ears closed to repeated requests by Ranade, K. T. Telang and others to gain free access to the files and *rumals* of the Peshwa Daftar, a mine of sources on Maratha history.

Under the pressure of mounting public interest in Maratha history, the Government of Bombay selected and handed over to the Deccan Vernacular Society a collection of papers from the Peshwa Daftar, on the condition that the Commissioner, C.D. (i.e. of Poona), "should determine the form, in which the selection should be printed, that he should inspect and approve the annotations made by the Society and that 30 copies of each of the printed volumes should be supplied to Government for their use free of cost".⁶ The organizational difficulties of the Deccan Vernacular Society were great, and Government supervision was not the right means to smoothen the process of publication.

The Society's proposal to have M. G. Ranade's "Introduction to the Peshwa's Diaries" attached to the first volume of the Selections was rejected by the Government of Bombay. It was reasoned that "although the publication of the diaries has been undertaken by the Deccan Vernacular Society as a private enterprise, yet it is acting under the sanction and with the permission of Government, and the Introduction if published with the Diaries will be regarded as being approved by Government, as an accurate and authoritative exposition of the effect and contents of the diaries. It is really an essay written with the object of exhibiting the rule of the Marathas in the most favourable light possible and is coloured throughout with the personal opinions and bias of the author." Any 'introduction' of the kind ought to have been approved by Government before being given to the public.⁷ If Ranade's "Introduction" was eventually published separately, it was a result of the decision of the Bombay Government.⁸

Although a limited permission was granted to the Deccan Vernacular Society and to Parasnis to look into some of the documents in the Peshwa Daftar, it remained closed until the Indian Historical Records Commission succeeded in changing the inflexible attitude of the Government. It was owing to this restriction that research by Indian historians in Maratha history was confined to materials collected from private persons, the movement to collect sources from private quarters was a way out, which Maharashtrians resorted to as a kind of national endeavour, as the example of Rajwade shows.

Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, the writing of Maratha history had been regarded as a "hot subject" by the British rulers, containing explosives harmful to the foundation of the Empire. Even the mildly nationally oriented *History of the Maratha People*, written by an Ex-Indian-Civil-Service-man, C. A. Kincaid, and a pro-British Indian historian, Parasnis, published in London in three volumes between 1918 and 1925, found no favour in governmental quarters. Government refused assistance reasoning: "If the book is a good book, it will sell without Government assistance. If it does not sell, this fact will prove it not to be a good book and therefore undeserving of Government assistance".⁹

The reluctance of the administration to throw open the Peshwa Daftar was understandably affected by apprehensions of Indian writings on Maratha history. But the real issue lay deeper. The question that the Government was faced with was: should archives in India be open to the Indian public in the same way as most archives were in Europe to Europeans? The opening of archives in India, only up to a date a hundred and more years back, could bring to light documents that were detrimental to the officially supported image of the history of the British conquest of India.¹⁰

The efforts at the beginning of this century to create a Record Department for all India, concentrating in it all records of historical value, and thereby stimulating historical research by Indians,¹¹ was strongly objected to at the provincial and district levels.¹² But even in the Government of India, grave doubts were expressed as to the soundness of a policy supporting Indian historical research. H. H. Risley (Secretary, Home Department) supported his objection with the following argument: "I am absolutely opposed to turning people loose to rummage in our records with the guidance of the press lists. There would,

in my opinion, be very great danger of the materials thus obtained being unfairly used for political purposes. This danger can only be guarded against by producing complete calenders which will prevent unscrupulous students from selecting and publishing those portions of records which tell in favour of their point of view".¹³

It was mainly from a desire to forestall the dangers of a growing public pressure to open to inspection by historians the records kept in the custody of Government, that the British-India Government proposed to prepare press-lists, i.e. lists of all available documents in the provincial archives, and to calender important sources in the sense of giving accounts of their contents.¹⁴ The scheme failed, because the provincial governments followed their own policy. Bombay did not show any activity at all, and Madras exhibited a tremendous zeal in printing old records for a short period only; but nothing was done for the preparation of press-lists and calenders.¹⁵

When in 1909 the English Government in London was ready to allow scholars free access to all Foreign Office records prior to the year 1837, and limited access to all documents of the period from 1838 to 1860, the Secretary of State for India had not the slightest objection to permit similar access to papers relating to India.¹⁶ In India, however, this suggestion roused a storm of opposition. H. Cloughton, Member of the British-India Government, argued that there was a difference between the situations in England and India. "The argument", he reasoned, "that papers of over 100 years ago can have but little bearing on the politics of the day is a dangerous one in India. The political pamphleteer could make considerable capital out of ancient documents if he were allowed to select those which suited his creed....".¹⁷

The view that the study of Government records by Indians could, or rather would, be detrimental to Britain's position as imperial power in India, was maintained for some years to come. A. F. Scholfield, for instance, held in 1914 that in India the public was different from that in England, and, furthermore, that in India "historical research, scientific use of evidence, critical scholarship are barely understood and seldom achieved".¹⁸

The provincial governments were opposed to a liberalization of the rules of research into Government records, and the British-India Government subserviently endorsed their view. The proposal of the Secretary

of State for India in 1915 to reconsider the former policy in connection with Government records fell on deaf ears in India.¹⁹ It is evident from the foregoing that in questions of records, the British-India Administration was—with the exception of the Peshwa Daftar papers—primarily concerned with those relating to British policy in India. This attitude changed, when in 1917 Ramsay Muir launched his proposal for what he then called a "Historical Materials Commission" which was to help to preserve all as private ones.²⁰

The views that Ramsay Muir expressed in his famous Memorandum of 17 December 1917, are revealing as to the position of the British-India Government in matters of historical training and education. Muir was strongly convinced that a development of the "spirit of historical enquiry and criticism" was a necessity not only from an intellectual but from a "political point of view". He argued that "if educated India is to attain full political sanity, it must be by training in criticism and in the evaluation of evidence".²¹ In other words, historical research was given a political significance; by the development of a historical-mindedness, it was hoped to stem the flood of political agitation. This view, adopted by the British-India Government, was a departure from the previously accepted principle of keeping record files closed to Indian scholars.

Hitherto Government had been afraid of single documents being used for political purposes; now, however, historical research work was regarded as an intellectual endeavour that affected the *weltanschauung* of men and the attitude of Indian society. Although there is no immediate evidence, it seems that the Government hoped to take the wind out of the sails of academic and political radicals by promoting a sense of historical method and criticism. It was a double-edged device indeed! The history-consciousness of the Government had matured: history was not only seen as some treasure to be hidden in the archives and monopolized by the rulers, but as an intellectual process, beneficial to the atmosphere among the governed people.²²

The resolution of the Government of India of 21 March 1919 to found an Indian Historical Records Commission was designed firstly to promote historical research, and secondly to make historical documents accessible in the best way to scholars. Government was to *assist* and *advise* rather than to *dominate* and *determine* in matters of research and publications. Therefore all possible financial support was to be given to private societies and individuals that were undertaking historical research.

The Indian Historical Records Commission was to recommend to the Government necessary steps in their policy of granting aid and assistance.²³

This is not the place to go into the history of the Indian Historical Records Commission. Its size and set-up changed: from a small body appointed by Government it developed into a larger group, representing different regions, states, and universities. It took, nonetheless, more than two decades before a more liberal access to Government records was granted to scholars in India, and only when Independence was achieved did historians gain full access to official files.²⁴

In spite of its recognition of the importance of historical research, the British-India Government did not abandon its patriarchal attitude. When Abdul Ali, Keeper of Records in the Imperial Records Department, for instance, desired to read to the Indian Historical Records Commission at the Lucknow Meeting in December 1926 a paper on "Shuja-ud-Daulah, Nawab Vazir of Oudh (1754-75)", he had to submit its contents beforehand for approval to the Foreign and Political Department of the Government, and was asked to change those parts that were regarded as offensive to the Government's image of Indian history. Abdul Ali was told that he, as a Keeper of the Records, "should maintain a high standard of accuracy and impartiality in compiling such papers (i.e. on the history of Shuja-ud-Daulah)."²⁵

In the case of G. S. Sardesai's monumental edition of "Selections from the Peshwa Daftar", undertaken at the recommendation of the Indian Historical Records Commission, the publication was subject to Government censorship. The Commissioner of the Central Division, i.e. Poona, took offence to the wording of the title "Expansion of the Maratha Empire in the North" and suggested its change into "The Incursions of the Marathas into the North or Northern India!"²⁶ Sardesai did not alter his original wording on account of the request which amounted to a direct Government interference in the interpretation of history! Already a year before this incident Sardesai had in unequivocal terms stated his position that he, while acknowledging his obligation to Government, was not ready to sacrifice for it his duty to India and his personal liberty: "While on the one hand I must not divulge any official information on the papers in the Alienation Office, I have on the other hand a certain duty to perform towards that large expectant public of India who are interested in historical studies... By agreeing to do research work here, I think I do not lose my individual liberty to say what I think right."²⁷

Government policy on historical research put a hard pressure on Indian historians, not only because Government held the largest collections of historical records, but because publications were financed by them, and subject to their approval.²⁸ But those who were granted access, like G. S. Sardesai and Jadunath Sarkar, were not ready to pay with their souls for what they were given. An absolute adherence to their conscience was for them a *conditio sine qua non* of the claims of historical scholarship. Loyalty to Government or country, to imperial demands or individual conscience, were the alternatives which historians in India were confronted with. I am not aware of any other country nor any other period in which similar demands were made on the personal courage and conviction of historians.

The patriarchal role that the British-India Government adopted in questions of historical research and writing was a result of its domination of Government records and of its financial power. Research on mediaeval and modern Indian history was costly and dependent on support by a financially powerful source, which only Government could provide.

It is illustrative of the British-India Government's position that it looked favourably on all-India efforts in centralizing the efforts at collecting historical material, and making it available to all students of history in India. But the suggestion of Shafaat Ahmad Khan in 1921 or 1922 to create with Government assistance an All-India Historical Association²⁹ evoked but little enthusiasm in Government quarters, where it was maintained that the initiative should come from the universities, and that the existing societies on the provincial level were doing a good job already.³⁰

If an All-India Historical Association had been founded with Government assistance, it would have had a federal structure with representations from various universities and historical societies of the different parts of India. Luckily, the Indian History Congress was the result of efforts of Indian historians free from the trammels of Government assistance, and the parochialism of provincial representatives.

To conclude, the existence of the British *raj* in India determined largely the development of historical research and writing. This paper attempts to describe some of the ways by which the British administration tried to influence and actually did influence Indian historiography. The concern with which the British administrators watched Indian historical

research and writing had various reasons. During the earlier part of the period surveyed, it was feared that the opening of archives might result in the discovery and publication of documents that were detrimental to the existing and officially accepted interpretation of the establishment of the British rule in India, and for this reason might be used politically in anti-British agitations. In the later part, since about 1910, the rights of Indian historians to have access to records in Government custody were recognized in principle by the Secretary of State for India, but rejected for political reasons by the administrators in India.

The lack of historical scholarship in India, which had then been put forward as another argument besides the political implications apprehended, was eventually one of the main reasons for creating the Indian Historical Records Commission. The provincial opposition to the promotion of research by Indians was, with the foundation of this body, undermined. Still, it lingered on and hampered research work and the publication of records till the early thirties, as G. S. Sardesai's difficulties in his work on the Peshwa Daftar records reveal. The means which the British-India Government could employ were their monopoly of State records and their financial resources.

The dilemma with which the British rulers were eventually faced was this: On the one hand, the spreading of science and knowledge was one of the tenets of the *raj*, on the other hand, a growing Indian independence of thought and research was bound to develop into criticism of the empire-oriented image of the past. This dilemma was the same in kind as that pertaining to self-Government: on the one hand, the British were keen on advertising the beneficence of the parliamentary system of Government that existed in England, and, on the other hand, were reluctant to develop such a system in India, for it implied an undermining of the *raj*.

Confronted with the patriarchal policy of the British, Indian historians had to do all they could to break into the citadels of Government record offices, and to devise means to remain independent from Government supported views on Indian history. To gain the material without losing the soul, was the silent motto in the severe struggle that Indian historians had to fight with the British administration. The intellectual battle was won before political independence was achieved.

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ANNOTATIONS

1. Quoted by Charlotte Watkins Smith, *Carl Becker: On History and the Climate of Opinion*, Ithaca New York 1956, p. 210.
2. Cp. Johannes H. Voigt, "Nationalist Interpretations of Arthashastra in Indian Historical Writing", in: *The Movement for National Freedom in India*, St. Antony's Papers Number 18, South Asian Affairs Number Two, edited by S. N. Mukherjee, Oxford University Press 1966, pp. 54 f. z
3. Dep. No. 146, of 21 September 1882; Home Department, Archaeology and the Conservation of Ancient Monuments, Proceedings Nov. 1882, Nos. 5 and 6; National Archives of India (in the following abbreviated "N.A.I.").
4. J. F. Fleet to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department 7 March 1884; Home Department, Archaeology, etc., Proceedings Nov. 1884, Nos. 10 to 16; N.A.I.
5. Col. W. R. M. Holroyd, Under-Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, wrote to the Government of India on 6 September 1887: "... it is not probable that such a class could serve any useful purpose to the Government of India". Revenue and Agricultural Department. Proceedings Nov. 1888, Nos. 1 to 8; N.A.I. For the general negative answers by the Provincial Governments, see: Home Department, Government of India, (Archaeological), 11 August 1885; No. 4; in above collection; for the general scepticism in the matter as pervading the views of James Burgess—see his letter to Sir E. C. Buck, Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, Calcutta 22 February 1889; Proceedings, June 1890, Nos. 40 and 41; N.A.I.
6. Reported by "G.F.K.", in proposal of 29 July 1904, Revenue Department, 1904, vol. 68; Bombay State Archives.
7. Proposal, signed by "H.M.", 26 March (1901), in: Revenue Department, vol. 90; Bombay State Archives.
8. Resolution of 29 June 1901, Revenue Department, No. 4496; *ibid*.
9. Quoted by C. A. Kincaid, *Forty-Four Years a Public Servant*, Edinburgh, London 1934, p. 205.
10. J. L. Rieu, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, General Department, demanded a close watch by Government even in case of research on documents of the pre-1800 period. In a letter to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education, dated 21 September 1914, he stated: "... these precautions [i.e. supervision of research by Government] are especially necessary in the case of the important historical records bearing on the relations between the Peshwa's Government and the British Government, which cover a period extending from the year 1750 onwards". Department of Education, General A., Proceedings, February 1915, Nos. 7 to 9; N.A.I.
11. S. Charles Hill's Memorandum, dated London 21 July 1902, attached to "Notes and Minutes" underlying Government Resolution, General Department, No. 3899, dated 27 July 1904; Revenue Department 1904, vol. 230; Bombay State Archives.

12. Commentary by R. Nathan, dated 5 August 1904; Home Department, Public A, Proceedings February 1905, Nos. 10 to 36; N.A.I.
13. H. H. Risley's commentary, dated 23 June 1904, Home Department, Public A, Proceedings September 1904, No. 98; N.A.I. A similar objection was expressed by R. Nathan (Deputy Secretary, Home Department) on 25 May 1904; *ibid.*
14. Home Department, Public A, Proceedings September 1904, No. 98; N.A.I. For the history of Government proposal see Memorandum of Denison-Ross, dated 18 November 1909; Home Department, Public A, Proceedings, April 1910, Nos. 1 to 5; N.A.I.
15. H. G. Stokes' Memorandum of 5 January 1910; Home Department, Public A, Proceedings, April 1910, Nos. 1 to 5; N.A.I.
16. See note by R. Ritchie (Under-Secretary of State for India) of November 17, 1909, Home Department, Public A, Proceedings, March 1910, No. 131; N.A.I.
17. H. Claughton's commentary of 22 February 1901; *ibid.* H. G. Stokes (commentary of 24 February 1910) supported Claughton's view in its entirety, *ibid.*
18. Note of 28 April 1914; Department of Education General A, Proceedings, June 1914, Nos. 1 and 2; N.A.I. The provincial Governments of Bombay and Madras were equally opposed to the idea of giving access in the proposed way to Indian scholars; see Department of Education, General A, Proceedings, February 1915, Nos. 7 to 9; N.A.I.
19. Letter of Hardinge of Penshurst to the Marquess of Crewe, 4 February 1915; *ibid.*
20. Ramsay Muir to Sir E. D. Maclagan, dated 7 December 1917; Government of India, Department of Education, General A, Proceedings April 1918, Nos. 1 to 17; N.A.I.
21. *Ibid.*
22. The Government's responsibility to encourage historical research was stated most emphatically in the Memorandum by J. M. Mitra, Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, dated 17 November 1917; *ibid.*
23. Government of India, Resolution No. 77 of 21 March 1919; Department of Education, General A, Proceedings August 1919, Nos. 1 to 21; N.A.I.
24. See S. Roy, "Recent Trends in Indian Research Activities in Modern Indian History", *The Indian Archives*, vol. XV, January 1963—December 1964, pp. 55 f.
25. Imperial Records Department, January 1927, B, Proceeding No. 8; N.A.I. The desired changes of the text are indicated by marginal notes on the manuscript, and the actual changes are apparent when comparing it with the printed

paper in the *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings*, vol. IX, (held at Lucknow, December 1926), Calcutta 1927, pp. 116-129.

