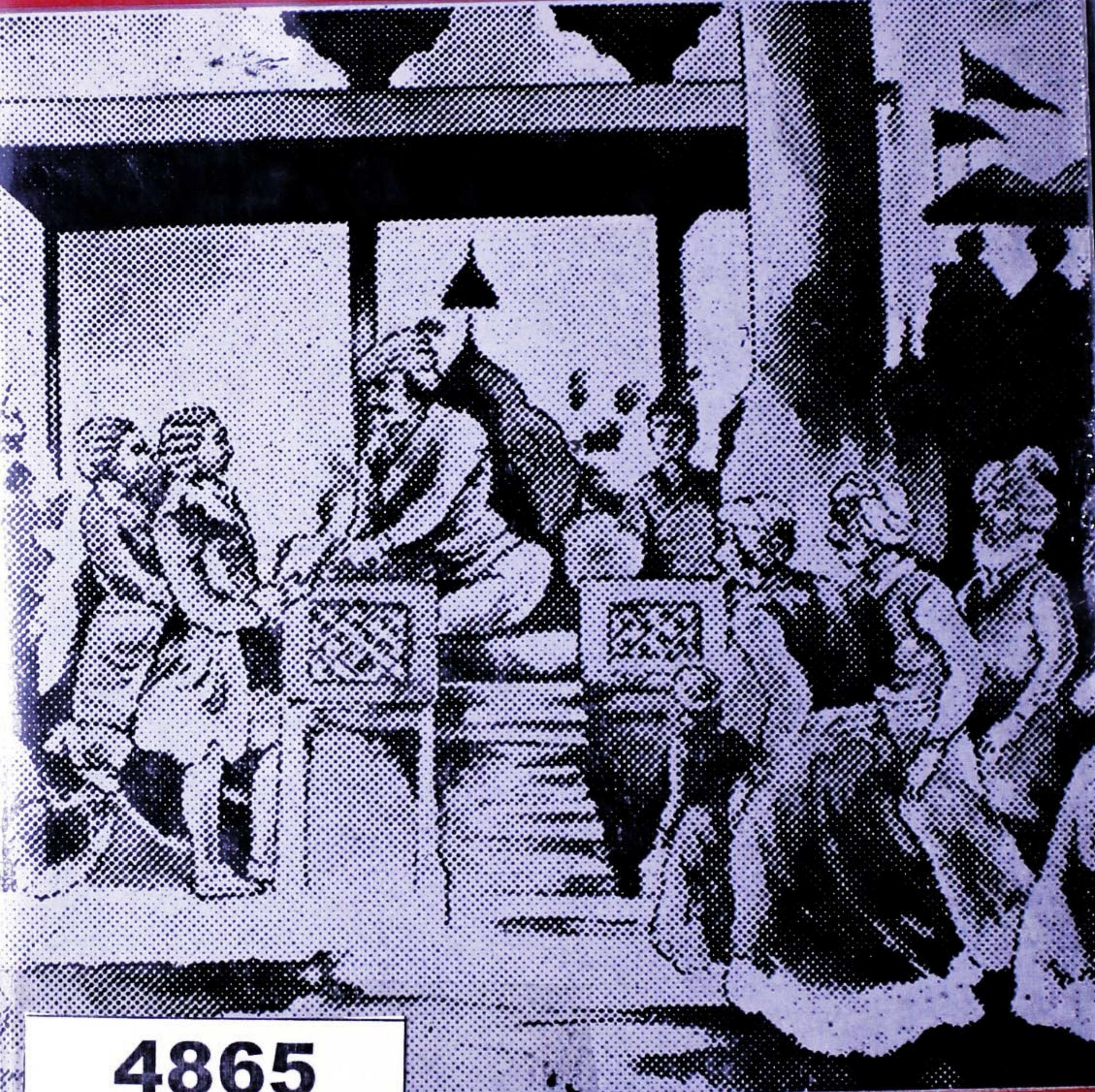


# ANGLO-MUGHAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

1583-1717



4865

Dr. Phanindranath Chakrabarty

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1583-1717

Dr. Phanindranath Chakrabarty



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## FOREWORD

India's commercial penetration by several powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has formed the subject matter of standard works by scholars, European and Indian,—R. S. Whiteway, C. R. Boxer, F. C. Danvers, W. Foster, H. G. Rawlinson, A. Wright, Balkrishna, R. K. Mukherjee, T. Roychaudhuri, K. N. Chaudhuri and many others. But these are mostly from the point of view of the foreign companies or powers and do not throw much light on the background in Indian States concerned.

