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B XVI.)
Warren Hastings to Sir E. Coote: 21 January 1779
(Add Ms 29117: Letters to Commanders and Envoys: ff 73-82)

ff77v) The sovereignty of the Maratta state is by its constitution vested in a Raja, but for many (ff 78r) years past, that is since the accession of the late Raja, the powers of it have been usurped by the minister of the Raja who is styled the Peshwa, the Raja possessing only the name. The last Raja was called Raja Ram Raja. He died about the latter end of December 1777. He had no children, nor have I yet heard certainly that any successor has been named. Moodajee Boosla has the fairest pretensions, being in the direct lineal descent from the ancient stock, and the adopted son of Saboo Raja, the predecessor of Ram Raja, though deprived of his rights by the artifices of Balajee who was the Peshwa when Saboo Raja died, and by an accomodation with Ragoojee Boosla the father of Moodajee, which was confined to a bare sufferance of Ram Raja's elevation, without any acknowledgement of it, he and his sons, as Moodajee does to this day, styling themselves (ff 78v) in all public acts the subjects of Raja Sahoo.

I had an early knowledge of Moodajee's pretensions, and judged him therefore a fit instrument to supply the place of Ragonaut Row, in the plan offered to us by the presidency of Bombay. He had wealth, power, a territory extending from the borders of Bengal almost to Poona; Ragonaut Row neither wealth power nor territory, nor an influence remaining which could supply the want of these requisites, except what might eventually arise from an active part taken by the presidency of Bombay in his favor, and they had plainly shewn that they would take none. The only point wanting was to fix Moodajee in a party in the design. I expected him to make advances having sent back his vackeel to him for that purpose a man of understanding and well instructed. But it soon became necessary to take a more determined and active part. On the 7th of July advices were received from (ff79r) Cairo and deemed to be of certain credit that war had been declared between great Britain and France. It was almost immediately proposed and resolved to enter into negotiation with Moodajee Boosla on the grounds which I have mentioned above. Mr Elliot was deputed on this service and set out on the July. Mr Rumbold has a copy of his instructions, and I have desired him to give you the perusal of them. The whole service could not have furnished an agent equally qualified for such a commission, and my hopes of its success were proportionately raised; but these were suddenly blasted, and the whole project annihilated by the death of that excellent young man.

I must now return to Col. Leslie. The distance from Calpy to the river Nerbudda is about 140 coss. .. (ff79v) his death which happened on the 3rd (Oct).. in time (after) of exactly four months from the day on which he began his march from that place.

980r)..Mr Elliot's death was a stroke of providence for which I could have made no provision, and left me no other recourse but in the desire which I had endeavoured to excite in the Raja of Berar to take a leading part in the negotiation.

(ff80v)..Knowing that Moodajee Boosla must have received much earlier intelligence of the death of Mr Elliot than myself, I thought it advisable to defer taking any steps towards renewing the negotiation ~~which~~/I could /until learn from him what effect that event had produced in his mind. He was no sooner informed of it than he wrote to me in the most pressing terms to transfer the powers with which

Warren Hastings to E. Coote: Nov 1779

(AddMs 29115, ff50-56)

"I am happy that you approve of the plan proposed for the Gohid treaty. In this point at least our political ideas do not differ, for the same objection which you have made to the mode of ascertaining the value of the conquered lands, struck me as forcibly, and it was the first alteration which I made in it as you will have seen by the copy of the finished treaty."

"At present I know no remedy, as the incapacity of the Nabob of Oude, and the turpitude of his character precludes me from proposing the only one which I could approve, which would restore this zemindary (Benares) to the government of Oude. It ought either to be ours wholly, or wholly appertain (?) to its ancient and constitutional sovereign. On its present footing it carries in its bosom the seeds of enmity to both, and if the Rajah can find the means of transporting his (ff 53v) influence to England, he will do yet more mischief by exciting the spirit of discord."

Warren Hastings to Sir John D'Oyly, Bart: 8 Feb (?) 1780
(ff 61v-64v:29115:reappointment of MRC)

"An accomodation has been concluded between Mr Francis and myself" (reasonings) 2nd The certain junction of Sir E. Coote with Messrs Francis and Wheler on his return to the Council would effect the same point by violence which I now propose to accomplish by quiet and amicable compromise. .. (63v) .. "convince him if you can and win him if you can. But submit he must." ... (ff64r).. "The material argument I have not mentioned because I doubt the Nabob's capacity to understand it. Our Government has been torn to shreds by the contentions which it has endured for the last six years and to the interhal evils which these have produced are now joined a war with France and a war with the Marattas which will require an exertion of all the power which this state possesses to defend it. These can not be applied while the members of Government continue divided. In a word our existence as a government our personal safety and the Nabob's too depend on our union, and to obtain it (ff64v) I have made large sacrifices. This is one in which if the Nabob considers himself under any obligation to my friendship he owes his acquiescence as a first return. We are now at a crisis which will not admit of inactivity or temporary delays but our future destiny may turn and I believe it will on the events of the last month and the period to the commencement of the rains."

F.Scott to Sir J.D'Oyly: 16 Feb 1780
(ff 65)

"The Governor General has desired me to inform you that Mohammed Reza Cawn is to be invested with the same powers in every respect that he enjoyed previous to the 30th January 1788 agreeably to the last orders of the court of directors that to preserve the ostensible dignity of the Nabob, his signature or seal is to be put to all papers issued from the Nizamut but without any effective power, nor is he to be consulted in public business."