26. A. Mackie, Commissioner, C. D., to Sardesai, 10 November 1930; Historical Research Office, Poona Correspondence File, 1930-31; Alienation Office, Poona.
27. Draft of a letter by Sardesai, dated 21 November 1929, in Historical Research Office, Poona Correspondence File, 1929-31; Alienation Office.
28. For Government pressure on Sardesai, see the instruction of the Commissioner, C. D. (Poona), dated 23 September 1929, sent to Sardesai in which it reads: ".... The Commissioner said that Government had directed that information gathered from the Alienation records was not to be published without their express orders and that therefore you had better drop the idea of publishing anything from these records at this stage". Historical Research Office Poona, Correspondence File 1929—June to 1931—March; Alienation Office, Poona.
29. Shafaat Ahmad Khan's proposal, undated; Indian Historical Records Commission, General Department, Political Branch, File No. 425; Bombay State Archives.
30. Resolution of British-India Government, General Department, of 21 November 1922; J. L. Mountford to Secretary to Government, dated 27 January 1922; *ibid.*

Allur and Isanamangalam

Two South Indian Villages of the Cola Times

NOBORU KARASHIMA

Introduction

In the Tamil country of the Cola period (9th—13th century), there were many villages which were granted to brahmanas and described as brahmadeya. These villages were dominantly inhabited by brahmanas who formed an assembly called sabhai for the village administration. These brahmadeya villages played a very important role in the local administration of the country. The study of them, therefore, is indispensable for the understanding of the power structure of the Cola rule. The majority of the villages of the period, however, were not brahmadeya. The inhabitants of these non-brahmadeya villages were not brahmanas and the village assembly called ur was usually found there. As the majority villages of the period, these non-brahmadeya villages formed the basic social sub-structure. Consequently, the study of them is as important as that of brahmadeya villages. Moreover, the study of non-brahmadeya villages is indispensable for the elucidation of the historical development of the South Indian village community, because they are thought to be older in origin than brahmadeya village.¹

The main sources for the study of the Cola villages are contemporary inscriptions which usually record various donations to the temples. These inscriptions are, however, mostly concerned only with the brahmadeya villages and very little information on non-brahmadeya villages can be gathered from the inscriptions. No study, therefore, has been made or even attempted on the non-brahmadeya village community, though a few studies have been made on the brahmadeya village community.²

In this paper, one brahmadeya village (Isanamangalam) and one non-brahmadeya village (Allur) of the early Cola times (9th and 10th century) are picked out and a comparative study of them will be made. The reason why two particular villages are selected is that in the present stage of the study it is rather difficult to examine brahmadeya villages and non-brahmadeya villages in general. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to contribute to a more general understanding of the two types of Cola village communities; the paper will be focused on two points: land tenure and social stratification of the community.

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The source materials of this study are thirty stone inscriptions which record land donations to the temples or tax remissions of the land. Twenty-one inscriptions which concern Isanamangalam of the early Cola times are from Chandrasekhara temple of Tiruchchendurai of Tiruchirappalli Taluk, Tiruchirappalli District, and nine inscriptions which concern Allur of the early Cola times are from the Pasupatisvara temple of Allur of the same Taluk. These two villages were in the same locality on the southern side of the Kaveri River. All the texts of these inscriptions, except one, are published in *South Indian Inscriptions* (abbreviated as *SI* in the following), *Vol. VIII*. The text of an inscription of Isanamangalam is published in *SI*, *Vol. III*, but it is registered in number in *Vol. VIII* also. References to the inscriptions, therefore, will be shown by the number in *SI*, *Vol. VIII*. The following is the list of those thirty inscriptions, with the names of the kings and their regnal years mentioned, and with brief remarks on the contents.³ PK stands for Parakesarivarman, RK for Rajakesarivarman, and MPK for Madurai (yum ilamum) konda Parakesarivarman.

Twenty-one Inscriptions on Isanamangalam:

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|--|--------|
| No. 600: | MPK-12, | Donation of two pieces (a,b) of land | |
| No. 601: | RK-20, | Remission of tax on land | |
| No. 602: | PK-16; | Donation of land | |
| No. 604: | PK-14, | Donation of two pieces (a,b) of land | |
| No. 605: | PK-9, | Sale of land | |
| No. 607: | MPK-20, | Donation of land | |
| No. 608: | PK-8, | Donation of land | |
| No. 609: | MPK-16, | Donation of land | 197521 |
| No. 611: | RK-2, | Donation of land | |
| No. 612: | RK-6, | Donation of land | |
| No. 616: | PK-23, | Remission of tax on land | |
| No. 617: | PK-3, | Donation of land | |
| No. 618: | PK-10, | Sale of land | |
| No. 619: | PK-2, | Donation of five pieces (a,b,c, d, e) of land. | |
| No. 620: | PK-10, | Exemption from tax on land | |
| No. 621: | PK-4, | Exemption from tax on land | |

3L

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- No. 623: PK-10, Exemption from tax on two pieces (a,b) of land.
 No. 626: ? Donation of two pieces (a,b) of land
 No. 628: PK-2, Donation of two pieces (a,b) of land
 No. 629: RK-23, Donation of land
 No. 630: PK-3, Donation of land

Nine Inscriptions on Allur:

- No. 687: PK-4, Donation of land
 No. 688: PK-12, Sale of land
 No. 689: MPK-37, Donation of two pieces (a,b) of land
 No. 692: PK-4, Remission of tax
 No. 694: RK-3, Donation of land
 No. 695: MPK-17, Donation of land
 No. 696: MPK-18, Donation of land
 No. 698: MPK-40, Donation of two pieces (a,b) of land
 No. 699: MPK-46, Donation of three pieces (a,b,c) of land.

1) DONORS OR SELLERS OF LAND

To determine by whom and how the land was possessed or held in the village, the inscriptions which have clear indications as to the person by whom the land was donated or sold,⁴ are to be examined. But first, an explanation of the various assemblies (sabhais, parudais, and ur) is given below.⁵

Sabhai was the assembly formed in brahmadeya villages. Its members were most likely restricted to brahmanas who possessed a certain area of the land in the village. It functioned as an administrative organization and often had several committees for the various purposes of the village administration. It represented the village to the world outside.

Parudai was probably an organisation discharging duties connected with the temple administration. It worked perhaps under the control of the sabhai of its village.

Ur was the assembly usually found in non-brahmadeya village. It was the administrative organization of non-brahmadeya village and seems

to have been responsible for the payment of tax (irai) charged on the village land by the Government.

Now we examine the inscriptions. As to Allur, there are eleven pieces of land whose donors or sellers can be ascertained from the inscriptions, as follows:

Donor or Seller	Pieces of Land Donated or Sold
Urar (the members of ur)	.. 7 (688, 694, 695, 696, 698a, b)
Talaivaccanrar	.. 2 (689a, b)
Temple	.. 1 (698b)
Koyilar	.. 1 (699c)

The meaning of Talaivaccanrar is not clear, but it may be the persons who were responsible for the irrigation of land, in charge of the main sluice (talaivay) of the water channel. The word talaivayccanrom appears in No. 570. In case of 698b, it is stated that waste land (tital) was purchased from a deity (temple) by some person and was donated back to the temple, after having been reclaimed. Koyilar is the person who belongs to a temple. This koyilar of the inscription might be the priest who was granted land as remuneration for his service. Seven pieces of land out of eleven had belonged to the ur and two pieces to the talaivaccanrar. This is a sure indication that non-individual land holding was prevalent. In other words, the connection between land and an individual person seems to have been very weak in Allur.

As to Isanamangalam, there are twenty-three pieces of land to be examined. Donors or sellers are classified as follows:

Donor or Seller	Pieces of Land Donated or Sold
Sabhai	.. 3 (607, 609, 626b)
Parudai	.. 4 (605, 618, 629, 630)
Kilavarar	.. 1 (623a)
Individual person	.. 13 (600a, b, 602, 604a, 608, 612, 619a, d, e, 626a, 628a, b)
Group of persons	.. 2 (619b, c)

Kilavar is usually interpreted as headman of the village by scholars, but kilavarar of this inscription were perhaps the elders of the families of the

village. They probably formed a central organization of the sabhai. "Group of persons" as the donors or sellers means that the land had belonged to "such and such person and others".⁶ A striking difference between Allur and Isanamangalam can easily be recognized. In Isanamangalam more than half the pieces of land examined belonged to individual persons. The connection between land and an individual person is evidently strong in Isanamangalam and most of the land in the village was probably divided and held by individual persons who were presumably members of the sabhai.⁷ It cannot be denied, however, that some pieces of land were held in common by the members of the sabhai or parudai.

2) LAND ADJOINING THE LAND DONATED

When defining the boundaries of the land donated, the inscriptions often mention the adjoining land and give us some clues to its holders. Forty four pieces of such adjoining land are found among the inscriptions of Allur, and they may be grouped into two categories. The first group are the pieces of land which are specified by the mention of its name, or the state of its utilization, or its area, for example, cirukkalanceri (699c:N), cantiramankalattu nirmilam (699a:N) and aruma (689:N). There are twenty three such pieces of land. The second group are the ones which are or seem to be connected with some person or with some deity. There are twenty one such pieces of land and they will be examined here in detail. Eight pieces of land which are connected with a deity are, however, excluded and there remain thirteen pieces of land which are or seem to be connected with some persons. They are:

1. 688:E "alinci(k)aivi(lai)" Vilai is cultivable or cultivated land, but the meaning of alincikai is not clear. It may be the name of grass or the name of a person. But, alincikaivilai is most likely just a name of land.

2. 689a:W "Kaniyar cey" The land of the astrologers.

3. 689b:S "... nakarattar tottac cuvar" Wall of the garden of the people of the town.... A town named Allurnagaram is mentioned in Nos. 692 and 681, and the town whose name is not known owing to the damage in the inscription is most likely Allurnagaram.⁸

4. 694:S "cankarappatiyar tottattu matil" Wall of the garden of cankarappatiyar. The meaning of cankarappatiyar can be taken as the people of mixed caste, who might be the merchants of Allurnagaram.⁹

5. 695:S(1) "puliyan pa(racu)raman vatavai" The meaning of vatavai is not clear. If it is taken as land, the whole meaning will be the land which belonged to puliyan paracuraman.

6. 695:S(2) "ciriyan kunamanta (ra)n vatavai". Vatavai (land?) of ciriyan kunamantaran.

7. 695:W "ettankantanum cinka nilanum nattiyattar nilam". Nattiyattar are most likely dancers and this land (nilam) is probably the land of two dancers.

8. 695:N "etta (n ni) lam". This ettan may be the father of ettan kantan, a dancer mentioned in the description of the Western boundary, or may be ettan kantan himself, and therefore might be a dancer.

9. 696:W (1) "ciriyan pullan ampalac cey". Land donated by ciriyan pullan for the maintenance of ambalam.

10. 696:W(2) "cattan vayakkal": land reclaimed by cattan.

11. 698b:W(1) "allur ettikal nilam". Etti is probably a caste name. In No. 644 a certain etti appears as an uvaocan and therefore, this is probably the land of a temple musician.

12. 698b:W(2) "allur nattiyattarkal nilam". Nattiyattar is certainly the same as nattiyattar of No. 695:S, i.e. dancers.

13. 698b:N "allur madhyastan nanurruvanterri cey". Land for madhyastan (Secretary of sabhai).

Of these thirteen pieces of land, we may put aside from our consideration 689b:S and 694:S which are presumably the land of the neighbouring town. 688:E also may be excluded, because alincikaivilai seems to be the name of the land and not to be the land owned by alincikai as a particular person. ciriyan pullan ambalacey of 696:W(1) is also not the land owned by ciriyan pullan and may be excluded. Thus four pieces are excluded; there remain nine pieces of land. Of these nine pieces, three pieces are not definitely held by particular persons. For the meaning of vatavai of 695:W (1) and (2) is not clear, and cattan vayakkal may or may not be the land held by cattan. The remaining six pieces were, on the other hand, apparently held by particular

persons, who were astrologers, dancers, a musician (?), and a secretary of the assembly.

These facts should be considered as a whole. Of the forty four pieces of adjoining land, only six or nine pieces were held by individual persons. Some of the other pieces also were connected with individual persons in some way, but it is not certain whether they were held by those persons or not. Most of the others are land which is mentioned by its name only, or the state of its utilization, or its area. This clearly indicates that the connection between land and individual persons was very weak in Allur, which is quite compatible with what we found in the previous section. The persons who held the land in Allur were astrologers, dancers, a musician (?) and a secretary of the assembly, and it is presumable, therefore, that in Allur only the persons who rendered some special services to the villagers held land individually as their remuneration.

Of the Isanamangalam inscriptions, twenty one pieces of land are mentioned as the land adjoining. Of these twenty one pieces of land, 619:N is described as karikalakarai which is probably just the name of land. 612:W is the land which belonged to parudai, and 617:E is the devadana land. All the remaining pieces of land, however, are connected with individual persons¹⁰, and were apparently held by those persons individually. And in none of them, except one (617:W), have we any reason to believe the land was given as remuneration for services.¹¹ It is, therefore, safely inferred that in Isanamangalam most of the land was held individually—presumably by the members of sabhai—, though some land was held in common by the members of sabhai or parudai. This is also quite accordant with what we found in the previous section and makes a striking contrast to Allur.

3) LAND HOLDERS' SHARE

The division of the crops between the land holders, the Government and the cultivators throws light on the social structure of the community.

Among the inscriptions of Isanamangalam, there is one inscription (No. 612) where the share (in paddy) of the donee (temple) is mentioned as "svamibhokam". The word for "cultivators' share" is not found in this inscription, but the word "svamibhokam" is apparently opposed to "cultivators' share". This is the only clue which we have

to the question of cultivation in Isanamangalam, but it is not impossible to presume from this that in Isanamangalam land holders and cultivators were socially different and formed two strata in the community. This presumption will be supported by the fact that many land holders of Isanamangalam were brahmanas who did not usually engage themselves in cultivation.

Did the Government claim a share in the products of brahmadeya Isanamangalam? In seven inscriptions, there appears the phrase "iraikkavalaka" or "iraikkattu", either of which means literally "(land) being protected from the dues". These "dues" the people of sabhai or parudai were to be "protected from", were most likely the "taxas" levied by the Government. This presumption will be confirmed by the statement of the inscriptions of different places and times.¹² But it will be endorsed by the contents of the following two inscriptions of Isanamangalam also. In those two inscriptions (Nos. 601 and 616), there appears the phrase "iraiyili", the meaning of which is "free of dues". In these cases, however, dues were remitted by Kodumbalur chiefs and not by sabhai or parudai. The land exempted from dues had already belonged to the temple in both cases, and therefore it is understood that the donated object was not land itself, but the dues. That the dues remitted were those levied by Kodumbalur chiefs themselves is clear from the following two phrases in these inscriptions. "In the manner in which I (one of the Kodumbalur chiefs) have (collected the dues)"¹³ "Remitting (the dues) in our (Kodumbalur chiefs') registration book."¹⁴ Kodumbalur chiefs had strong power in the Tiruchirappalli area in the early Cola period¹⁵ and in fact their orders to the villagers were treated with as much respect as royal orders in the inscriptions of Isanamangalam and Allur. In addition, it is impossible that both the Cola Government and Kodumbalur chiefs had their shares in the products of these villages.¹⁶ It may be, therefore, assumed that these chiefs represented the Cola Government and from the villagers' point of view they were the Government itself. Then it will be concluded from the argument above that the Government also claimed its share in the products from the land in Isanamangalam. The products should have been therefore divided into three parts, namely, the Government's share, land holders' share, and cultivators' share.

Among the inscriptions of Allur, there are also found the phrases "iraikkavalaka", "iraikkattu" and "iraiyili". Where the phrase "iraiyili" is found (No. 692), the tax was remitted by one of the Kodumbalur

chiefs. It is, therefore, understood that the Government had a claim in the products from the land in Allur, which is quite natural because there is no particular reason for Allur being exempted from the Government tax.

As to cultivators, there is one inscription from which we can get information. No. 692 is, as mentioned above, the record of tax remission by one of the Kodumbalur chiefs. In this inscription, there appears the phrase "kutinikka" which means that the previous cultivators were not evicted. At the same time, there is found in this inscription the phrase "ure ulutukontu", the meaning of which is "ur itself (should) cultivate (the land)". From these two phrases, it is gathered that the land was cultivated by ur members, and therefore, that the ur members who probably held most of the land in Allur were themselves cultivators. In other words, there seems to have been only one social stratum, the land holders being the cultivators in Allur.

There are two other pieces of evidence on cultivation. No. 694 records the donation of reclaimed land to the temple. There is no phrase connected with tax. It cannot therefore be assumed that the land was exempted from tax. In any case, the donated object is land itself and in this inscription the phrase "isrikoyilp pattutaiyarkaley ulutu kontu" is found. Koyilppattutaiyarkal are temple priests or servants. The meaning of the phrase is, therefore, that the temple priests or servants should cultivate the land. Priests themselves do not usually cultivate and therefore the land might be cultivated by the temple servants or more likely by agricultural labourers other than the temple servants. They were, however, certainly not the members of ur, because, if they had been the members of ur, the phrase "isrikoyilp..." should have been replaced by the phrase "ure ulutukontu". No. 687 is the record of the grant to the temple by one of the Kodumbalur chiefs. The object granted is, however, land itself in this case and in this inscription there appears the phrase "kutinikki" which means that the previous cultivators should be evicted. The land was obtained from the people of ur, and the previous cultivators who were to be evicted, therefore, must have been the ur members. From these two evidence, it is clear that the cultivation of the land donated to the temple was not to be conducted by the members of ur. Though there is no evidence in the inscriptions, the lands given to some persons as remuneration for their services were also presumably cultivated by some people other than the ur members. From the facts shown above, it is inferred that there must have been a group of agricultural labourers who were not the members of ur. Though they do not

seem to have been large in number, their very existence might be taken as an indication that social stratification was taking place to some extent in Allur.

It may be concluded that in Allur the land held by the members of ur in common was cultivated by them and that the other land which belonged to the temple, astrologers, dancers, etc., seems to have been cultivated by the people other than the ur members. The produce from the ur members' land was divided into two parts, namely, the Government's share and the land-holding cultivators' share, while the produce from the land held by the temple, astrologers, etc., must have been divided into three parts, namely, the Government's share, land holders' share and cultivators' share.

CONCLUSION

The interpretation that ur was an organization for the village administration has not been faced with any contradiction throughout the argument above. Most of the land in Allur was held by the members of ur, not individually but in common. Some land was held, however, by individual persons as the remuneration of their services for the villagers. Individual holding of land does not seem to have existed. The members of ur who were the land holders appeared also as cultivators of their land, and therefore the fundamental structure of the community of Allur seems not to have been stratified except to the extent that there were some agricultural labourers who were not the members of ur, and the stratification of this kind seems to have been going on to some extent.