As far as the English East India Company is concerned, not much is known of the unofficial beginnings of the growth of England's commercial interest in India. The present work fills up this need well. Again notwithstanding the researches of topmost British historians, certain heresies still continue to hold the field. The first establishment of the English factory at Surat in 1618 is repeated *ad nauseam* not only in text-books but even in standard works of reference by imperialist historians. But the present work has pricked the bubble of this myth and shown that the *firman* on which the English East India Company based their claim was not really granted by the Mughal Emperor at all in 1612 but only in 1624. So the factory at Surat established in 1618 was unauthorised and hence illegal.

Again the standard works on the history of the English East India Company and their trade do not indicate the role of the Indian merchants in the commercial history of the period. The Gujarat merchants, in particular, who practically controlled the Red Sea trade and were fully aware of the possible adverse effects of the competition of the English East India Company, naturally sought to guard their interests. The Mughal emperor mighty on land, but helpless on the sea, were completely at the mercy of the English 'sea wolves'. Piracy became, in the latter's hands a lever with which to bring the Indian traders down to their knees. This principle was adopted by individual English naval rapists of Indian ships. It became, in the hands of that distinguished Ambassador of king James I, Sir Thomas Roe, the basis of the policy of 'Force'. It was continued in full swing down to the days of Sir Edward Winter and Child, to curb and cripple the Indian mercantile marine. The merchants resorted in relation to the English, to threats, appeasements, and appealed to the Mughal governors and Emperors. But all was in

vain. Plundered, terrorised and fleeced by the foreigners, the once flourishing Indian traders found their trade slipping from their grasp but could not get protection from the rulers and the ruling classes.

And this for a very significant and interesting reason. The Mughal Emperors, the ladies of the harem, including Empress Nurjahan and some princes like Khurram and nobles like Asaf Khan, Mukarrab Khan and others all had their 'private trade', i.e. private commercial interests which led them often to form trade *ententes* with the English East India Company. Nurjahan and her brother Asaf Khan in particular depended on Roe. She, in turn, became Roe's solicitor and Asaf Khan his 'broker' (Letters Received, i, 150). In this situation a strong anti East India Company front was hardly possible. The right of the Indian merchants were passed over in silence.

It is needless to multiply details. The book makes no attempt to collect the trade statistics and Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. Its true significance lies in its unravelling the inside story of diplomacy behind those relations, which is not to be found in the standard works. The author of this book has taken the reader to the green room of politics before coming to the open stage of trade relations.

By patient and careful research extending over six years the author has been able to present a new but engrossing story of Anglo-Mughal Commercial Relations (1583-1717) in a clear and lucid style. This will surely help in discarding the heresies of imperialist historians about the work of the English East India Company. It will also unmistakably show that it is another mistake to speak of the 'Commercial Policy of the Mughals'. In fact the author has conclusively proved that the Mughals right from the days of Akbar to Farrukhsiyar had neither any consistent nor constructive commercial policy at all. Their failure to build up a naval power, their failure to grasp the true designs of the East India Company as well as the consequences of their wavering attitude to the latter all combined to account for this corrosive weakness in the economic structure of the Mughal Empire. I commend this book to the advanced student as well as to the general reader.

J. N. Sarkar

M. A. (Pat.), Ph. D. (Cal.), F.A.S., Hony.  
Member, Iran Society, Formerly Professor and  
Head of History Dept. Jadavpur University.