TWO VIEWS ON INDIA'S WEAKNESS

(AD 1779)

B/XVI/1(Civ)

I differ much from you in the apprehension you express of their taking service with the country powers, and instructing the troops in the discipline and practice of that corps. The country powers have long been in possession of much better instructors, of British sepeys trained to the management of the guns, of European artillery men and European officers. But hitherto they have profitted as little by the imitation of that corps as in the mimicry of our sepeys. In the former they have not attained even the art of constructing gun-carriages, and the latter have nothing but their clothing and their name to distinguish them from the old rabble of Burgundasses, while the attempt in both instances can only entail upon them an useless expence and encumbers them with an unwieldy mass, by which they lose the only advantage which they before possessed over us, in the rapidity of their motions.

The cause of these defects are to be traced in the manners of the people, and the habits of their governments, and are almost wholly foreign from the subject of a military speculation. I should scruple to hazard my opinion to you if I regarded this in any other lights. I may err, but I am very decided in the persuasion that every attempt made by the chiefs of India to raise their infantry and artillery establishments to an equality with ours will but add to the advantages which we already possess over them, unless some powerful genius such as the world sees once in ten centuries shall suddenly make his appearance among it, with abilities to change the minds as well as the habits of the people, and the means to exert them, which I do not think likely to happen in this reign. ©

© The above is extract from a letter from Warren Hastings to Sir Eyre Coote, the commander in chief dated 31.10.1779. Coote was a colleague of Clive at Plassey and had a few months earlier to the date of the above, returned to Bengal as C-in-C. The occasion for Hastings remarks was Coote's insistence that the "Gollandaus" corps should be disbanded. Insisting on such disbanding on 7.10.1779 Coote stated: "It is not only my opinion but that of every able, and unbiassed officer I have conversed with upon the subject, that the establishing of black artillery must prove the first step to our ruin in this country, not to say a word, of the Company's positive orders to the contrary."

Replying to the letter of Hastings Coote further observed (13.11.

"If we were to differ as much in our political sentiments as we seem to do in our military ideas, we should probably be able to do little business together. Since I first knew this country, the natives have improved their military much beyond my expectations. Their infantry was once/despised /a rabble, but now they are chiefly attended to and in their mutual conflicts, gain the most decided advantages over their once preferred cavalry, who beheld them with as much contempt formerly as they now dread them; their artillery is still more improved. I have myself seen gun carriages with elevating screws made by themselves very little inferior to our own. Hyder Aly has corps of infantry disciplined after our mode and most respectable train to support them; for all this they must in great measure be indebted to those whom we have instructed. I therefore wish never again to see the Gollandaus in any form, or hear any more of them; however it is dangerous even in Europe to disband whole corps at once, and is always attended to with every possible precaution. I have therefore issued orders agreeable to the plan first communicated to you."

A Petition sent by a Black Princess to Governor Hastings while he was in India.

The following ^{is the} translation of a Petition sent by the wife of Mmas-ali-can, who was seized upon and put to death for political purposes in India.

To the High and mighty Servant of the most powerful Prince George King of England

The lowly and humble Slave of misery comes praying for mercy towards of her children; May the blessing of thy God ever wait on thee, May the sun of glory shine round thy head, and may the gates of honour Plenty and Happiness be always open to thee and thine. May the Pillars of peace keep thy cheek, and may the pleasure of Imagination attend thy dreams; and when length of years make thee tired of earthly joys, and the curtain of death gently closes round the last sleep of human existence, May the angels of thy God attend thy Bed and take care that the expiring

The Black Princess's
Petition

MS. B. 1. 5.

Lamp of life shall not receive one rind. Last of hasten its
 extinction. Oh! hearken to the voice of Distress, and grant
 the petition of thy servant, spare, Oh! spare the father of my
 children, spare the partner of my bed, my Husband my all
 that is dear. Consider Oh mighty Sir, that he did not become
 rich by iniquity; but that which he possessed was the inheritance
 of a line of flourishing Ancestors, who in those smiling days (when
 the Thunder of Great Britain was not heard on the fertile plains of
 India) reaped their harvest in quiet and enjoyed their patrimony
 unmolested: Think, Oh think that thy God whom thou worshippst
 delights not in the blood of the innocent. Remember his own
 commandment (Thou shalt not kill) and obey the orders of
 heaven. Give back my Almas-ali-Cam and take all our
 Wealth, strip us of our jewels and our precious stones of our
 Gold and our Slaves, but take not the life of my Husband.
 Innocence is seated on his brow, and the milk of humane kindness
 flows round his heart. Let us wander thro' the deserts, let us become
 Hunters and labourers of those delightful spots which he was once Lord
 and Master of: But spare, Oh! mighty Sir, spare his life and
 let not the instrument of death be lifted up against him (you

have them at present by force) and we will remember thee
 in our prayers, and forget that we ever were rich and power-
 ful. My children, the children of Almas-ali-Cam send
 their petition for the life of him who gave them life, they
 beseech from thee the Author of their existence. By that
 humanity, by which we have been told glows in the breast
 of European Lordings, by the tender mercies of English
 men, by virtues, honour, honesty, and natural feeling of
 thy Great Queen whose numerous offspring is so dear to her
 the miserable Wife of thy prisoner beseeches thee to save
 her Husband's life, and restore him to her arms. Thy ^{God} rewards
 thee, thy Country will thank thee, and she who now peti-
 tions, will ever pray for thee, if thou grantest the
 prayer of thy humble Vassal.

N. B. This petition was delivered by the unhappy
 Woman to Governor Hastings, who after perusing it, gave
 orders that Almas-ali-Cam should be immediately strangled,
 and those orders were instantly put into execution.

Copied at Whittington, Dec: 17th 1814. J. H.