The interpretation that sabhai was an organization of the land holders for the village administration is quite compatible with what we read in the inscriptions of Isanamangalam. Many of the lands in Isanamangalam were held individually—most likely by the members of sabhai—though some land was held in common also by the members of sabhai or parudai. Anyway, individual land holding did exist there. The landholders and the cultivators were apparently different from each other and there existed, therefore, two strata in the community of Isanamangalam.

Isanamangalam and Allur were in the same locality and of the same period, but the characteristics of their social structure were quite different in many respects. This conclusion would be more important if it is considered that one of these two villages is brahmadeya and the other is non-brahmadeya. To the extent that these two villages can be taken as

the typical cases, the examination serves as a typological study, and many hypotheses might be proposed on the problems of the Cola power structure or the historical development of the Indian village community. These conclusions, however, must not be generalized too hastily. For Isanamangalam is only one example of the brahmadeya villages, and Allur, that of non-brahmadeya villages. This comparative study, therefore, should be considered as a preliminary approach to the question of characterizing the two types of the village communities and of analysing the historical implications of the typology.

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NOTES

1. Special thanks of the author are due to Mr. K. G. Krishnan, Assistant Superintendent for Epigraphy, the Office of the Government Epigraphist for India, Ootacamund, who kindly helped him in reading inscriptions for this study, and Mr. Toru Matsui, Lecturer, the University of Tokyo, who kindly read the draft and offered useful suggestions.

2. Studies on the village assemblies of Nalur and Uttaramerur by Krishnaswami Aiyangar (i) and Nilakanta Sastri (ii) See note 5.

3. In many of these inscriptions, the King is mentioned only as Parakesarivarman or Rajakesarivarman, which cannot be the clue to the date of the inscriptions. From the contents, however, all those inscriptions are assigned to ninth or tenth century.

4. In this period land was sold, in most cases for the purpose of religious donation or for the public utility. In some cases land was sold to the temples directly. Though there were some cases in which inscriptions did not mention any purpose of selling but only mentioned the name of the purchasers (among the inscriptions of Isanamangalam, there is one such inscription), it is doubtful whether there existed land sales which were completely secular and private in nature.

5. The information on the assemblies is gathered from the following authorities.

(i) S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar: *Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India*. (Madras, 1913).

(ii) K. A. Nilakanta Sastri: *Studies in Cola History and Administration*. (Madras, 1932).

(iii) A. Appadorai: *Economic Conditions in Southern India (100-1500 A.D.)* 2 vols. (Madras, 1936).

(i) K. K. Pillai: *The Suchindram Temple*. (Madras 1953).

(v) T. V. Mahalingam: *South Indian Polity*. (Madras, 1955).

(vi) K. A. Nilakanta Sastri: *The Colas*. 2nd ed. (Madras, 1955).

6. Many interpretations could be proposed of the phrase "such and such person and others (ullittar)". "Others" would be other members of the family as co-parceners or would be partners in the holding of land. The latter interpretation is derived from the knowledge on the periodical redistribution of land (see H. Stoke: "The Custom of Kareiyid or Periodical Redistribution of Land in Tanjore, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 3, pp. 65-69), which seems to have existed in the Cola times also.

7. There is no definite evidence that these individual persons were the members of sabhai. Some of these individual persons, however, had the name "paradayan" as their gotra name, which clarifies that they were brahmanas. At the same time, we know that through the Early Pandyan times, in brahmadeva Mananilainallur the membership of sabhai was restricted to brahmanas who possessed a certain area of land. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 22, pp. 5-11). It is, therefore, presumable that these individual persons also were the members of sabhai.

8. The southern boundary of 692 is specified as the wall (matilcuvar) or Allurnagaram. Consequently, Allurnagaram was the neighbouring town of Allur on its southern side.

9. In No. 681, the donor of the land is mentioned as "cankarappati alias arinciki vennaual... who belongs to Allurnagaram". Moreover, the wall (matil) of Allurnagaram appears as the southern boundary of the donated land in No. 692.

10. Eight pieces of land are connected with one particular persons. Seven pieces are, however, connected with groups of persons specified as "such and such person and others", or with more than one particular persons. Two pieces of land are stated to be "the land kept (alkira) by such and such person", though the actual meaning of the verb "al" is not clear enough.

11. 17:W is, however, the land for the teachers or monitors (cattaperumakal) of the college (matam).

12. For example, in one of the Manimangalam inscriptions of Rajendra deva (*SII*, Vol. III, No. 30), which records land donation to the temple, we find the phrase "having received funds... we, the members of maha-sabhai, are bound to pay the tax on this land for as long as the moon and the sun exist". If the tax had been the one levied by sabhai, this phrase would have been absurd.

13. "nanutaiyaparecey" (No. 601).

"namutaiyapa(ri)ce" (No. 616).

14. "nam pottakkattu mili(ttu)" (No. 601).

15. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyar and K. S. Vaidyanathan, "The Kodumbalur Chiefs and the Revival of the Colas," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. 43. (1953).

16. The amount of paddy which was given to the temple by one of the Kodumbalur chiefs and which would naturally be the share of Kodumbalur chiefs, is specified as one hundred and twenty kalam of paddy for one veli of land. The same rate is found in the inscription No. 624 which is also the record of tax grant by one of the Kodumbalur chiefs. On the other hand, the rate specified in the inscription (*SII, Vol. II, No. 4*) which records the grant of the tax of many villages to the Tajore temple by Rajaraja I, is one hundred kalam of paddy for one veli of land, which would certainly be the amount of the share claimed by the Cola Government. If we assume that both the Cola Government and Kodumbalur chiefs had claimed their own shares separately, the total sum levied would have become more than the double of the usual Government tax. It is, therefore, not assumable.

17. For example, some brahmadeya grant inscriptions suggest that in the Cola times there existed, even though for some short period, the brahmadeya village whose land was held completely in common.

The Income-Tax (1860-1872): A Study in Basic Contradictions

SUDHIR CHANDRA

The British rule in India involved some contradictions which worked in different spheres and on different plans. Of the two basic contradictions in the economic sphere, one was between the respective interests of the rulers and the ruled (the latter including the non-official European residents in India); the other between the interests of the rich and the middle classes on the one hand, and those of the masses on the other. From these ensued a constant struggle between the administrators and the classes, with the masses as pawns on the chess-board of Indian politics. This is best illustrated by the vicissitudes of the Income Tax during the sixties and seventies of the last century.

The contradiction arose from the unavoidable necessity of increased taxation caused by the enormous expenditure during the Revolt of 1857-58. Rich Indians and Europeans, who alone at this time controlled the Press and could agitate, became apprehensive of being required to share a portion of the new burden. As early as March 1858 a writer assuming the pseudonym 'A creeper' wrote in the *Hindu Patriot*:¹ "the people are already overtaxed, and they would not, they cannot, bear a single pie in addition to it." He referred to "the suggestions of some maudlin politicians... to impose on the natives a succession duty, income tax or the like." The first would be "impolitic" and the other "a positive oppression" resulting in "the complete exasperation of the feelings of the people."²

The allusion to the inability of the people to bear another pie of taxation, however, cannot be interpreted as solicitude for the welfare of the poor and the oppressed masses. For later on we find the same organ raising "serious objections" to the proposed tobacco tax; and suggesting that "the tax upon salt may be raised without calling forth more than a meaningless murmur from the community."³ In anticipation we may remark that throughout the agitation against the income tax this organ of the zamindars kept on suggesting increased salt duty as an alternative to the income-tax.

The zamindars also claimed exemption from fresh taxation on account of the Permanent Settlement. They suggested that the non-official Europeans, being rich and almost free from taxation, ought to be taxed in such a moment of crisis. The Europeans, on the other hand, wanted the Government to tax the "zamindars and natives rolling in wealth."⁴ Obviously, the anticipated taxation had produced a sharp conflict of interests between the two sections and each was endeavouring, while there was time, to have the inevitable burden placed more on the other.

The initial measures of the Government led the zamindars to believe that their demand for exemption had been successful. On March 14, 1859, the Government of India raised the import duties. The European businessmen found in it a set-back to the British imports in India and "an artificial stimulus to native production."⁵

The Indian reaction was different. The complaint was made that an injustice had been perpetrated on India by the adoption of the dogmas of free trade while even Great Britain was levying "heavy duties" upon articles from India. But for the necessities of the exchequer this injustice would have remained unredressed. It was hoped that the increase of customs duties would "prove less oppressive than almost any other tax."⁶

Another measure of the Government which strengthened this belief was the proposal of Harington, the Financial Member of Canning's Council, to raise income by licensing trades and professions. This again left the zamindars free. The non-official Europeans made a vigorous protest. At a general meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce on 28 May 1859, Mackinlay, the President said:

"... we have already tendered our opinion to his lordship that nothing short of a succession duty and a property and income-tax, with an increase in stamp duties, will be sufficient to enable his lordship make the income nearer the expenses."⁷

Meetings and petitions were organised. A monster public meeting was held on 11 September 1859 in the Calcutta Town Hall. The exemption of zamindars and fundholders was denounced. The zamindars, apprehensive lest this powerful agitation should succeed, lent their support to the measure and reiterated their right of exemption from fresh taxation.⁸

Such was the state of affairs when Wilson was welcomed, soon after his arrival in Calcutta on 5 December 1859, by a deputation of the British Indian Association. It professedly abstained from discussing any subject of controversy. The same day a deputation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Indigo Planters' Association called on Wilson. The *Hindu Patriot* reveals the jealousy and apprehension of the zamindars while reporting that the effect of this ceremony was marred by "an impertinent speech by Mr. MacKinlay."⁹

Wilson, however, decided in favour of an income tax. According to an eye-witness, the European residents, realising the gravity of the situation, acquiesced, while Indians yielded to the current of approbation which had set in.¹⁰ This does not, however, portray the real reactions of the rich men of the two communities.

Europeans did not acquiesce in the new arrangement; they welcomed it. They had realised during Harington's time that it was impossible for them to escape taxation. Henceforth their anxiety had been to get a portion of the new burden imposed on the zamindars. In this they had succeeded. Moreover, the income-tax had brought them relief in the form of a sizable reduction of import duties on the principal articles of their consumption.

The zamindars, with individual exceptions like the Maharaja of Burdwan, were far from submitting to the current of approbation. The hope of exemption having been shattered, the tax was assailed as "a desperate expedient of an impoverished tyranny" which would "breed a large amount of real discontent." The Government was even reminded that it was "still viewed as a government of foreigners intent on making themselves rich and their countrymen rich at the expense of a conquered race."¹¹

The indiscreet publication of the minutes of Sir Charles Trevelyan and Maltby attacking Wilson's proposed taxes gave a new fillip to the opposition. The *Hindu Patriot* reviewed these minutes with glee and regretted its lack of space to reproduce the noble documents. It wrote:

"There is a boldness, a moral grandeur, in the manner in which Sir Charles Trevelyan pleads the cause of the people... that contrasts strongly with Mr. Wilson's half flattering, half ironical tone of allusion to a European and a Native public, a free press and independent discussion."¹² The zamindars also petitioned the Government.

This agitation, however, had no effect. The income tax was finally levied for five years from 31 July 1860 to 1 August 1865.

The European community in India had accepted the tax for five years. As the time of its expiry approached they started agitating to make sure that this was not re-imposed. Belonging to the ruling race, they had a strong aversion to being taxed in India.¹³ The zamindars were no more under the illusion of being able to escape taxation at the expense of the Europeans in India. On the contrary, there was between them an identity of interest inasmuch as both of them now wanted the remission of the income tax. Forgetting their past rancour they now united together to press the Government. If the Indians had been alone in the opposition, the Government would probably not have yielded. For it was mainly in deference to the European opposition that the income tax was dropped.¹⁴

Thinking men in India and England could not but view with alarm this "act of financial suicide."¹⁵ Lamenting the remission, Wood commended Sir John Lawrence for his refusal to shift "the load from the shoulders of the rich to those of the poor, by raising the salt-tax."¹⁶

As for the rich, even though the burden had been removed from their shoulders (if at all there was a burden), they were unhappy that the salt tax had not been slightly raised. The charge of "sentimental humanity for the poor," originally levelled against Canning, was now directed against Sir John Lawrence. And to this was added a new charge, that of "an overweening consideration for his old friends the Punjabees."¹⁷

A similar phenomenon was observed after income tax had been re-imposed by Sir Richard Temple. An "indignation anti-income-tax meeting" was held in the Calcutta Town Hall on 18 April 1870 under the joint auspices of Indians and Europeans. It was attended by influential men like Ramnath Tagore, Raja Satyanand Ghosal Bahadur, Raja Narendra Krishna, Peary Chand Mitra, Kristo Das Pal, T. M. Robinson, Chairman, Landholders' and Commercial Association, and F. C. Eldridge, Vice-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Five resolutions were passed and a memorial to the Secretary of State for India was proposed.¹⁸

The memorialists submitted that "a tax intended to fall exclusively upon the middle and upper classes of this country, who comprise less than one-thousandth part of the whole population is unjust."¹⁹

The masses, though themselves ignorant and politically a non-entity, had begun to be represented by a few newspapers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Shom Prakash*. Sir Richard Temple referred to the assertion of the *Patrika* that only one in 800 was to be touched by the income tax; while this one person might abuse the Government, the rest would bless it.²⁰

But the combined pressure of Indians and Europeans kept on mounting. The latter carried the fight in England also and induced the *Times* to bring out an article in support of these cases. They seemed to consider that "the dignity and prestige of the governing race are somehow concerned in their escaping untaxed."²¹

Temple failed to realise that appeal to a few newspapers representing the interests of the masses would not help him. To the last moment he kept on emphasising the justice of taxing the well-to-do rather than mulcting the poor still more heavily. He did not see that the question was not one of justice and morality, but of the interests of powerful sections in society—the European community backed up by prosperous Indians. He even thought of resigning rather than produce a budget which militated against his views.²² Eventually the decision was taken, on 20 March 1873, to drop the income tax; Temple, Ellis and Lord Napier dissenting.²³

It may be concluded that rich and educated Indians who proclaimed themselves to be the spokesmen of the people as a whole did so primarily to strengthen their position vis-a-vis the Government. But when their own interests came in conflict with those of the masses, they did not hesitate even to combine with those non-official Europeans whom they usually cursed for racial arrogance. Economic interests, obviously, proved more potent than racial, religious or regional affinity. This was true of Europeans also. Many of them, for whom Indians were 'niggers', joined forces with the latter to extract concessions from their compatriots in charge of the Government.

On the other hand, the Anglo-Indian administrators, lest they should lose the *raison d'être* of their existence in India, insisted on acting as the guardians of the masses to save them from exploitation by the rich and educated Indians. But these administrators had also to keep in good humour their non-official compatriots in India, besides making occasional concessions to the Indians clamouring for their rights. The masses thus became mere pawns with no party, apart from some in-

dividuals, interested genuinely in and fighting consistently for their welfare.

National Archives, New Delhi.

1. This was the organ of the British Indian Association which, notwithstanding its claim to be a representative organization of all Indians, was essentially an association of the Bengal Zamindars.
2. *The Hindu Patriot*, 3 March 1858, Vol. VII, No. 9. Henceforth referred to as H.P.
3. H.P., 17 March 1859, Vol. VII, No. 11.
4. Cf. H.P., 24 and 31 March 1859, Vol. VII, Nos. 12-13.
5. The Annual Report of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce for 1859. Quoted in Sullivan, Raymond J. F., *One Hundred Years of Bombay: History of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce 1836-1936*. Bombay, 1937, p. 63.
6. H.P. 17 March 1859, Vol. VII, No. 11.
7. Quoted in Tyson, Geoffrey W., *The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry*. Calcutta, 1953, p. 37.
8. H.P., 17 September 1859, Vol. VII, No. 37.
9. H.P., 10 December 1859, Vol. VII, No. 49.
10. Temple, Sir Richard, *Men and Events of My Time in India*. London, 1882, p. 192.
11. H.P., 25 February 1860, Vol. VIII, No. 8.
12. H.P., 14 April 1860, Vol. VIII, No. 8.
12. H.P., 14 April 1860, Vol. VIII, No. 15.
13. Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 17 April 1865. Lawrence Collection. National Archives of India Microfilms, 2.6.33.
14. Lawrence to Northcote, 28 March 1867. 3.1867.21.
15. Sir Bartle Frere to Wood, 10 April 1865. Quoted in Martineau, 3., *Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere*, Vol. I, London, 1895, pp. 452-3.
16. Wood to Frere, 17 May 1865, *ibid.*, 453.
17. H.P., 1 January 1866, Vol. XIII, No. 1.
18. Enclosure to Temple's letter of 19 April 1870 to Argyll. Argyll Papers. National Archives of India Microfilms. 319.13.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Temple to Argyll, 26 April 1872. 319.13.9. Also enclosure to it.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Temple to Argyll, 26 September 1872. 319.13.15.
23. Northbrook to Argyll, 21 March 1873. 317.19.12.

Some Notes on the Social Life in Nagaon in the Early 19th Century*

S. V. AVALASKAR

The object of this short paper is to make available to scholars some useful information on one or two aspects of rural social life in the early nineteenth century in a small village (Nagaon) on the Western Coast (Kolaba district) in the principality of the Angres. The late Mr. Avalaskar of the Gokhale Institute of Economics and Politics has written a full length book on Nagaon (1760-1840), based on the Marathi records and this has been published in Marathi in 1962. The information contained in this note is from this book. It pertains to only one or two aspects of social life on which there appeared to be fairly full information.

Nagaon is a small village three miles to the south of Alibag, the present district town of the Kolaba District. The information regarding this village is derived from the Angre Daftar, being the papers of the Adhikari family who were the official record keepers of the Angres. Mr. Avalaskar secured access to these papers in 1940 and published through the Bharat I. S. Mandal a selection of them in several volumes. Besides these, he had gathered other historical papers in the same area over a number of years. All these have been used for this book. Mr. Avalaskar also consulted papers in the several rumals of the Konkan Jamav section of the Peshwa Daftar in Poona for supplementing his information. His account is based on all these papers.

Nagaon was under the Mughals before it was brought under his rule by Shivaji in 1662. It came under the rule of the Angres in the early years of the eighteenth century and was under them until it was taken over by the British in 1841.