## INTRODUCTION

The history of India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is characterised internally by the rise and development of the Mughal empire and externally by the increasing penetration in Indian economic life of some European powers, of whom the Portuguese power declined in the seventeenth century. As far as the English were concerned, even before the establishment of the East India Company (31st December, 1600), a host of Englishmen, travellers and merchant adventurers came here as pioneers who prepared the ground for English commerce in India. Indeed their experiences have a great part to play in the establishment of England's commercial relations with India during this period.

It is, however, difficult to trace the historical antecedents of England's interest in India and to know the actual date when Englishmen first came into contact with India. As far as is known from the historical sources English merchants collected information about India from Arab merchants who used to bring Indian articles to the Levant from time immemorial. This commercial relation between India and Britain through the Levant was 'far older than the Celtic conquest'<sup>1</sup> (6th century B. C.).

There is a general belief that it was Father Thomas Stevens who was the first Englishman to come to India in 1579 by the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>2</sup> But in fact Stevens was preceded by Sighelm or Sighelmus and Aethelstan, two priests of King Aelfred, who came to India to St. Thomas in 9th century A. D. (883 A. D.)<sup>3</sup> But

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1 Trevelyan, *Illustrated History of England*, 7; W. Notestein, *The English people on the eve of Colonization*, 2.

2 See for details Chapter I.

3 *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ae VI Scriptores or Chricles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages or The Saxon Chronicle*, ii, 66 (Text, 152, 153); DNB, i, 158. The name of King Aelfred as given here conforms to the Saxon Chronicle.



direct commercial connection between India and England was still far off. There is a gap of centuries between Sighelmus and Ralph Fitch, the third Englishman, who unofficially tried to establish Anglo-Mughal commercial relations in 1584.

The Portuguese attempt to explore a new direct sea-route from Europe to India bore fruit in the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route by Vasco de Gama and his arrival at Calicut in 1498. It was the 'climax of almost a century of patient economic effort.'<sup>4</sup> The Portuguese, backed by the Papal Bull, maintained their monopoly of eastern trade for a century.

It was to the deliberate flouting of these claims of the Portuguese that the English directed their energies in the beginning. During the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) the improvements in English ship-building and his vigorous diplomacy combined to push Englishmen into the waters of the Levant. For half a century after the death of Henry VII the commercial policy of England sought to follow the lines which he had laid down. At that time she was also vigorously bestirring herself and seeking new outlets for her fast-growing manufactures. The markets of the East seemed to offer endless possibilities for that purpose, and getting access to those markets became the aim—alike of statesmen, merchants and mariners. In 1578 Sir Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, merchants of London, secured trading privileges from the ruler of the Levant. As a result, Elizabeth, Queen of England (1558-1603), issued a charter in 1581, constituting the Turkey Company, a recognised corporation, with Osborne, Staper and others enjoying monopoly trading rights with the Levant. In 1583 Elizabeth also formed the English Syndicate with the sole right to import currants, sweet wines etc. from Venice. These two bodies were amalgamated under the name of the Levant Company in 1583.

In 1584 Ralph Fitch reached India in his private capacity as an individual merchant. Though he was the third Englishman to come to India, he was the first to come to the Court of the Great Mughal

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<sup>4</sup> R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 69.

and so may justly be called a 'pioneer' in establishing future Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. He was followed successively by the merchants of the English East India Company.