Nagaon under the Angres was predominantly a Brahmin village. Table 1 tabulated from several rumals of the Angre Daftar shows the

* We wish to thank Prof. N. V. Sovani of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, for making this note available to us.

total number of houses in Nagaon and the number belonging to Brahmins and Prabhus, both of whom were exempted from house tax. The proportion of Brahmin houses seemed to be around 40 per cent during the period.

The records do not give information about the total population of Nagaon in these years. That is only available for 1840-41 when the British took over. The total population of Nagaon in that year was 2123, consisting of 907 adult males, 159 non-adult males, 964 adult women and 93 non-adult women. (Konkan Jamav Section, Peshwa Daftar, Rumat 137, p. 3).

The information in the table gives the exact number of houses of Brahmins, Prabhus, Golaks as also temples in Nagaon because they were exempt from the house tax. The distribution of the remaining houses according to the caste of their owners in these various years are only partially available. Whatever information is available in that regard is summarised in Table 2.

As Nagaon was predominantly a Brahmin village greater information about the Brahmins is available in the records and it is significant in some ways. The Brahmins enjoyed considerable patronage and a number of concessions, in contrast with other castes in Nagaon. For example, not only were they exempted from paying the house tax but they were also exempted from tax on domestic cattle (*Van takka*). Besides this, several Brahmins were exempted from paying taxes on cocoanut trees, on orchards etc. but these were in the nature of individual concessions given for specific periods, such as the life time of the particular person.

Two features of the Brahmin community in Nagaon that stand out are: (1) the Brahmins did not confine themselves to their traditional occupation but were also active cultivators; (2) the Brahmin families in Nagaon do not seem to be of the joint family type.

The available references in the Angre records indicate that Brahmins in Nagaon had been practising cultivation even under Shivaji's rule, i.e. in the middle of the seventeenth century. The cultivation was mainly of garden crops like cocoanut, betelnut, etc. and paddy. A list of all cultivators in Nagaon in 1812-13 is available in the Konkan-Jamav Section of the Peshwa Daftar but one leaf of this important document containing about 25 names of cultivating holdings is missing. According to this list there were in all about 300 land holders in Nagaon

in the year and of these 33 were definitely Brahmin. There were in all 10,008 fruit yielding cocoanut trees in Nagaon in that year and of these 4,500 were in orchards owned and operated by Brahmins.

The land holdings were ordinarily small and from all evidence cultivated by the owner families themselves. There is evidence to show that outside labour was engaged and Malis and others were brought into Nagaon as helpers in agricultural work by larger cultivators. But the total number of such landless labourers, to use a modern term, was 50 in 1840-41, composed of 30 Mushar khors and 20 Malis: (Angre Daftar, Rumat No. 249, p. 110; Konkan-Jamav, Peshwa Daftar, Rumat Nos. 638, p. 164; No. 137, O. 34). The total number of agricultural labourers was relatively small compared to the number of Brahmin cultivators so that they could not have all carried out cultivation by hired labour instead of by working themselves on their own farms.

This detailed list throws light on the second feature of the Brahmin community in Nagaon, namely the absence of joint families. The list contains separate government revenue demands on fathers, brothers, sons, showing clearly that their families were separate economic units which had their own orchards and which paid their land revenue separately and independently to government. This indicates that the nuclear family rather than the joint family was the rule, at least among the Brahmins. This is corroborated by other evidence. The information about houses at Nagaon indicates that the houses were small, only sufficient to accommodate a small family. There is also little indication of houses being rented out to tenants. From the Census of 1940-41 it would appear that the average number of persons per house in Nagaon was about 4, a very moderate family size. Papers in the records are also available which record the separation of brothers and division of their properties even while their father was alive and did retain a separate share in the division. Thus non-prevalence of joint families is indicated by all the available evidence.

Table 1 : Distribution of Houses in Nagaon according to liability to House Tax.

Year	Total No. of Houses	Temples	Houses of					Houses liable to pay House Tax
			Brahmins	Prabhus	Covenanted servants	Beggars	Maid servants	
1798-99	494	11	198	10	19	4	1	247
1807-08	553	17	223	19	4	2	0	—
1819-20	623	17	—	—	—	—	—	296
1823-24	—	17	—	—	—	—	—	341
1829-30	632	17	211	19	44	9	1	309
1839-40	614	18	232	20	—	15	—	278
1840-41	610	18	232	20	—	15	—	278

Angre Daftar, Rumat No. 134, p. 50, 51, 52

Rumat No. 638, p. 163, 164, 174

Rumat No. 637, p. 133.

Konkan Jamav, Peshwa Daftar, Rumat No. 137, p. 33

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Table 2 : Distribution of Houses According to Caste

	1798-99	1829-30	1839-40	1840-41
Total Houses liable to House Tax	247	309	278	278
Shopkeepers & Wani	9	10	7	8
Goldsmiths (Sonar)	13	9	11	10
Oilmen (Teli)	8	10	9	11
Washermen (Parit)	1	1	1	1
Barber (Nhavi)	3	3	7	7
Potter (Kumbhar)	2	1	1	1
Ironsmith (Lohar)	2	2	2	2
Weavers (Koshti, Kafadkari)	2	—	—	1
Toddy Tappers & Winemakers (Sarabhatti & Bhandari)	12	46	41	40
Bamboo workers	4	6	4	5
Bricklayers (Garandi)	12	4	4	5
Shoemakers (Chambhar)	4	6	5	6
Tailors (Shimpi)	—	3	5	5
Temple servers (Gusai)	—	7	7	8
Gardeners (Mali)	—	3	—	1
Carpenters (Sular)	—	1	2	2
Kasar (Coppersmiths)	—	—	—	2
	72	112	106	115

(Konkan Jamav, Peshwa Daftar, Rumat No. 137
Angre Daftar, Rumat Nos. 134, 638).

*The Records Kept by Priests at Centres of Pilgrimage as a Source of Social and Economic History**

by

B. N. GOSWAMY

I am a student of the History of Art and have, as such, concerned myself with Pahari Painting over the past few years. The difficulties in the way of writing the history of Pahari Painting are considerable, for the art is more or less completely anonymous and the miniatures bear consequently few or no signatures or dates; it has not so far, despite valiant efforts, been possible to reconstruct this history with any accuracy from external evidence either, for the hills are singularly barren of written records. The piecing together of the history of this art has, therefore, been attempted by several scholars, sometimes with disastrous results, largely through speculation, or reliance on stylistic considerations, but since the anchor of facts available is slight, each theory has been a point of acrid controversy.

I have been engaged for some time now in making an effort to break through the anonymity of Pahari painting as the first step in the direction of re-writing its history. For this it was essential to reconstruct the genealogies of the Pahari artists. These genealogies are important in the extreme, for we must remind ourselves that painting in India in the historical period was a traditional craft which was practised by whole families for generations until of course, the mould broke up in the middle of the 19th century. The genealogies could thus give us the names of artists which taken together with the few signed examples, may help in isolating the strains, as it were, of styles in Pahari painting and provide a clue to their development.

It was the search for accurate genealogies and, hopefully, dates which led me two years ago to centres of pilgrimage like Kurukshetra,

Pehowa and Haridwar, for I hoped there to find in the *pothis* or *bahis* of the priests some entries relating to the families of Pahari artists. What I landed upon, after difficulties to which I shall have occasion to refer to later, was a mass of material which it would take me a long time yet to assimilate and organise.¹ The history of Pahari painting is a world of silence in which one is grateful for the slightest whisper: what I was able, to my delight, to hear was numerous voices from the past which spoke firmly and clearly. After nearly two years of work,² with interruptions, I have now with me transcriptions of scores of entries relating to the families of Pahari artists, giving hundreds of names and dates and other facts of the deepest interest to my studies. With these and with the help of some more field-work in the hills, I believe it is possible to take studies in the history of this art far beyond the point at which they had apparently come to a halt.

My intention in this brief paper, however, is not to speak of the history of Pahari painting, nor merely to share with this group of scholars the excitement of discoveries which have significance only perhaps for the historian of Indian art. My aim is to draw pointed attention to the richness of the source which has yielded me such plentiful material and which may equally respond to the social and economic historians' demands on it. For it is not only genealogies of obscure families of artists that are preserved by the *pandas* or priests at our centres of pilgrimage; the documents in their possession are of several kinds and simply bristle with information which both social and economic historians of India may find of value and significance to their studies.

These records are neither freely available nor very easy to consult; hard and patient labour would be needed before any significant use of them can be made. They can be reached only through strenuous field-work and the not-so-easy agency of their owners, the *pandas*. But it is both possible and necessary, I believe, to liberate social and economic history from the tyranny of political histories from which one scrapes together facts of interest, official documents which as often as not yield scraps of information of questionable authenticity, or diaries and private papers which in our country are all too rarely obtained and are then possessed of severely limited interest. In these unusual records, peculiar I think to our country, and maintained with remarkable continuity over the past three hundred and fifty years or so, one can discover a whole new world of facts relating to the studies to which this seminar is devoted. I hope I am not being naively enthusiastic about a private discovery, or an not speaking in ignorance of any considerable work done in the past

* Paper read at the Seminar on the Social and Economic History of India held by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study at Simla, June 13-30, 1966.

with the help of these records by other scholars.³ I venture to proceed with the rest of this paper, however, on the assumption that very little work has been done on these and that even though most of the scholars present here must be vaguely aware of the maintenance of the records by the *pandas*, there is little or no detailed knowledge of the types and nature of these records.

I should like here to state that my own field-work has been limited to only five places of pilgrimage viz., Haridwar, Kurukshetra, Pehowa near Kurukshetra, and Kangra Mandir and Jwalamukhi in the Punjab Hills, and I am aware that similar records are kept by the *pandas* at numerous other places in India. I should like to add that since my interest in these records was for the present limited to finding out more about the artists of the Punjab Hills, the knowledge that I possess about the nature of other information contained in these records is general, not intensive. The points that I will make about the possibilities of work in this field are illustrative rather than comprehensive, and the examples that I choose are from my own area of study.

The records with the *pandas* fall broadly into three categories:—

- (a) The *pothis* or *bahis* kept by the *pandas*;
- (b) the *pattas* and *farmans* and other documents including the correspondence of the *pandas* with their clients, especially the *rajas* of the past; and
- (c) the *pandas*' own personal papers including accounts of expenditure, disputes relating to property or division; and the adjudication of these disputes by the authorities of the times.

The most carefully preserved and of course the most widely known records kept by the *pandas* are the *pothis* or *bahis* which I have referred to elsewhere,⁴ for want of a better English term, as "pilgrims' registers". The purpose of maintaining them is not historical, for the *pandas* are not distinguished by the possession of any great historical sense except perhaps unconsciously. The purpose is intensely practical and is two-fold: for the *pandas* they form a record of all their clients from all the country over; for the pilgrim they are a record of his visit and the occasion of his visit and that of his ancestors, and, above all, proof positive that the *panda* who owns the *bahi* with his ancestors' names and signatures is indeed his family priest at that place of pilgrimage.

Individually, and by themselves, the entries on a particular page of the *bahi* may mean little or nothing, and the entire volume may possess the uninspiring character merely of an arbitrarily arranged telephone directory. But it is when one takes into account the extent and the continuity of these records, and the manner in which they are organised, that they assume significance. For this reason it is necessary to pause here for a moment and refer to the organization of the *pandas* themselves, and their manner of keeping the records. For the sake of illustration we take the town of Haridwar and the *pandas* of that place. Pilgrims come to Haridwar from all corners of India at all times of the year, even though the *pandas* can tell us which months or festivals are preferred by the people of different areas for the performance of pilgrimage. This has been so for the last several hundred years. Between the entire body of *pandas* at Haridwar are owned all the *bahis* keeping a record of these pilgrims from all over India; and each *panda* serves as the *panda* of specific geographical regions not necessarily contiguous, or equal in size to the regions "owned by" another *panda*. One *panda* may thus be serving regions as far separate as, for instance, the Punjab Hill States, and Rajasthan and Bengal. The *panda* of the Punjab Hill States, to take an example over-simplified for purposes of illustration, thus keeps several *bahis*, one for each convenient unit of territory with him: he may have separate *bahis* for the areas of Kangra and Mandi and Guler and Jammu. Each of these *bahis* is then sub-divided into parts which deal with smaller units like *parganas* or *pattis* or *kothis* depending upon the common practice in the area concerned. Thus *parganas* or *pattis* or, in some cases, *tehsils*, are then further sub-divided into villages each of which has several sheets of the *bahi* devoted to it. Under each village or town, the families are listed according to 'castes', in the loose sense of the term, often keeping in view the hierarchy obtaining in the area. In the area of Kangra, thus, under each geographical unit come first the Brahmins, then the first grade Rajputs followed by the second grade Rajputs; then follow the Khatri, the Mahajans, the Suds, the Sunars, the Tarkhans and Lohars, the Ghirths and Changa, and so on. The *bahi* is consulted by the *panda* with the help of an index of villages which accompanies each *bahi*, aided of course by his own phenomenal memory for names and places. At a given time, thus, a *panda* operates with a large number of *bahis*, sometimes as many as nearly a hundred, and these are only the current or *chalu bahis*. For each of the current *bahis* there are several preceding volumes which are stored away, not being needed either by the *panda* or the pilgrim, for the current *bahis* often contain information stretching back to the last hundred years or so at which point the interest of most pilgrims ceases.

It is because of this neat and amazingly accurate indexing and organization of records that the pilgrims have no difficulty either in locating the *panda* or the entries in his *bahis* relevant to their own family. The procedure that a pilgrim follows on arrival at the place of pilgrimage is relatively simple. After running the gauntlet of a host of *pandas*, which can linger in one's memory as a vivid if trying experience, he locates his *panda* by the process of elimination. (It is his *panda* in fact who more often locates him). After that the pilgrim has only to give the place of his origin, then his caste and finally the names of his father and grandfather to be led straight to the pages on which the whole record of the family is inscribed. There are tens of thousands of names in each *bahi* but it often takes, after the *panda* and the pilgrim have come together, no more than five minutes for the pilgrim's family records to be located. The *bahis* grow year by year because each pilgrim after having performed the ceremony which often is the occasion of his visit, makes an entry in the *bahi* in his own hand, or, if he is illiterate, has it done by the *panda's* *munim*. The entry runs something like this: the pilgrim first gives the place of his origin, then the place of his residence if it happens to be different from the place of his origin (this fact is always prominently recorded), then his own name and the names of the members of his own immediate family, then the names of his father and grandfather etc. and of his brothers and nephews, each relationship being carefully and precisely indicated. Then he records the date of his visit, the occasion of the visit—for it may be the Kumbha Mela, the death of an immediate relation, the Solar eclipse, an ordinary act of devotion, or the performance of penance for a sin—, any other facts of interest, and frequently the payment or other gifts he makes to the *panda*.

The point of this somewhat detailed narration has been that both the content and the manner of preservation of the record render it possible for us to put it to considerable use in research on social and economic history. The possibilities that open up, in fact, are vast, and it is of interest here to indicate a few of them. I should like to begin by illustrating the point with the rather limited use I have made on the *bahis* in my own researches into the history of the families of Pahari artists. A matter of controversy among scholars of Pahari paintings was the place of origin of the gifted family of Pandit Ser. and his sons, Manaku and Nainsukh. They were allotted at pleasure by scholars to areas as far apart as Kashmir and the Delhi territory, the latter because of a theory rather stridently put forward that they were Moghul artists trained in the Muhammad Shah period style who immigrated into the hills in the wake of the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah. It was a colourful theory

which commanded the allegiance of many a scholar till the *pandas' bahis* clearly and unequivocally stated that these artists were not only natives of Guler but were also residents of that small hill principality. I am in a position now, with the help of records, to trace the history of this entire family for the last two hundred and fifty years, their movements and migrations, the names of some of the patrons whom they served, and the dates around which they operated.⁵ There is the fascinating case of a talented member of this family, Deviditta, great grand-son of the celebrated Nainsukh, who lived for some time at Basohli because his father had settled there, moved from there to Lahore, clearly to work for the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and from there to Patiala to work for the Maharaja of that place, after the decline and fall of the Sikh kingdom of Lahore,⁶ obviously because patronage of the arts had dwindled at Lahore and was still possible at Patiala.

I have facts of equal interest and similar to this about numerous other families of pahari artists. But I must not allow myself to be led by my materials, and must return to the larger matter of the possibilities of work by other scholars on these *bahis*. I believe it is possible, through these intensely human documents, to reconstruct a vivid picture of the common people, not the heroes alone, of an area at a given point of time. This is what neither cold statistics nor speculative reconstructions of the past succeed in doing. When a Rajasthani peasant of today prostrates himself on the ground on hearing the name of his ancestor read out by the *panda* from his *bahi*,⁷ he puts us in mind of the Pahari painter of two hundred years ago who, being illiterate, left his mark in the shape of a sensitive drawing in the *bahi* itself, of Shravana Kumar carrying his aged parents in a balance across his shoulders, because the occasion of his own visit was his taking his father in his old age on a long pilgrimage, perhaps his last.⁸ And with this a link, a remarkable continuity of attitudes, becomes alive.

But to speak of other things. It may be possible, for instance, with the help of these records to ascertain, among other things, at a given point of time, in an area, the population of a village or town or region, the distribution of castes in that area, the hierarchy of the social order, the relative position of the professions, the pattern of migration from one place to another, and so on. Considerable work of demographic interest may thus be possible from the records of a place like Haridwar for large parts of India, or at a place of relatively restricted interest like Rameshwaram or Gaya or Jagannathpuri for the regions which they serve. This,

provided of course that the *bahis* can all be located, and above all made available for use by the *panda*.

It may be possible again for us not only to study the situation at a fixed point of time, but also the developments in it over a period of time. In the matter of caste, and people's attitude towards it, for instance, it was fascinating for me to see how the painters of three hundred years ago were content simply with describing themselves as "Tarkhans" or "Tarkhan Chitreras" (carpenter-painters'), and their descendants of fifty years ago sought to raise themselves in status by giving themselves out as "Rajput Chitreras". The painters and carpenters and blacksmiths of the hills of today of course, when we fondly believe that the consciousness of caste is on the decline, describe themselves as "Dhiman Brahmins", because a conference of theirs in the Kangra District a few years ago so decided! The *nais* or barbers thus have become the "Kulin Brahmins" and the *Jhiwars* or water carriers have up-graded themselves by adopting the style of "Jal-Khainch Rajputs."⁹

The relative strength of profession in the past in different areas it may be possible to ascertain with reference to the *bahis*. When we find in the 18th century innumerable families of workers in gold and metals at Sujampur Tira in Kangra, or shawl weavers in Nurpur, and contrast it with the Ghirth or peasant predominated population of villages in large areas around it, we discern the pattern clearly of the concentration of these crafts in the central towns of the region. It may also be possible to form a fair idea of the state of literacy in a given region at a given time, for the literate pilgrims preferred always to inscribe in the *bahis* in their own hands while the rest left it to the *pandas* to make the entries. It is a matter of interest thus to find in the Punjab Hills that virtually the only two castes which left notes in their own hands in the *bahis* were the Brahmins and the Mahajans. The Rajputs confined themselves to just putting down, in the grand manner, simply a "*Sahi*" across the note dictated by them to the *panda*,¹⁰ the goldsmith made tiny floral patterns in the *bahis* and the painters sometimes drew little sketches. The notes left by pilgrims contain a variety of small bits of intimate information like the personal faith of the writers, the group of pilgrims with whom they travelled, the garments and ornaments which they brought with them to give away in charity. They are possessed at the same time of some linguistic significance, for one can see here the written records of the last three hundred years together. The inscriptions in Takri, the obscure script of the hills, for instance, I found to be important, for these enable

us to see the development of the script, almost impossible to ascertain from any other source at all, over a long period of time. A very large number of letters and *pattas* in several variations of Takri I found pasted in the old *bahis* of the Haridwar *pandas*, and I am convinced that this must equally be the case with documents from other regions of India.

The second category of records in the possession of the *pandas* consists of *pattas* and *farmans* which I have had the fortune of seeing by the hundred. They have, like the *bahis*, been carefully preserved by the *pandas*, for their livelihood partly depended upon them. The *pattas* received by the *pandas* from the Rajas of yesteryear, recording gifts made, or grants endowed, or again, confirming their status as family priests, were a source of great pride for the *pandas*, for their status in their own community depended considerably on the status of their *yajmanas* or clients. A *panda*, I found, will with great fondness, open a small *basta* of coarse red cloth to take out a bundle of these *pattas*, each of them neatly folded and each having a little story to go with it. Apart from their possessing interest of the kind that we have spoken of above, these are of great help in the writing of political history, for they invariably contain dates, sometimes even regnal years, and almost always brief genealogical information. With the help of the *pattas* that I have seen at Haridwar and Kurukshetra and Jwalamukhi alone, I find it possible to revise in great part the chronological portions of the pioneering work in the history of the Punjab Hills done by Hutchison and Vogel,¹¹ and to cut across the uncertainty of those volumes. The Temple Committee of the Kangra Mandir has had the enlightenment to frame and display the most important of the *pattas* with the *pandas* of that place, and among them one finds documents originating from Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan and Kashmir and so on. I have not had the occasion to see them personally, but have heard references to *pattas* given by Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji being in the possession of certain *pandas*. A kind *panda*, with an eye at my surname, spoke to me at Pehowa of a grant in his possession given by some Gosains, dating back to the 12th century.

I have at other places found letters written on behalf of the Rajas informing the *pandas* of the intended pilgrimage of the Raja, giving precise details of the members of the entourage, and asking the *panda* to make arrangements for specific quantities of provisions likely to be needed by the party. Along with one such letter which I saw with a *panda* at Jwalamukhi several years ago, written on behalf of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, was a sheet detailing the *panda's* own account

of expenditure and provisions arranged by him. At Jawalamukhi again I saw with the central body of the priests a fascinating document in the nature of an agreement between the *pujaris* of the place and the then paramount hill ruler, determining exactly and in great detail the share of the Raja in the *charhawa* or offerings received at the temple. At Pehowa was a letter written on an eighteenth century Hill Raja's behalf conveying to the *panda* the news of the death of one of his Ranis, and, regretting his own inability to come, informing the *panda* that he was sending through his own *purohit* who was bringing the remains of the Rani, a number of clothes, ornaments, and utensils. Each of these was described in the most detailed fashion, perhaps to guard against the possibility of the *purohit* not being able to resist certain temptations while bringing the gifts to Pehowa. Hundreds of documents of these and similar nature, I think, it will be possible to locate at several places.

In the last category fall certain personal papers of the *pandas* themselves. These include their personal account books, records of disputes between descendants of a common ancestor about the division of their clients, or disputes about property, landed or otherwise. Litigation has unfortunately been necessary among the *pandas* to settle disputes of this nature, and at Pehowa I saw with a family of *pandas* certain documents in Persian recording adjudication of some of these disputes by the Moghul authorities of the Suba of Sirhind. The document belonged to the early years of the 17th century.

These records taken together suggest, I think, vast possibilities. We must be sure though that there are serious difficulties in the way of obtaining access to these records, and that there are limitations from which the records in their very nature suffer. It is not easy to overcome the initial resistance of the owners of these records. The *pandas* are both suspicious and apprehensive of the designs of any one conducting a thorough inquiry into their documents which they have rendered us a remarkable service by preserving so carefully. Part of this suspicion is understandable because these *bahis* are admissible evidence in courts of law and are frequently cited in disputes about succession; no *panda* will readily be willing to be drawn into a legal battle of no concern to him. The other part of the suspicion arises from the fact that the priests are not accustomed to their records being examined in this fashion even by persons looking up their own family records, much less by outsiders. I have had trying moments during my work at these places of pilgrimage. I have been flatly refused; I have had the sensation of being examined by a whole group of persons as if I myself were an object of considerable antiquarian interest; I have had to enter upon

long explanation of the *abhipraya* and *tatparya* of my work before I was allowed the opportunity of doing some *vidyoparjana*. But the fortunate thing is that it is necessary only to get past the outer wall of resistance to meet much kindness. I have received generous help from several *pandas* themselves and from other kind friends wielding some influence locally. A little patience has yielded rich fruit.

The limitations of these records to which I referred above are several and obvious; the records are restricted only to the Hindu, including of course the Sikh, part of the population; women are left out of these, at least up to the middle of this century except when their deaths are sometimes referred to; some of the *bahis* may have been destroyed, others mislaid; the current *bahis* are likely to yield little compared to the earlier volumes which are not always equally well preserved; the manner of maintaining these records excludes the possibility of several facts like the rise of new towns being noticed, even though the migrations from older villages and towns are always recorded.

These limitations, however, even though serious, do not by any means wholly negate the value of these records. In spite of everything, this source of information remains vast, authentic, continuous, and available. This can be said of few records that go back to three hundred years or more in the past.

NOTES

1. It has been possible for me to achieve this work only through the kindness of a very large number of persons to whom I would like here to acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude. Apart from the priests whose specific help I shall have occasion to refer to later, when I publish the records collected from them, I would like here to mention gratefully the help and kindness received by me from Shri Balkrishan 'Muztar', S. Harsharan Singh, Dr. Iqbal Nath Chaudhury and Pandit Harii Bilas at Kurukshetra, Pandit Dewan Chand and Pandit Babu Ram at Pehowa, Pandit Ishwari Prashad at Jawalamukhi, Pandit Suryamani at Kangra Mandir, Pandit Shiv Kumar, Pandit Ram Kumar, Sardar Ram Kumar and Shri Hari Shyam at Haridwar, and Shri Hari Datta and Mrs. Rama Datta of Balawali.

2. I was assisted in my task by a Research grant received by me from the U.G.C. in September, 1965 to work on the project: "Collection of materials relating to the genealogies, and traditions in the families, of Pahari artists."

3. My attention has kindly been drawn by Dr. Romilla Thapar and Dr. Partha Sarathi Gupta to the work done by Dr. A. Shah of the Department of Sociology, Delhi University, on some records from Gujarat. Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose published a study on the records of the Lingaraj Temple at Bhuvaneshwar a few years ago in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, and has very kindly referred me to the work done, but not published, by Dr. Burt Stein on the Tirupati Temple. I am deeply grateful to these scholar-friends for this information.

4. See B. N. Goswamy, "Chamba Painting: A Study of New Documents", *Asian Review*, Volume II, No. 2, August, 1965.

5. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand has planned a special issue of the *Marg*, Bombay, to be devoted to the reconstruction of the history of Pahari Painting in which I hope to publish the result of some of my researches in this field.

6. See B. N. Goswamy, "Sikh painting: An Analysis of Some Aspects of Patronage", scheduled to be published in the forthcoming issue of *Oriental Art*.

7. The *pandas* of Haridwar have several instances to cite of the great reverence shown by Rajasthani pilgrims to their ancestral records. The Rajasthani peasant referred to here I had personally the occasion of seeing while I was working with Pandit Shiv Kumar at the Gau Ghat, Haridwar.

8. The sketch of Shravana Kumar I found in a *bahi* at Haridwar and was drawn by the artist Gwal of Guler.

9. The members of these families, it may be of interest to mention, do not get past the *pandas* with their new and self-styled castes, for the *pandas* are of course aware of the new attitudes and the shrewd questions asked by them about the families with which they inter-marry always tells them where exactly to place these visitors.

10. The word "Sahi" (lit., correct), written in a sprawling hand on the top of the page was inscribed in the hand of a royal personage or a specially authorized person, to signify that the contents of the document had been written correctly according to the instructions given. The equivalent on Persian documents of this *Sahi*, I understand, was "Sadiq" (lit., true), abbreviated most often into simply a Persian "S".

11. *History of the Punjab Hill States*, 2 Vols. Lahore, 1933.

Economic Change and Agriculture in Nineteenth Century India*

MORRIS DAVID MORRIS

I

The classical interpretation of the Industrial Revolution in Britain finds its most elegant exposition in Paul Mantoux's grand study, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*.¹ The general argument is well known. For my purposes, the relevant aspects can be summarized as follows: an agricultural revolution is a necessary precondition for the transformation of industry. Apart from providing foodstuffs and raw materials for the industrial sector, labour must be made available for the new factories. In these terms, the Enclosure Movement of the 18th and early 19th centuries was a necessary development. Not only did it increase the available output of food and raw materials via a technical transformation, but as a social revolution the Enclosures drove labour off the land and made it available for urban employment. This dispossession of the rural small holder, the creation of a landless proletariat with no alternative but to move from the land where employment opportunities were declining to the cities where they were increasing, is seen as an integral and essential part of the industrialization process. In the British context, a geographical characteristic was also important. The transformation of the occupational structure of the society was accompanied by a regional shift in the weight of population densities from southeastern to northwestern England.

The thesis, originally suggested by Marx and Toynbee, was developed to its classical proportions by Mantoux and elaborated in detail by countless scholars. Research was directed to documenting the Mantouvian theme, and this canonical interpretation went unchallenged until after the first World War.² Early in the 1920s J. H. Clapham, the distinguished economic historian, raised some troublesome questions about at least one implication of Mantoux's scheme, the notion that the scale

* A review article of *Land and Caste in South India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency during the Nineteenth Century*. By Dharma Kumar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965. pp. 211. 45 shillings.

of living of the working class deteriorated in the period 1760-1848 as a result of the costs of heavy capital investment.³ Clapham and his followers, challenging the point, introduced a more substantial quantitative tone and a stronger thrust of economic theory into work on British economic history. In the controversy that followed, the Mantouvians were forced to shift ground substantially. Although the debate still rages in lively (and sometimes acrimonious) fashion, Clapham's challenge did not threaten the main bulwarks of the theoretical edifice that Mantoux erected. Clapham's point touched the basic issues only marginally.⁴

It was Jonathan Chambers' pathbreaking article of 1953 that opened a major chink in the Classical interpretation.⁵ He summarised the results of years of detailed work by many scholars and concluded that in many areas the technology of the Enclosure Movement was not labour-saving but labour-using per acre of land. The suppression of fallow, waste and common land and the elaboration of the complex system of mixed farming required a much greater use of labour than traditional agriculture did.⁶ Chambers' argument could not be incorporated into the smooth format of Mantoux's model, and suddenly the sources of labour supply for growing industry became less certain. If labour did not come from the land via the enclosure process, if enclosed farms could use all the labour dispossessed from small holdings, where did industrial labour come from?

The answer, which was not an obvious one, came from demographic studies. The evidence we now have suggests that differences in district birthrates provided the solution.⁷ The increasing demand for labour in the eighteenth century Midlands seems to have generated its own supply of labour. Migration from southeast to northwest England was not involved. A birthrate which was much higher in regions of more vigorous economic activity tended to provide the labour force that was needed in these districts. It seems to account also for the geographical shift in the weight of population densities between 1700 and 1800.

Not only does this demographic reinterpretation solve the problem posed by Chambers, but it also eliminates the conceptual difficulty raised by the restrictive character of the Old Poor Law. If regionally differentiated birthrates more or less took care of the demand for labour, then long-distance migration in violation of the Old Poor Law was unnecessary. In fact, the new demographic analysis also solved another problem associated with the Poor Law. The Classical model saw the

pressure to repeal this legislation as coming from industrialists who were short of labour and needed a less inflexible labour market. But most research on the political aspects of Poor Law repeal indicates that the pressures came mainly from agricultural rate payers. If industrialists were not really short of labour—and on the whole they were not—then this new range of demographic facts can be incorporated into a different theoretical formulation.

And this is the point I wish to emphasize, a theory is never overthrown by a fact but only by another theory. For example, despite the fact that Chambers' article was published in 1953, the classical Mantouvian interpretation dominated for another decade because no one quite knew what to do with Chambers' uncomfortable "fact". It threw the canonical thesis out of joint, but by itself his essay didn't provide an adequately based alternative hypothesis to explain the way things worked and intermeshed. As teachers we had to proceed as if Mantoux's model was still firm. If we were particularly honest with our students, we noted the disturbing, inconsistent evidence and, possibly, tried to point out where (i.e., in what sector of the system) new evidence had to be sought and research had to be carried out. But until the work was done, we had to live uncomfortably with the old system.⁸

Now that we have a new body of evidence and a rather different system of dynamics, we are in a position to set up a theoretical model that is in many ways quite different from Mantoux's model. As I see the situation of British economic history, the new formulation will be more complex, less elegant than the Mantouvian scheme. But it will be a better approximation to relevant reality, a better tool for social and historical analysis.⁹

II

All this is by way of introduction to some comments on the state of Indian economic history which have been stimulated by the recent book of Dr. Dharma Kumar. There is a classical and largely unchallenged interpretation of nineteenth century developments associated with the name of R. C. Dutt. The central theme of Dutt's view, elaborated over the past six decades by innumerable scholars, begins with the notion of a "traditional India", seen as an essentially static, self-contained, non-monetized and unspecialized economy.¹⁰ A distinguishing feature of the economy (or economies) was that its overwhelmingly rural population

consisted in the main of relatively equal owner-occupiers. The argument is that into this essentially egalitarian economic order came the shattering influence of market forces represented by Western commercial and industrial competition, reinforced by the power of the modern imperial state. The consequences of this intervention furnish the main strands of the Duttian view of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Indian economic history. Agriculture was enfeebled by inappropriate tenurial and revenue policies. Modern industrial development was inhibited by an official *laissez faire* policy and adverse governmental interventions. Handicrafts were destroyed by European competition. Lacking alternative employment opportunities in the constricted modern commercial-industrial sectors, displaced handicraft labour, indebted owner-occupier peasants and the labour force generated by expanding population were forced onto the land. Agriculture was burdened with an ever-increasing supply of only partially employable landless labour.

The Duttian view is "Classical" in three meanings of the term: classical in the symmetry and unity of its overall analysis, classical in that it embraces the widest possible range of evidence, and classical in that it is virtually unchallenged by any alternative theoretical formulation.

In a very strict sense, the approach, concerned mainly with the decay of old institutions and the emergence of new ones, is Institutional. This is understandable. Economic history was a major weapon in the Nationalist struggle. Both Indian and foreign scholars were concerned with the impact of British rule, with policy and the way in which policy changed the parameters of Indian economic behaviour. Consequently, little attention has been paid to the detailed economic processes that are directly and immediately involved. Until recently, the problems suggested by the conventional sort of economic theory have been ignored. Almost no attempts have been made to apply the simplest tools of economic theory— notions of price and cost, supply and demand, elasticities, productivity—to the historical Issues.¹¹

In recent years a number of economists have produced historical work of importance. Scholars working in the National Income Unit of the Planning Commission and others stimulated by the same problems have generated quantitative data of a type, quantity and reliability that we have never had before. But it should be noted that these studies have characteristic limitations. They are essentially classificatory exercises. They are not in themselves theoretical except in the concern for

the methodological aspects of classification and construction. They give the facts of history but not yet the history itself. Furthermore and equally important, these economists have largely restricted their work to the period after 1900 when hard statistical data become easily available. In fact, when purveyors of the dismal Queen of the Sciences work on the nineteenth century they tend invariably to fall away from the tools of their own discipline and into the arms of the Institutionalist tradition of Dutt.

These comments are not intended to suggest that the Institutionalist approach of the Classical tradition of Indian economic history is necessarily wrong. There is a range of problems associated with the transformation of socio-economic parameters that would be missed by conventional economic theory. However, it should be borne in mind that an interest in changing socio-economic arrangements does not (or at least should not) preclude a concern with the specific short-run, micro-mechanics of a situation. Marx faced this issue in the third volume of *Capital*. Dobb in his *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* has shown our own generations how provocative can be the results of combining very sophisticated institutional analysis with the tools of orthodox economic theory in a reexamination of European economic history.