The appearance of the English Company in India was a new element in Indian trade. A trading Company was an entirely novel commercial institution in India, of which the Mughals and Indian merchants had no previous experience. Akbar conquered Gujarat in 1573 with its renowned seaports, Surat, Cambay and Broach. The bulk of Mughal India's sea-borne trade was carried on through those ports. Akbar himself took active interest in revising commercial laws, re-organising the pre-existing mercantile marine, re-modelling the administration of ports but failed to form a fleet of warships for protecting Mughal India's mercantile marine. To remedy this serious weakness Akbar had to come to an understanding with the Portuguese. Stimulated by Akbar's commercial measures, the members of the royal family began to participate in sea-borne commerce with ports of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The high Mughal nobles also took part in such sea-borne trading activities. Though a number of books on Mughal nobility have been written by scholars during recent years, no adequate light has yet been thrown on their commercial activities or on their relations with European merchants.<sup>5</sup> Among the members of the royal family Jabangir's mother, Nurjahan and Prince Khurram showed keen interest in such activities, while Mukarrab Khan, Zulfiqar Khan, Saif Khan, Muizz-ul-Mulk and some others among the high Mughal nobles<sup>6</sup> took prominent part in carrying on internal and external trade. It was the commercial interests of Prince Khurram which became a bone of contention between him and the English East India Company. Nurjahan, due to her

5 There are, however, a few articles on commercial activities of the members of royal family and Muiz-ul-Mulk, the *mutasaddi* of Surat by scholars like V. C. Joshi (JIH, 1949), Satish Chandra (Proc. IHC, 1959) and B. G. Gokhale (JIH, 1962 and 1966).

6 Dr. Jagadish N. Sarkar has made an analytical treatment on Mir Jumla's commercial relations with the English in 'The Life of Mir Jumla'.

commercial interests, backed Sir Thomas Roe in his efforts to secure commercial privileges from Jahangir.<sup>7</sup> Asaf Khan, brother of Nurjahan, and a high Mughal noble, became an ally of the English due to former's own commercial interests and therefore he resisted Khurram. Some brokers and influential rich merchants also took an active part in giving a definite shape to Anglo-Mughal Commercial relations.

A number of excellent works have been written on India's economic history including Mughal India's trade and commerce by European and Indian scholars, viz. W. H. Moreland's 'India at the Death of Akbar' (1920) and 'From Akbar to Aurangzeb' (1923); C. J. Hamilton's 'Trade Relations between England and India' (1933); W. Foster's 'England's quest of Eastern Trade' (1923); Dr. Balkrishna's 'Commercial relations between India and England' (1924); Dr. D. Pant's 'The Commercial Policy of the Mughals' (1930); Dr. R. K. Mukherji's 'Economic History of India 1600-1800' (undated); Dr. Jagadish N. Sarkar's 'The Life of Mir Jumla' (1951/79); Dr. Kulshrestha's 'The Development of Trade and Industry under the Mughals' (1964); Chicherov's 'Indian Economic Development in 16th to 18th centuries' (1971); Dr. Jagadish N. Sarkar's 'Studies in Economic Life in Mughal India' (1975) and 'Glimpses of medieval Bihar economy, 13th to mid-18th century' (1978); O. P. Singh's 'Surat and its trade in the second half of the 17th century' (1975) and Dr. S. Gopal's 'Commerce and Crafts in Gujarat' (1975). But none of them have thrown sufficient light on the theme of the present thesis, viz. Anglo-Mughal Commercial relations.

The thesis has been divided into four parts corresponding to the broad phases of the activities of the English and their commercial relations with the Mughals. The period does not correspond to the actual reigns of emperors. The period from 1583 to 1606, including the last twenty two years of Akbar's reign, was an era of

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7 For Nurjahan's commercial relations with the English see the summary of my article in Proc. IHC, 1974 and Appendix F.

unofficial attempts of the English to open Indian commerce (Pt. I). The major part of Jahangir's reign from 1608 to 1619 witnessed the English East India Company's official attempts to secure a foothold in the commerce of India. The period witnessed the Portuguese discomfiture near Surat by the English navy and also the fruitless mission of Sir Thomas Roe (Pt. II). The period from 1619-57, virtually spanning the last eight years of Jahangir and the whole period of Shahjahan's reign saw the applications of the policy of Force by the English. This resulted, thanks to the vacillating and weak-kneed policy of Jahangir, in the decline of India's Red Sea trade monopoly as well as in his grant of *firman* of 1624 which finally gave the English a foothold in Indian commerce. There was a marked contrast in the attitudes of Prince Khurram and emperor Shahjahan. While the former opposed the demands of the English, the latter was favourable to the English.