Let me offer an example of what I mean by this proposition. It is widely noted that in the nineteenth century portions of the Indian countryside became enmeshed in the world economy.¹² Typically it is argued that the Indian peasant was forced into this commercial relationship by the nature of the British-imposed revenue system and that this led to his "exploitation" by landlords, money-lenders and merchants. Whether used by Marxists or non-Marxists, the concept of "exploitation" is invariably overloaded with normative connotations; there is rarely any solid reference to the specific economic context. When it is used by these scholars to refer to high interest rates charged to peasants by money-lenders, they pay no attention to the fact of capital shortage and high risk in the agricultural setting.¹³ When they employ it to refer to the power of the landlord to exact high rents, they ignore the land-population ratio. In general, when reference is made to the monopolistic-monopsonistic positions of landlords, money lenders and merchants in the rural sector, economic historians fail to comprehend that it is not the spread of commercialization but the limitation of its spread—the persistence of traditional features rather than their replacement by modern commercial relationships—that left the peasant in an adverse position.¹⁴

In fact, one of the still unfounded propositions of the canonical tradition is that the position of the peasantry worsened in the nineteenth century as a result of commercialization and British policy. Official revenue policy may have forced the peasant into the world of commerce, but it did not determine what he had to produce. One of the most striking features of nineteenth and twentieth centuries agriculture is the developing and shifting pattern of regional crop specialization. While for the twentieth century we have some notions of the phenomenon, there are no solid studies of the process for the nineteenth century. Yet the shifts between rice and jute in eastern India and between cotton and wheat elsewhere (to identify two gross examples) suggest that peasants tended to maximize their positions vis-a-vis prices in domestic and world markets. Surely, the increasing regional specialization and the movement from lower to higher value crops must have had some effects on the incomes and well-being of the landholding peasantry. Possibly, the overall effects might still have been adverse in the long-run. However, this is a conclusion to be proved, not an axiom to be enunciated.

It is in this context that in recent decades the results of scholarship committed to the Classical view seem rather disappointing. It is not that there has been no grand new hypothesis. Rather, it is that there have been few if any attempts to test the validity and/or the internal consistency of any of the canonical themes. Historians have tended merely to add more descriptive material of various sorts. Economists working on the nineteenth century typically have not used their analytic tools either to elicit the mechanisms of the system or to explore the theoretical implications of propositions advanced.

For example, a good deal of work has been concerned with the issue of *zamindari* versus *raiyatwari*. Of course, such studies have thrown light on certain limited aspects of social structure. But from the viewpoint of *economic* history possibly the most important problem to examine is the effect of different tenurial systems on agricultural productivity and output. To the best of my knowledge, no one has attempted to compare the performance of agriculture under the two systems.

More directly related to the central Institutional theme is the notion of the increasing indebtedness and the transfer of lands to "a few money lenders." The most impressive and consistent case for indebtedness and forfeiture and increasing concentration after 1850 has been made by S. J. Patel.¹⁸ However, Dr. Patel's case does not strike me as particularly convincing. Apart from defects in his use of census data,

he bases much of his argument on evidence derived from famine periods.¹⁹ Dr. Kumar's study throws some doubt on this aspect of Patel's case. She makes the point that at least in the Madras Presidency for the period 1881-1901 "there seems to have been no large-scale dispossession of the peasantry by money-lenders and traders." In fact, she gives evidence that there was actually an *increase* of landowners in the period.²⁰

Even more to the point if we are discussing the supposed *secular* tendency towards concentration of landholding is the work of A. M. Khusro. If the movement towards concentration of landownership was the powerful long-run force that Dr. Patel has suggested, we would necessarily find an extremely high degree of concentration of landholding and, given the typical technology of Indian agriculture, a very high proportion of tenancy. But Dr. Khusro explicitly denies that "the separation of ownership from cultivation was an all-pervasive or universal phenomenon in the pre-1947 India." In fact, he concludes that in 1947 land cultivated by tenants and under all the subtle forms of sharecropping was probably about 20 per cent of all agricultural lands.²¹ Given the case which Dr. Kumar makes, which I consider in more detail later, there seems to be no evidence of any very strong secular trend at all. It is true that land was not held equally, but inequality and "concentration" (if that term is to be meaningful) are not necessarily the same thing.

It is possible that the situation at the time of Independence represents a falling away from an earlier, more concentrated pattern, but this would have to be shown. Moreover, if this point is argued, we are faced by the need to explain how and why such a situation developed. If India was still in 1947 a country of "pygmy landowners", as Paul Baran once put it, we are confronted with the possibility that the Classical analysis has somewhere gone awry. A society of owner-occupiers, however impoverished, is not at all what one would expect from that analysis.

The Classical interpretation cannot be proved by merely quoting various official British sources on the subject. I am aware that the Blue Books frequently referred to growing indebtedness and land transfers. However, most of the evidence that is cited about land transfers comes from periods of famine and may therefore not be representative. Further more, the fact is that land transfer and concentration are not the same thing at all.²² Even if, for argument's sake, we accept a direct link between transfer and concentration, such occasional evidence is not capable in itself of demonstrating any secular trend. It is not legitimate

to take figures of land transfer from one famine period, add them to figures from a later famine period and argue that the sum of the two represents cumulative concentration *unless* it can be demonstrated that the process was not reversed during the intervening period. And precisely such reversals may have occurred during inter-famine periods. In other words, the career of the Indian agriculturist in the nineteenth century may not have been one long secular slide downward toward increasing misery, as Dr. Patel would have it. Instead, it could have been a condition of cyclical fluctuations against which no definite long-run tendency or even a slight upward secular movement might be projected.²³ This is suggested by Dr. Kumar's statistical evidence on increasing numbers and proportions of landowners in the agricultural population for the period 1881-1901 (pp. 177-179). It is also consistent with the facts elicited by Dr. Khusro that I referred to earlier.²⁴

I do not want to be interpreted as arguing that all was well or that what we have been told is entirely incorrect. The condition of the agriculturist in the nineteenth century was grim. But what we have to determine is whether that grimness was actually a creation of nineteenth century events or essentially a continuation of a pre-existing situation. It is at this point that we come to grips directly with the theme of Dr. Dharma Kumar's book.

III

If there is a major theme in later Institutional analysis, it is the notion that landless labour, a rural proletariat, was the creation of agricultural commercialization. The argument runs as follows: at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were few if any landless labourers. Subsequently, British factory products destroyed handicrafts and forced artisans to become landless labourers. At the same time, settlement policy and rigid revenue burdens combined with commercialization of agriculture and population growth converted increasing proportions of the agricultural community into agricultural wage workers.²⁵

The core of the argument rests on the twin assumptions that the pre-British Indian village was a society of roughly equal smallholders and that the high ratio of land to population made impossible the existence of any significant group of landless labourers. From this assumption of a "Paradise Lost" the Institutional argument moves to

an uncritical acceptance of Patel's data and conclusion. No one has thought to examine the initial axiom, that there were no (or very few) landless labourers before the mid-nineteenth century, on which the entire case is ultimately based. It is this passive, uncritical acceptance of an untested theme by one generation of scholars after another that produces the rather dismal "scissors and paste" quality of so much of the work on modern India.

But now we have been presented with a study that, whatever its rather substantial weaknesses, throws a hard and challenging light on Classical notions in the field. Dr. Kumar's book is, in terms of its implications, the most original piece of work on nineteenth century agricultural history that has been published in a very long time. If its implications are pursued in further research, this volume will be seen to have played the same kind of disruptive and creative role for modern Indian economic history that Chambers' essay played in English economic history.

Dr. Kumar's study asks a very simple question: did the class of landless agricultural labourers really grow up only after the mid-nineteenth century and, if so, at what rate? The best place to seek an answer is in South India. It was in nineteenth century Madras that the *raiayatwari* form of settlement was most rigorously carried through, that the rates of revenue extracted were highest, that land transfers were easiest, and that, consequently, the traditional village community should have suffered its most disruptive blows. Moreover, in the twentieth century, South India has the highest proportion of landless labour to total population. All this would seem to offer the strongest confirmation of the Classical argument that the ruthless application of *raiayatwari* settlement and the high ratio of agricultural labour to total population are intimately linked as cause and effect. In this region the Classical case should be hardest to challenge. And this is the area that Dr. Kumar makes the focus of her research.

Dr. Kumar begins by examining the possibility that the social structure and the manner in which land was held in 1800 made for the existence of a landless labour class. In a brief discussion that sorts out the major characteristics of *zamindari*, *inamdari* and *mirasdari*, she makes the point that even in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "the village was not always and everywhere a simple community of peasant proprietors; often it was far more differentiated and complex."

(p. 28). In fact, her description (pp. 10-28) documents the essential inequality inherent in the traditional landholding system.²⁷

Even though there are no recorded instances of hacienda-sized estates—units of more than a hundred acres were quite rare—farms were frequently large enough so that in many cases parcels of land were rented out.²⁸ In a large number of villages there were many other cases of insufficient family labour to do all the work and a fairly wide use of hired labour. (Chapter II and p. 189). Mrs. Kumar is making the point that the very structure of landholding, its inequality, suggests that the use of hired labour, tenants-at-will (*parakudi*) and agricultural labourers proper (*pannaiyals*), did exist at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁹

Social structure and ideology also contributed to the need for hired labour. In many districts Brahmins could not perform manual labour, but a large proportion of land was held by them. While some Brahmins rented out their lands, in very many instances they hired labour. (pp. 30-31 and 189-190).

Mrs. Kumar very trenchantly points out that in general there was no substantive difference between the *parakudi* and the *pannaiyal*. Typically, the tenant-at-will's function consisted of providing only labour. All capital, often even his living expenses, was furnished by the landlord. And it was the landlord who exercised all decision-making functions.

The similarities [between *parakudi* and *Pannaiyal*] go further. If the crop-sharer bore the risk of the crop turning out badly, the agricultural labourer too was paid his wage in the form of a share of the crop, though it is true that he generally got a daily wage as well. The income of the poorest crop-sharer and the agricultural labourer were frequently the same, and this seems to reflect the fact that there was no great difference in their economic functions. Indeed the same person might play both parts. As a case in point, the *pannaiyal* or agricultural labourer was sometimes given a small plot of land to cultivate as a tenant.... Again, as we have seen, the *parakudi* might receive daily wages during the harvest.³⁰

The significance of this phenomenon is usually dismissed (without reference to the evidence) by pointing to the abundance of land at the beginning of the nineteenth century. While it is true that "anyone who agreed

to pay the land revenue could take up land from the Government" (p. 29), the crux of the matter was that "the lowest castes were probably prevented by powerful social sanctions from owning or leasing land." (p. 31). In other words, in addition to the inequalities of landholding, the social rigidities of South Indian society created the demand for hired labour by a major landholding group that couldn't by custom do its own work (Brahmins) and created a supply of hired labour that had no alternatives.³¹

Having set out the general economic and social conditions under which landless agricultural labour existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Dr. Kumar turns her attention to an analysis of the institutional form within which it was contained, the system of agrestic serfdom. She is aware of the complexity of the situation and considers the definitional problems briefly but carefully. As she points out (p. 24):

One of the most striking and important peculiarities of the Indian forms of servitude [as compared with slavery and serfdom in the Western world] is their close connection with the caste system.... the caste system not only confirmed the economic and social disadvantages of the agricultural labourer, but also gave him some rights, some economic, others of a social and ritual nature.

Dr. Kumar explores the variations in degrees and types of servitude, which ranged from near freedom in the Telegu districts to greater burdens in Tamilnad to the rigor and harshness of the system on the West Coast. "Serfdom" is probably the most convenient term to apply to the entire complex of conditions, as long as we explicitly recognize that this does not commit us to any views about the comparability of the Indian and western forms of serfdom. On the West Coast the situation was closest to slavery, but even here caste provided a few traditional rights which relieved agricultural labourers of some of the features of slavery as it existed on the plantations of the American South until 1863. (p. 64). But regardless of the specific circumstances, i.e., whether these agricultural labourers could be transferred or sold, or whether they were classed as *pannaiyal* or *parakudi*, there was still the social and economic burden of dependency, the lack of freedom and security even in the "rights" which tradition purportedly allotted to them. And most important of all, they lacked the right to control and dispose of land, which was the prerogative of members of higher castes. (Chapter III).

In her analysis Dr. Kumar clearly establishes the fact that these agrestic serfs were drawn from specific castes—Cheruman, Pallan, Pariyan, Mala and Holey, and whether free or unfree, they, neither owning nor controlling land, worked for others. Having established this, she proceeds to calculate for the early nineteenth century the proportion of agricultural labourers in the total population. Her method is simple. Based on evidence that all or virtually all members of these specific castes were agricultural labourers at the beginning of the 19th century and that the population of these castes grew at approximately the same rate as the population as a whole, estimates of the size of these groups from the 1871-1901 census data can then be projected back to the beginning of the century.³² Dr. Kumar concludes that "The five main castes which were definitely 'agricultural labour' castes... together formed 12.0 per cent, 13.1 per cent, 12.9 per cent and 12.5 per cent of the total population in 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 respectively." (p. 59). If the Palli caste, a group not always classed as one of the traditional agricultural labour castes, is included, "the proportion rises to around 20 per cent..." (p. 59). This range of 12-20 per cent is completely consistent with estimates of agricultural labour groups for the early nineteenth century which were culled from official reports for that period. (pp. 49-50). However, for reasons that are not entirely clear to me, Mrs. Kumar tends to work with a lower estimate in which at the beginning of the 19th century the landless agricultural labour force amounted to 10-15 per cent of the *total population*.³³ Based on her manipulation of census data for the period 1871-1901 and its backward projection, she concludes that agricultural landless labour at the beginning of the nineteenth century "would have formed 17-25 per cent of the *agricultural population*."³⁴ In 1901 the figure had risen to about 27-29 per cent of total agricultural population." (p. 191) Given the possibility that the estimate for 1800 is conservative and that the margins of error for both the 1800 and the 1901 data are likely to be fairly significant, Dr. Kumar's conclusions point to the probability that there was little if any growth of a landless agricultural labour force in the nineteenth century. The author, herself, concludes more modestly: "the fact that agricultural labour amounted to 27-29 per cent of the agricultural population in 1901 could hardly be regarded as a radical transformation of the agrarian economy." (p. 182).

IV

This, then, is the substance of Dr. Kumar's study. The two fundamental propositions are, first, that even at the beginning of British

rule, long before Indian agriculture was involved in the international economy, a significant proportion of the agricultural population was effectively landless; and, second, that the rate of growth (if any) of this landless class was certainly not very significant.

The first proposition challenges a fundamental presupposition of the Classical school. Here, it is important to recognize that the canonical view is not based on any real examination of the detailed evidence. Instead, it rests to a very large extent on rather casual official references and, specifically, on a statement taken by Dr. Patel from R. Palme Dutt.

The growth, at the other end of the scale, of the landless agricultural labourers is even more significant. In 1842 Sir Thomas Munro, as Census Commissioner, reported that there were no landless peasants in India (an undoubtedly incorrect picture, but indicating that the numbers were not considered to require statistical measurement).

Dr. Kumar's almost epigrammatic rejoinder is certainly devastating. She says with reference to this statement:

It does not strengthen one's confidence in this view to recall that there was no All-India census until 1871, that there was no Madras Census in 1842, that Sir Thomas Munro was never Census Commissioner, and that in 1846 he was dead.

The combined impact of Dr. Kumar's two propositions raises a substantial question of definition. Even if one accepts the existence in 1800 of "serfdom" on a large scale, is this the same thing as landlessness in 1900? In other words, is there a fundamental difference between "serfdom" and "proletarianization" in the Indian agricultural setting? The argument rests on the proposition that the "serfs" had some rights, however tenuous, while a landless labourer in 1900 had none. Dr. Kumar's answer is that the "serf" did not really have the security that is usually implied: "he had far fewer economic rights than the *mirasdar* or tenant" and even "his right to work on a particular plot of land was not always granted." (p. 35. See also pp. 191-102). In other words, there were "proletarian" characteristics of insecurity in early 19th century "serfdom".

There are two other lines that a rejoinder might follow. The first stems from the evidence that in the nineteenth century the nature of

changes in the socio-economic characteristics of the landless groups was not particularly great. "Serfdom" of the traditional sort was surprisingly durable, just because it was reinforced by caste disabilities. (pp. 47, 75-76, 148-151 and 180-181).

The other line of argument flows from the fact that a large proportion of the members of those groups that Dr. Kumar classed as landless in 1800 were landless in 1900.³⁷ Functionally the groups of 1800 were the same as those of 1900. And, what is more, they did the same kind of work in the same way in 1900 as they did in 1800. Nevertheless, Marxists particularly view this as a changed situation. It seems to me that their notion of a change does not arise out of any modification in the internal operations of agriculture nor in the *real* relations between overlords and labourers. What the Marxists are in fact saying is that it stems from the purported change in the Indian economy as an entirety, from the transformation of a "feudal" economy into a "capitalist" system.³⁸ I will not deal with the appropriateness of the "feudal" concept as applied to the Indian setting. Let me merely point out that expansion of commerce does not in itself constitute a change in basic economic relationships, at least not in the neo-Marxian formulation of Mr. Dobb.³⁹ In these terms, certainly, Mrs. Kumar's comparison (and link) between landlessness in 1800 and 1900 is legitimate, even by certain Marxian standards.

Clearly, Dr. Kumar's analysis forces us to reexamine the Classical view of what was going on in the rural sector in the nineteenth century. The questions that she poses are of the utmost importance, but her investigation is disappointing. Her examination of the factors that yield the terminal results strikes me as being confused and contradictory. The conclusions are in no way weakened, but their impact is likely to be minimized by the disorderly character of the rest of the book.

The study should have been either briefer or much longer. Had Dr. Kumar presented only the basic case which documents her two major propositions, chapters I-IV, and X-XI would have been enough. But once she begins to examine the significance of revenue policy (Chapter VI), of the changing man-land ratio (Chapter VII), of emigration (Chapter VIII), and of the movement of wages (Chapter IX), she embarks on subjects which themselves require detailed examination or re-examination. If Dr. Kumar's basic thesis is correct, and I am convinced that it is, much of what up to now was accepted as valid must be re-evaluated, and an entire range of issues which have never been considered

seriously have to be investigated. In reading Dr. Kumar's book, I have the impression that she did not realize how disruptive her basic argument is to existing interpretations. While the supplementary questions she asks are not at all irrelevant to the reexamination that is now necessary, the answer will need much more careful work than she was able to undertake in this small book. To examine this ancillary part of her study in detail would require an investigation of the entire canvas of 19th century agricultural development in India. I only will touch a few of the major problems as I see them.