The fortunes of the East India Company passed through successive vicissitudes from 1658 to 1717, specially during the reigns of Aurangzeb and Farrukhsiyar (Pt. IV). Privileges, once granted came to be curtailed. War, declared by the English, resulted in their discomfiture. Peace was followed by restoration of former privileges by the emperor, over head and ears in the troubled waters of the Deccan. The subsequent grant of *Zamindari* rights in Bengal by its Governor (1698), strengthened the position of the English. Nevertheless they continued to press greater privileges, commercial and territorial, and these were obtained by the grant of a *firman* in 1717 by Farrukhsiyar.

Chapter I is a necessary introduction to the era of British commercial influence in India. It deals with the arrival of first unofficial English commercial mission of Ralph Fitch to the court of Akbar in 1583. On the basis of original sources like 'Narrative of Ralph Fitch' ed. by, J. Horton Ryley; 'Purchas his Pilgrims'; Foster's 'Early Travels in India' and other contemporary, semi-contemporary and later works in English, the chapter throws light on interesting features of that little known initial stage of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. It is divided into four sections:

background ; prospects of the English ; Akbar's attitude towards the Portuguese ; and the upshot of Fitch's mission.

Chapter II deals with the activities of Mildenhall, also an unofficial merchant adventurer in Mughal India, from the end of Akbar's reign. The story of his commercial activities at the Mughal court is generally neglected by all writers dealing with Mughal India. This chapter is divided into three sections : Mildenhall's Journey ; activities in the Mughal court and Akbar's attitude.

Chapter III attempts to depict the commercial activities of William Hawkins, the official representative of English East India Company to the court of Jahangir. It comprises nine sections : his journey ; the contemporary administration of Surat ; Hawkins' objectives ; identity of Mukarrab Khan ; Mukarrab's commercial views ; arrival at Agra ; Mukarrab's farsightedness ; Jahangir's attitude towards English ; futile mission of Hawkins. In fact, this chapter unveils the surprising commercial acumen and farsightedness of Mukarrab Khan a Mughal noble, who realised in that remote age that the English would eventually grab India's foreign commerce. He also resisted the demands of the English to allow the latter to settle themselves at Surat and abide by their own laws and regulations. This conception of mercantile extra-territoriality was an entirely new one in Mughal India.

Chapter IV is based on the diary of William Finch, who came to Mughal India with Hawkins. It throws light on the reasons of Hawkins' failure in the court of Jahangir. Finch's activities are treated in three sections : at Surat ; shabby commercial dealings ; rupture with Hawkins.

Chapter V deals with Captain Thomas Best who is said to have obtained the first imperial *firman* from Jahangir. All historians even including Sir William Foster (but excepting W. H. Moreland) writing on Mughal India believe that the first English factory was established at Surat in 1612-13 on the basis of that *firman*. But this chapter will prove on the basis of original source materials, that the *firman* so called was no *firman* at all. It was merely a

draft that was left unsigned by the emperor. Hence the first English factory alleged to have been set up in 1612-13 was unauthorised and no English factory was established before 1624. The English factors used to live in hired residences and they usually stored their articles for buying and selling there. The residences cannot be termed as factories particularly when those lacked imperial confirmation. Therefore, it will be seen in the subsequent chapters of the thesis that the English were striving to obtain imperial consent for the establishment of a factory at Surat in 1619.

The chapter is divided into six sections: Eagerness for establishment of commercial relations with the English, commercial agreement; draft of imperial *firman* to the English left unsigned; deputation of Thomas Kerridge to imperial court; anti-Mukarrab campaign by the English; Edward's embassy. The chapter also throws light on the reasons of decline of Portuguese navy and the emergence of powerful English navy.

The activities of Sir Thomas Roe (Chapter VI), the first British ambassador to the imperial court of Jahangir, have been studied under six sections; the reasons for the appointment of Roe as ambassador to Mughal court; Mughal administration of the port of Surat; the commercial situation in Mughal ports; Zulfiqar's struggle with Roe; Khurram's relation with the English; Khurram's *nishan* to the English; and critical estimate of Roe's achievements in the Mughal court.