I think Mrs. Kumar is correct in suggesting (Chapter V) that British efforts to "reform" the system of agrestic serfdom were not very successful. I am, however, unimpressed by the evidence she calls forth (Chapter VI) to bolster her proposition that "the chief administrative and legal levers for bringing about social changes lay not in the reform of 'slavery' but in land policy. . . ." (p. 77). In fact, I think Mrs. Kumar was intending to ask a question and not make a statement.⁴¹ Certainly she concludes that land policy seems to have been largely irrelevant to the creation or size of the landless labour force in South India.

What was chiefly entailed by their settlements was a reshuffling of the upper levels of the tenorial hierarchy. Both *zamindari* and *raiyatwari* realigned the position of rent-collectors, superior landholders and sub-proprietors. While it is true that the simple cultivator occasionally lost certain traditional rights, he probably also gained others that previously he had not held at all, or had not held securely, such as the right to buy and sell land. *But none of the changes made during the first half of the century impinged on the landless labourer at the bottom of the social scale.* (p. 89. Italics added).

Although she is slightly less certain for the second half of the century, I think it is clear from the logic of her argument that no substantial case can be made (at least in the present state of our knowledge) that changes in land tenure or revenue policies had any significant effect on enlarging the relative size of the landless labour group.⁴²

Dr. Kumar's treatment of the changing land-man ratio (Chapter VII) is inadequate. She has brought together a good deal of data on population growth in South India 1801-1901, but the uses to which she puts them are unsatisfactory. The growth rate that she derives is the basic

weakness, a 300 per cent population increase over the course of the century. (pp. 101-197 and 120-123). This figure, and much of the subsequent discussion, depends on the 9.6 million population estimates for 1801 which is used as the base. (p. 120). An examination of her detailed table and the attached comments (pp. 120-123) suggests that the estimate is a gross understatement. If, for example, we were to take her comment (p. 107) that the 1801-1851 growth rate might be 65 per cent rather than 130 per cent—implying an 1801 population of 13.4 million rather than 9.6 million—the population increase between 1801-1901 would be brought down from 299 per cent to 186 per cent, a very significant difference. Failing to spend more time exploring the reasonable demographic possibilities, Dr. Kumar vitiates the meaningfulness of the entire chapter.

Her discussion, in the same chapter, of expansion of land under cultivation (pp. 107ff) is also unsatisfactory. She properly recognizes that which is forgotten by most investigators, that the measure should not be merely of physical acreage expansion but of that multiplied by productivity changes. To develop this story of land and output expansion would be an enormous research project all of its own, and one could not expect Dr. Kumar to undertake such a study in this book. However, instead of impressionistic statements, she could have been precise.

The crux of the issue is, of course, her attempt to relate the rate of population growth to the rate of expansion of cultivated land. Once it is recognized that her base figure for measuring population growth is extremely low and yields an absurdly high population growth figure, virtually all of her generalizations with regard to land expansion become meaningless. And even where she is working with more substantial data, her conclusions appear dubious.

For example, Dr. Kumar states that during the last fifteen years of the century "the extension of cultivation was beginning to fail to keep pace with the growth of population." (pp. 119 and 192). But the evidence she offers strikes me as being capable of quite a different conclusion. Between 1885-1901 population grew by 16.6 per cent and cultivated area expanded by 15.6 per cent. At the same time there was an increase in double and triple cropping and a very decisive shift to rice and other high-value crops like oilseed and tobacco. (pp. 116-127). This evidence and the fact of a 74 per cent rise in the price of common rice between 1873-1900 (p. 162) seems to run, at odds with the proposition



that population was outrunning output. The combined weight of the evidence seems to support the point she makes at another place, that "in terms of yield the average holding had probably increased."⁴³

Her section on emigration from South India (Chapter VIII) tells us that during the last four decades of the century the phenomenon "grew to significant quantities." (p. 133). In fact, Dr. Kumar estimates that net emigration constituted from one-ninth to one-seventh of annual population growth, while gross emigration was four to six times as large again. (pp. 133-136, 143). The "most important effect was probably to support wage levels or to mitigate the decline in them that would have taken place in the absence of this outlet for labour in the latter half of the nineteenth century." (pp. 142-143).

The analysis seems to run counter to the evidence she produces on wage movement. (Chapter IX). This chapter contains a good discussion of the difficulty of analyzing wage data in a still largely non-monetized rural sector, but Dr. Kumar's treatment of the substantive issue is sketchy. It is difficult to conclude much about wage movements before 1873. She is properly cautious about her conclusions even for the period 1873-1900. Her evidence suggests that in six of the seven districts real wages displayed a sharply downward trend (pp. 161-167), and she claims that this judgement is reinforced by her earlier conclusion that this same period was one when pressure of population was increasingly felt. (p. 167).

The argument is legitimate in terms of her own earlier analysis but I have already indicated my disagreements with that. Apart from the fact that the emigration rate Dr. Kumar describes (pp. 136, 143) should have worked against real wage declines of the magnitude indicated (pp. 165-167), the tale of declining real wages runs against her much more satisfactory evidence that the proportion of landless labour was not really increasing at the end of the nineteenth century. (pp. 172-173). Mrs. Kumar does not indicate how increasing population pressure and purported real wage declines fit with her major theme.

Once again, we are faced with a problem which requires extensive and detailed research attention. Dr. Kumar has succeeded in showing how confused the whole business is, and in the present state of our knowledge the contradictions arising out of this confusion are insoluble.⁴⁴

For all of its defects, Dr. Dharma Kumar's book raises a major problem that historians of the nineteenth century economy and society can no longer ignore. Henceforth, it will not be possible to quote an isolated statement to prove that there was no landless labour in India before the establishment of British rule. She has given us quantitative data—the best that we have ever had—that a substantial proportion of total agricultural population was landless at the beginning of the nineteenth century. She has given us quantitative data which very strongly suggests that the growth of that class, if any, was very small during the course of the century. As a consequence of her work economic historians will have to ask new questions as they reexamine the behaviour of the rural sector. Furthermore, they will have to proceed with a greater attention to quantitative evidence and the logical tests imposed by economic theory.

Scholars in the field may, possibly, be critical of the quality of some aspects of Dr. Kumar's work, but they must be grateful to her. She has opened new horizons in nineteenth century Indian economic history in much the same way as Chambers did in English economic history.

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1. First published in the early 20th century, the English translation appeared in 1928.

2. I do not intend to provide here more than the relevant highlights of the historiography and even this is given in a most schematic fashion.

3. John L. and Barbara Hammond dealt with this theme most explicitly and vividly.

4. For a summary of the literature and the state of the argument, see E. J. Hobsbawm and R. M. Hartwell, "The Standard of Living during the Industrial Revolution: A Discussion", *Economic History Review*, XVI, August 1963, pp. 119-46. My comments understate the enormous significance of Clapham in the scholarship dealing with the Industrial Revolution. In a fundamental sense, his work lays some of the basic groundwork for an alternative to the Classical viewpoint. See J. H. Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain, I* (Cambridge: 1926).

5. J. D. Chambers, "Enclosure and Labour Supply in the Industrial Revolution", *EHR*, 2nd S., V, 1953, 319-343. This essay is a direct critique of M. Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (London: 1947). Inasmuch as Dobb seems to be the major source of information for many Indian scholars who compare British and Indian economic development, I commend Chambers' essay as one particularly worth reading. The article is reprinted in *Population in History*. Edited by D. V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley. (London: 1965).

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This volume contains a very large number of methodological points which would be useful to students of modern Indian economic history.

6. I ignore here the change in the social status of the agricultural labour force and deal only with its employment opportunities.

7. For a detailed discussion of the evidence, see Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688-1959* (Cambridge: 1962).

8. Methodologically speaking, the problem faced here was not unlike the difficulties faced by Newtonian physics at the end of the 19th century. In physics, more and more "facts" accumulated which had to be treated as exceptions to the Newtonian system. Increasingly cumbersome explanations were elicited to incorporate these "facts" into the general scheme. It was not until Einstein developed, first, his special theory and, then, his general theory of relativity that the field of physics could proceed effectively. In this sense, Chambers' himself suggested the alternative proposed by Adam Smith, that demand for labour would provoke its own supply. But he was not in a position in 1953 to suggest the specific mechanics.

9. While I do not want to press the parallelism between method in the natural and social sciences too far, there is one more point I would like to make. Einsteinian physics did not supplant the Newtonian system entirely. Much of the older scheme survives in the grander model. Similarly in British economic history, the new form will correct the old, it will ask different questions, but the classical questions and some of the classical answers will be incorporated into the modern theoretical version.

For a glimpse of the line the new interpretation is taking, see Phyllis Deane, *The First Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: 1965).

10. There is a more recent variant interpretation which stresses certain highly commercialized features of the system. But even this view typically accepts the notion that the rural sector was non-monetized, that resources were transferred from rural to urban groups via essentially non-market devices, and that commerce and industry on any significant scale was essentially organized for royal purposes and the restricted needs of international trade.

11. Where, for example, are the detailed studies of price movements in the 19th century? The studies of agricultural output? The analyses of urban economic activity as related to agricultural performance? The investigations of the effects of modern transport on the economic performance of individual towns or districts? My point is that historical scholarship has been motivated in terms of method and scope by traditions associated with the German Historical School and Thorstein Veblen rather than by the classical, neo-classical and Keynesian themes.

12. Virtually every description of this process by an economic historian states or implies that all (or nearly all) peasants and all (or nearly all) agriculture got involved in the implications of the commercialization process. Current studies by social scientists indicate that the Indian economy even today is, only partly monetized. Clearly, in the 19th century there was even less monetization. Actually, the notions of monetization and commercialization as applied to 19th century India are extremely vague. The terms seem to serve as surrogates for detailed investigation of the actual situation.

13. It is possible that the long run tendency of rural interest rates in the 19th century was downward. This is certainly the impression one receives from reading the reports of early 19th century observers such as Francis Buchanan or Richard Jenkins. (One point is always neglected by those who talk of excessively high interest rates in the countryside. They fail to compare these with urban interest rates. If such comparisons were made, the situation in the rural sector could not be interpreted in the dramatic terms so typically employed.)

14. I confess to being confused by the notion of "exploitation" as it is so widely employed in Indian economic histories. To the extent that the term is used by apparent Marxists, it should be used only for relationships between employers and employees and not for those between peasants and landlords, money-lenders or merchants. Even when it is used in its appropriate scientific setting, it is not intended to contain—and was not used by Marx in his scientific writings to imply—an opprobrious conditions. In the Marxism scheme, "exploitation" is a neutral category with, if anything, a favourable effect on capital accumulation and economic development. Moreover, "exploitation" in the Marxian sense is entirely consistent with a rising scale of living for the working class.

When used by non-Marxists, "exploitation" merely seems to imply a situation of human relationships which the writer finds personally unpalatable. While one cannot quarrel with such a personal choice, it seems to me that it would be better to avoid the use of a word which immediately hints at a lack of scholarly objectivity. The term should be restricted to its scientific usages, by Marxists or by those who follow (explicitly) the definition suggested by Joan Robinson.

15. This system of adjustments deserves detailed study on a district or regional level. Even a casual reading of settlement reports will indicate that the phenomenon was widespread in the 19th century. Dharam Narain, *Impact of Price Movements on Areas under Selected Crops in India* (Cambridge: 1965) while oriented differently, confirms the basic point for the 20th century.

16. One response could be that the case is proved by the obvious and visible poverty of the mass of agriculturists today. My answer to this is quite simple. Poor as the Indian peasant may be today, he may have been even worse off a century-and-a-half ago. Unfortunately, the issue cannot be settled by calculating food-grain output and heads (or mouths) and dividing the one into the other, as is so popular today. Even if it could be shown that per capita output of food-grains fell in the long-run (and the evidence is against this for the 19th century), this in itself would not be close to a proof of a declining scale of life. If it were, Britain in the 19th century and Russia in the 20th would have to be classified as increasingly poor societies.

Nor can the issue be resolved by pointing to declining size of farm units. As Japan has taught us, this feature is consistent with rising output per acre and rising output per worker. Esther Boserup, *The Conditions of Economic Growth* (London: 1965) has some striking things to say on this subject which should not be ignored by any student of Indian agriculture in the 19th and 20th centuries.

17. I ought to note that R. C. Dutt, himself, argued the specific virtues of the zamindari system as against the raiyatwari. His successors, without attempting

any of the detailed comparative work that would be necessary to make a convincing case one way or another, generally have held the opposite view.

It is possible that the entire zamindari-raiyatwari discussion, at least as it affects the question of productivity, may be irrelevant. The notion of raiyatwari conjures up the image of a system of small owner-cultivators in which there is no landlord. However, my reading of settlement reports in raiyatwari and mahalwari regions suggests that even here the landlord-tenant relation was widespread throughout the 19th century. Dr. Kumar has noted this fact in several places in her study, most explicitly p. 85.

18. S. J. Patel, *Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan* (Bombay: 1952). A summary can be found in the first essay in his *Essays on Economic Transition* (Bombay: 1965).

19. Patel, *Essays*, p. 14. See Dr. Kumar's brief comment (p. 189) on Patel's use of census data.

20. Kumar, pp. 168-180. The quotation is from p. 179. Dr. Kumar's figures suggest that between 1881-1901 not only did the absolute number of landowners increase but that landowners as a proportion to working force in agriculture rose from 39 per cent to 47 per cent. (p. 177).

21. A. M. Khusro, "Land Reforms since Independence", in *Economic History of India: 1857-1956*. Edited by V. B. Singh (Bombay: 1965), p. 184.

22. For example, much of British discussion of land transfers seems to relate to the shift of land out of the hands of the "traditional landholding classes", and this reflected a concern about problems of political stability (and the British view of the groups that provided it) rather than a concern about concentration of landholding in a few hands. In many of the official statements, transfer of land from "traditional" landholding classes to previously landless groups would also be considered a worrisome event.

23. Dr. Khusro, *op. cit.*, p. 194, suggests the mechanism for this for the period between 1948 and 1955. Dr. Kumar indicates that the same process was at work in the 19th century. (pp. 89-91).

24. It is possible to conceive of explanations which might help resolve this Classical paradox without necessarily dismantling the basic theoretical dynamics of that system. However, to introduce these would require a great deal of research on a range of topics that are as yet untouched. For example, implicit in the typical analysis are the assumptions that land under cultivation did not expand and that productivity per acre did not increase. See, e.g., B. M. Bhatia, "Agriculture and Cooperation", in V. B. Singh (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 136. Yet no one has examined the impressive transformation of Indian agriculture associated with the clearing of forests, the elimination of the waste, the suppression of the fallow, not to mention the growing regional specialization and the shift of output from lower to higher value crops which seem to have marked the 19th century.

Here I would like to make a point that is everywhere neglected. Most writers seem to identify technological innovation primarily with mechanization. They

ignore the fact that one of the greatest revolutions in European agriculture was the medieval shift from two-field to three-field farming. Here it was the reorganization of agricultural practices under the pressure of growing population, apparently without any obvious increase in investment, which made possible the striking increase in agricultural productivity per acre and per man after 1000 A.D. This shift to the 3-field system seems not to have been accompanied by any striking social transformation. The changes in the appearance of agriculture were slight—a different pattern of fields under cultivation and fallow and the substitution of the horse for the ox. I would not be surprised if future research would reveal that in a somewhat similar way Indian agriculture in the 19th and early 20th centuries was quietly undergoing its own transformation. For the general analysis which bolsters the point of this paragraph, see Boserupa, *op. cit.* There are also some important insights in H. Myint, *The Economics of the Developing Countries* (London: 1965), particularly Chapter II-III.

25. Patel, *op. cit.*

26. Kumar, p. 4; and Patel, *Essays*, pp. 6-18.

27. Dr. Kumar makes it clear that *raiya* (*mirasdari*) areas were districts with "elaborate gradations of tenancy." (p. 28). *Raiyas* were not untypically landlords, whether or not they tilled some of their land. It is important that this point of hers be recognized, that *raiya*, like *zamindari*, was a legal classification describing the methods of revenue payment. It was not a description of who might be tilling the soil. Tenancy could be as prevalent in the one as in the other. I stress this because much historical analysis proceeds on the assumption that the *raiya* was the owner-occupier. In fact, as the author points out, this assumption was another legal myth of the 19th century. (p. 85). Once it is recognized that the *raiya* could (and often did) have tenants, we will not necessarily expect to find differential responses to the same economic incentives in areas designated *raiya* or *zamindari*.

28. There was a fairly well-developed market for land on the West Coast and in Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts. And Dr. Kumar makes the significant point that this situation existed "where traditional tenures were most developed, or had disintegrated least...." (p. 30).

29. While there are a variety of terms used for these relationships, I shall restrict myself to these two for the sake of simplicity.

30. P. 29. See also p. 22. Dr. Khusro, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196, makes exactly this same point in perhaps even stronger terms: "The real identity of a share-cropper [as distinguished from a farm labourer] emerges only when attention is shifted from the superficial question of the mode of wage payment to the more fundamental issue of what one contributes to the farm."

31. Students of Indian economic history have too glibly accepted the notion that landlessness is incompatible with the presence of uncultivated lands. While there may be a tendency in this direction, the character of property relations and social relations may singly or together prevent that tendency from manifesting itself.

Nineteenth century Australia is a case in point. (See J. R. Commons, "Labour Movement", *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, VII, p. 694). But even where institutional and ideological bars are minimal, the capital cost of the "flight to freedom" may be too great for poor peasants to bear.

32. I do not propose to examine the author's method in detail. I find her assumptions (Chapter IV) reasonable, at least on the basis of evidence we have at the moment.

33. Pp. 190-191. The author seems merely to be exercising some laudable caution, allowing for the possibility that not all members of the specified castes were actually working as labourers. On the other hand, she tends to dismiss the likelihood of members of castes not traditionally "labour" castes being landless or earning most of their income working for others. Yet the evidence she offers (pp. 62-63) suggests that she may be neglecting a not insignificant group.

34. P. 181 (*italics added*). This is based on the assumption she makes about proportion of the agricultural population in the total population. However, if we assume that some "deindustrialization" occurred during the course of the century, then landless agricultural labour would have formed an even larger proportion of the agricultural population in general. (Pp. 181-182. For detailed estimates, see pp. 168-185 and 190-191).

35. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today* (Bombay: 1949), p. 224. Patel, *Agricultural Labourers*, p. 9, quotes the passage. As anyone who has read the recent literature knows, this statement is either quoted directly or used in paraphrase by virtually every writer on the subject.

36. P. 189. I frankly find it very hard to understand why historians, who purport to "exhaust the sources", should have been able to ignore the fairly clear and widespread evidence of landlessness (and also of the indebtedness of small-holders) in many regions of India at the beginning of British rule. Anyone who examines the early 19th century settlement reports and other detailed descriptions with a modicum of care will find this. Francis Buchanan's reports on eastern India contain numerous references. Richard Jenkins', *Report on the Territories of the Rajah of Nagpur* (1827) is quite explicit, as are some of the reports on western India. It is true that one has a dig for the evidence because British officials were concerned with the revenue payer, the person who controlled the land and was responsible for revenue payments. They had little interest in who actually did the work. An example of the ignorance can be found in "Mr. Sterling's Minute on Tenure in Orissa" (1821), an excellent and otherwise informed statement which is reproduced in G. Toynbee, *A Sketch of the History of Orissa from 1803 to 1823* (Calcutta: 1873). The statement of ignorance about "actual occupants and cultivators of land" is found at pp. xxxix. However, even Mr. Sterling gives evidence that suggests the existence of essentially landless labour. See his references to "Inferior castes", the Pankundra and Baoree. *Ibid.*, p. cix.

I suspect that the explanation of the neglect of these early references to landless labour (and indebted small holders) stems from the fact that a specific theoretical position has tended to blind researchers to this kind of evidence.

37. Mrs. Kumar states that some 65-75 per cent of the members of these agricultural labour castes were landless at the end of the 19th century. (pp. 60-61). Actually, if all or "a vast majority" of the members of these castes were landless in 1800 (pp. 49, 55, 61, 62) and only 65-75 per cent were in this condition at the end of the century, this suggests more dramatic possibilities than even she is willing to explore.

38. While a part of this problem is a methodological one, whether one accepts the usefulness of "feudal" and "capitalist" categories as relevant to a description of the 19th century economy, the other aspect would seem to depend on the nature of the evidence. For example, Patel, *Essays*, pp. 19-21, claims that the development of "bonded or semi-free labourers" was a 19th century phenomenon and "could not have existed in an essentially non-monetary economy of pre-19th century India." This notion carries with it the implication of a previous golden age when there was plenty of land to go around. On this the facts are clear, as Dr. Kumar has shown. However, Patel at one point (*ibid.*, p. 21) does state that "The relationship thus evolved, was a new form of bondage. The traditional serfs were 'liberated' to be re-enslaved." If it is admitted, as Patel seems to be admitting, that inequality was a substantive feature of pre-British agriculture, we then come to the point that Dr. Kumar has stressed, that the old forms persisted to a very great extent throughout the century. It is at this juncture that we can enter in a more sophisticated way upon the methodological controversy of precisely how "capitalist" the Indian economy became during this period. (Properly supported by solid research, we have here the possibilities of a parallel to the famous Dobb-Sweezy controversy).

39. For example, Dobb's, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, Chapter II, described the "recrudescence of serfdom" in eastern Europe after 1300, a revival that is intimately and directly linked with the rapid growth of international commerce in that region.

40. My point is not that the Marxian formulation is necessarily wrong. It is only that Marxians have refused to be sufficiently subtle; they have failed to capture the very specific character of the Indian situation. They insist on describing India as if it were 18th century England (right out of Mantoux and the Hammonds), ignoring the implications of the very specific distinction Marx himself made between European society on the one hand and "Asiatic" or "Oriental" societies on the other.

41. Dr. Kumar has a delphic way of proceeding and her method of presenting her argument is sometimes confusing. A reorganization of the book would have cleared up some of the difficulty, but some of the problems arise out of the failure to clarify the implications of the data with which she is dealing. An example of this appears at pp. 97-98. (This might be the place to mention one serious misprint. On p. 89, line 32, the author clearly means a *rise* in price rather than a fall).

42. Pp. 95-98. My hunch is that Dr. Kumar's point that settlement policy represented only a "reshuffling of the upper levels of the tenurial hierarchy" will be borne out in studies of other parts of India. It is this I had in mind when I earlier suggested that research would probably indicate that no clear correlation

exists between zamindari or raiyatwari tenures on the one hand and levels (and rates of change) of productivity on the other.

43. P. 179. The only possibility that this did not occur would have to depend on Dr. Kumar's claim that inferior lands were being brought under cultivation and yields were declining. (pp. 117, 119). Her sole piece of evidence is a thoroughly tenuous reference to cotton yields. (p. 117). Even if this were true for cotton, it would be irrelevant inasmuch as there was clearly a relative shift away from cotton into rice, to oilseeds and the like.

44. It is clear in Dr. Kumar's discussion (161-165) that the money wage data that she takes without correction from *Prices and Wages in India* require very careful reexamination at the sources before being accepted. The possibilities of error are enormous. Moreover, the deflation of uncorrected money rates into real terms by an all-Madras rice price to get at district results leave much to be desired. I would suggest that until there is much more detailed examination of local wage and price data, it would be best to treat this issue as unexplored territory.

BOOK REVIEWS

Guntur District 1788—1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India by Robert Eric Frykenberg, Oxford University Press, 1965 (45 sh.)

This is an essay in what might be called the sociology of administration. As local history, it concerns itself with an interesting region in one of its most interesting phases. The author and his material came together somewhat fortuitously. The result is extremely satisfactory. In the words of the Irish jury, slightly adapted, it might almost be described as a case of accidental birth in highly *auspicious* circumstances. Almost. For it would not do to minimise the scholarly judgment and workman-like deftness apparent in choice of subject, use of sources and sifting of material.

The point about the Guntur District is that it has both an attractive geography and an attractive history which, for many centuries, appear constantly to have blended into one another. (It has an unattractive climate, but that is a different matter.) Its heroes grow from the people, as its hills rise from the plains, without towering too far above. It is no wonder, for example, that the well-known Palnad heroes of this tract have become the theme, not so much of history, as of folk song and local legend. The social complex is extremely interesting. It consists of successive strata of castes, sub-castes and cultural groups which found their way to this region through invasion, migration or sometimes (by will of the ruler) deliberate importation from some other part of the country. This happened over the centuries. The main processes reached completion about a hundred years ago. Different linguistic and occupational groups had come and settled down side by side. The descendants of these are the people who inhabit the area today. Without living among them and among the hills, rivers and plains of Guntur, it is next to impossible for any one to recapture the local colour and local milieu of more than a century ago. It was, therefore, extremely fortunate, and of basic value to the study, that Mr. Frykenberg happened to have spent his childhood in Guntur and Nalgonda.

One more circumstance needs to be noticed. Accepting a happy piece of advice, Mr. Frykenberg directed his enquiry to an unit that was neither too large nor too small. This was the district. Administration at the district level has very great strategic advantages for the student. It is mid-way in the structure of authority. Looking up to it are the three local levels of administration which, in ascending order,

are village, firka and taluka. The district in turn (at the time) was subordinate to three decision-making levels, namely, the Board of Revenue and the Secretariat, both in Madras, and the Court of Directors in London. A study of the district is thus automatically a study of "local influence" and "central authority". And, in this instance, it is quite often a study of how local factors effectively neutralised the exercise of authority from above.

But this anticipates the third of the fortunate circumstances attendant on the genesis of the book. First one clue and then another led Mr. Frykenberg to discover a great deal of material, much of it in the form of hitherto unexamined manuscripts, in the Andhra State Archives, in the India Office Library, and in private collections of papers in London and elsewhere, including those of a couple of former Governors of Madras. If these latter throw light on the somewhat inept exercise of central authority, the leisurely, well-documented and still eminently readable reports of outstanding officers such as Walter Elliot and John Goldingham are mines of information on the social and economic structure of the district, as also on the vagaries and vicissitudes of its administration.

Few districts could be more rewarding than Guntur for a study of this description, that is to say an administrative and sociological study of the East India Company's rule, in terms of a well-defined local population and covering more than half a century including the first half of the nineteenth. Geographically and historically, the Guntur of this study was at the centre of important cultural and administrative influences. Its geographical position made it receptive to coastal Andhra in the north-east (Rajamundhry, Vishakhapatnam, etc.) Nizam's Andhra in the north-west (Warangal, Golkonda, etc.) and Madras City and the Tamil country in the South. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the history of village administration. The village accountants were at one time "Aravas" a term then used for goldsmiths and sometimes for a section of the Tamil population. Thereafter, a large number of Jain accountants were specially entrusted with the maintenance of village records. A Pallava King is credited with replacing both Aravas and Jains by brahmins brought all the way from Benaras. It is certain that, much before the 15th century, Telugu-speaking brahmin accountants were predominant in the district. These were generally the secular "Niyogis" and infrequently the priestly "Vaidikis". But this too did not last. In the sixteenth century, with the fall of Andhra Warangal, Guntur

came under the administrative umbrella of Muslim Golkonda. Then started a movement to replace the locally oriented officials by those who had roots elsewhere, especially the Marathi-speaking Desastha Brahmins and Golkonda Vyaparis, both of whom had elsewhere served the Muslim rulers well. The British administrators in turn depended partly on Muslim officers, who were now a mere sprinkling, but largely on brahmins of Maharashtrian origin. But these, at the time of the study, had already to a great extent become naturalised and indeed started speaking in Telugu as the language of their adoption. Moreover, they had so increased in number as to form factions among themselves. There were many able and even some honest officials among all the castes that thus served as sources of recruitment to the Company's cadres in village, taluka and district. But the main features of administration at the district level, as indeed at the village and taluka levels, were by no means honesty and ability. Rather, the most noticeable qualities of the administration were corruption and factionalism.

Meanwhile, in Madras, headquarters of the State, the Company's British servants were themselves engaged in scramble for power and intrigue for promotion. Those who, from being Collectors in the districts, had become Members of the Board of Revenue or senior Secretaries often had a net-work of favourites who included the "native" officials in the districts rather than their junior colleagues from Britain. There were pulls and tensions between the Governor and the Board of Revenue, the Board and the Secretaries, the Secretaries and the Collectors.

In the district itself it was quite often not the Collector but the Sheristadar (Indian head of office) who was the most important person. A skillful Sheristadar could by a little manipulation collect, partly waive, or fully remit the land revenue according as he wished, in order that praise or blame might attach to the Collector under whom he served. He, his relatives and kinsmen held the district in a closely interwoven net of unofficial incentives and sanctions. To some extent it was not only the power of the Collector but the prestige of the Zamindars that converged in the "native" heads of the Collector's establishment. If the Sheristadar did not hold the district to ransom it was because, in this net-work of castes and sub-castes, there were in-built safeguards of rival castes and rival factions. It is against this background that the author quotes a Commissioner who had been sent from Madras in 1845 to investigate the conditions of the Guntur district: "The Circar, instead of having improved during the long period it has been subject to the

peaceful sway of the British Government, is actually in a worse state now than it was when it was ceded by the Nizam upwards of fifty years ago" (p. 8).

This, of course, is not the whole picture. The conflicting processes which caused temporary confusion between the Zamindari, the Amani and the Ryotwari systems was slowly giving way to the establishment of a proper Ryotwari settlement throughout the district. Attention had started being paid not only to the reorganisation of the administration but also to the economic development of the region. Running through the narrative and relieving its gloomier aspects are the career and achievements of Walter Elliot, one of those few—but, even so, astonishingly many—British administrators who put public duty before official prospects, who understood the people and laboured for them, and who added scholarship and learning as accomplishment, to patience, efficiency and drive as administrative qualities. Naturally, so outstanding a combination did not find complete favour with Elliot's superiors. Of extraordinary interest is the fact that the first real beginnings of economic development in this region, apart from its administrative reorganisation, can be traced to the implementing of the recommendations which Elliot along with his collaborator, Krishna Rao, made in his report on the Guntur District. These included the construction of the Krishna Anicut, the establishment of a new revenue system and the reorganisation of the talukas.

Among the most valuable contributions made by the study is the new light it throws on the changing role of the collector. The picture of him as the "*ma-bap*" of the district may have been true enough in the early days of the Company rule. It is no doubt also very near the truth during the second half of the nineteenth century and perhaps right up to the First World War. But in the interval roughly covered by this study there was obviously a phase of administration in which power was over-centralised in the Board of Revenue and too little relegated to the head of the district. This resulted in considerable dislocation of local administration. The Collector knew what his villages needed, but was often over-ruled by Madras and London. Paradoxically, it was often "local influence" that mitigated the results and, if it did not make them more beneficial, at least rendered them more acceptable to the district at large and in particular to the village. It was sad, but unavoidable, that in this process there should be corruption, intrigue and falsification of records. Remoteness of the administration and the good of the administered do not go together. And the lesson to be learnt today,

especially in terms of our villages, is that remoteness can be psychological and sociological, no less than physical. It is because this lesson has not yet been learnt by our administration that Mr. Frykenberg's study is of great current value and not merely of historical significance.

B. VENKATAPPIAH

RANAJIT GUHA. *A Rule of Property for Bengal* (Mouton and Co., Paris 1963) 222 pages.

The permanent settlement of the land revenues of Bengal in 1793 is an event that is a God-send to the historian. It is an executive decision with firm outline; its antecedents and context can be examined in detail; and its economic, administrative and social consequences are clear and far reaching. No wonder, therefore, that it has attracted innumerable scholars from that day to this, though the rounded work encompassing all aspects, both before and after the event, is yet to be written.

Dr. Guha's book, with its rather odd title, goes a long way towards making such a study possible. It is an essay in, not Indian economic and social history, but British intellectual history. He analyses the reasons and influences which sustained the advocacy of a permanent settlement; and his book is in essence a study of five of the chief protagonists of the scheme. Dr. Guha shows that these men disliked the efforts

of officials like Warren Hastings to collect revenue by adopting the existing system or by methods of trial and error and wished to introduce the principle of private property, so that Bengal would become the image of England. Alexander Dow, writing in 1772, believed that the decline of Bengal had set in with the coming of the British and a permanent settlement was required to enable its recovery. Promotion of agriculture would in turn improve her commerce and thereby facilitate a favourable balance of trade.

If Dow belonged to the mercantilist school, Henry Pattullo was influenced by the Physiocrats; but he too reached the same conclusions. Writing at about the same time as Dow, but without any first-hand knowledge of India, Pattullo contended that a permanent settlement was the best means of encouraging investment in land, and in this way alone could agriculture be saved from decay.

The core of Dr. Guha's book, and its most valuable part, is the long analysis of the views of Philip Francis. Seen as a vicious and vindictive rival of Hastings, Francis has so far had a bad press; and Dr. Guha's work does much to redress the balance. He shows Francis to have been a man of ideals and principles as well as of ambition, a staunch and consistent supporter of the anti-slavery movement and of the French Revolution, of parliamentary reform and of free speech. Dr. Guha's chapters on Francis provide a necessary corrective to such works as Miss Weitzman's *Warren Hastings and Philip Francis*.

This exposition of Francis's thought and outlook enables a clearer understanding of his 'system' for Bengal. If the British wished to ensure the permanence of their rule, they should establish it on fundamental principles, at all times and in all places. They should revert to what Francis declared to have been the practice in pre-British times and assure the sanctity of private property. He believed, like the physiocrats, in inequality, and wrote approvingly of "those intermediate gradations of rank, authority and responsibility, by which all great civil societies are held together". He saw the *zemindars* as the landed gentry who would give a lead to society and was in favour of concluding a permanent and moderate settlement of the revenue with them. There was no need to ascertain how much they were capable of paying: "Let us proportion our demand to *our* necessities, not to *their* utmost abilities".

In conclusion, Dr. Guha gives an account of the views of Law and of Cornwallis, who took the final decision on the permanent settlement, as well as of John Shore. The history of the idea of a permanent settlement is, therefore, traced with clarity and with a wealth of contemporary reference. The weakness of the book lies in the failure to give sufficient attention to the influence of local conditions on the making of this policy.

S. GOPAL

Acknowledgement: The articles by Dr. B. N. Goswamy & Dr. Voigt, were presented at the Seminar on Social and Economic History of India held at Simla in June 1966. We are grateful to the Director, Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy for allowing us to publish articles.

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CORRECTION: We regret that it was incorrectly stated in our previous number that Dr. Arasaratnam's paper was presented at the International Conference of Economic History.

197521

AL ARAB
Organ of
INDIAN-ARAB FRIENDSHIP

A MONTHLY REVIEW OF POLITICAL
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INDIAN ECONOMIC REVIEW

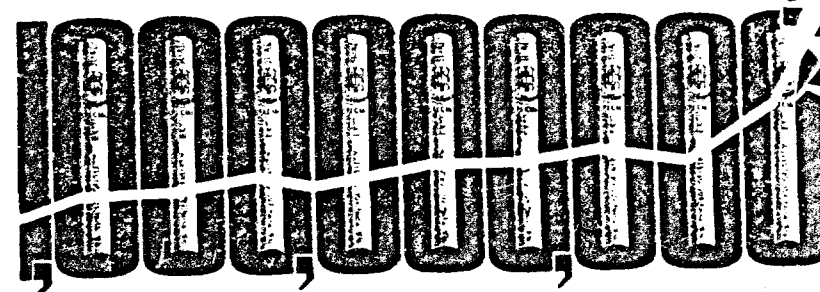
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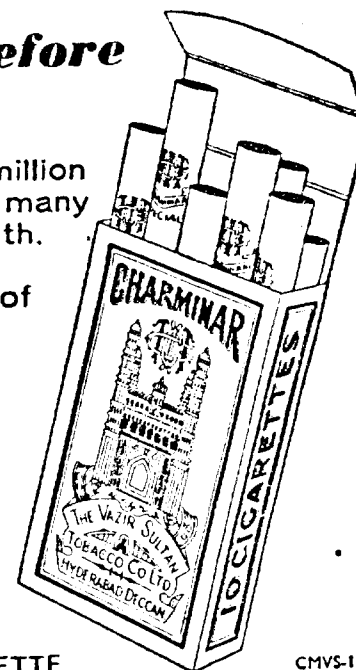
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