Chapter VII presents the contemporary conditions in which India's Red Sea trade declined in the seventeenth century. The chapter has been divided into ten sections: The Red Sea trade and English designs thereon; India's trade link with the Red Sea and the Persian gulf, preparations for English piracy; piracy and trade; piracy on Mughal shipping; reaction on the Mughals; agreement of 1623; discontent of the English and renewal of Piracy; agreement of 1624: growth of English commercial influence; critical analysis of the grant.

Chapter VIII deals with the Anglo-Mughal commercial relations

during the reign of Shahjahan. It comprises nine sections : Commercial position in the beginning of Shahjahan's reign ; English penetration into Bengal commerce ; Mughal-Portuguese tussle in Gujarat ; imperial intervention in commerce ; Anglo-Portuguese agreement (1635) : attempt at Mughal-Dutch coalition ; Courteen's association ; negotiations between Shahjahan and Charles I of England ; and Shahjahan's *firman*. In this chapter light has been thrown on the reasons of Shahjahan's conversion from anti-English attitude to pro-English attitude.

Chapter IX is an attempt to trace Aurangzeb's commercial relation with the English. Defeating the English for the first and last time Aurangzeb got an opportunity to drive the English out once for all. On the contrary, the emperor granted them extraordinary commercial privileges which strengthened the position of the English. This chapter has been divided into eight sections : Bengal ; Western India ; decline of Surat and Growth of Bombay ; dwindling importance of Surat ; Aurangzeb and Bombay ; interlopers ; Madras and embassy of Sir William Norris.

Chapter X traces the acquisition of *Zamindari cum* commercial rights by the East India Company in 1698 and developments thereafter. The chapter comprises four sections : The Bengal Nawabs and the East India Company ; grant of *firman* (1717) to the English ; general terms for the English in Mughal India ; factors behind the grant.

The concluding Chapter XI (Resume) sums up the main features of the thesis and seeks to analyse the policy of the emperors towards the English.

The thesis in its different aspects has been studied with adequate utilisation of relevant evidence in varied documents after six years' patient study of the following classes of original sources :

1. European factory records (mainly English and Dutch, the latter in translation and extracts).
2. Works of contemporary European merchants, agents, writers and travellers.
3. Jesuit accounts of Father Monserrate and Du Jarric give

us extra information about Anglo-Mughal commercial relations.

4. Contemporary historical works in Persian. Unfortunately Persian sources are silent as regards trade, commerce and English commercial missions to the Mughal court.

The materials have been utilised in such a way as clearly indicate the landmarks in Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. Several appendices deal with the more controversial points for the better understanding of the Anglo-Mughal relations. Quotations from European records have been given in their original form, sometimes with modern equivalents of unfamiliar words within brackets. Besides a glossary has been added for better understanding of the meaning of important Persian words.

Now it is my esteemed duty to express my indebtedness to all those who assisted me in different ways in preparation of my thesis. Prof. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, M. A., Ph. D., F. A. S., formerly Professor and Head of the Department of History, Jadavpur University, Professor under U. G. C. Retired Teachers Scheme, and successively visiting Professor in History in Bhagalpur, Magadh and Mithila Universities suggested the subject to me and spent his time and energy in giving me constant guidance for the preparation of my thesis and allowed me to utilise his personal collection of books, journals and other documents. Dr. Amalendu De, M. A., D. Litt., of Jadavpur University who spared his valuable time in reading my thesis in manuscript form and giving me important suggestions. Prof. Madhab Bagchi, M. Sc., Dr. Mrs. Anjali Chatterji, M. A. Ph. D. (London) also encouraged me. My thanks are also due to the authorities of National Library, Calcutta, National Archives, New Delhi, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, for offering me facilities to consult records and manuscripts. Lastly, my thanks are also due to Sri Durgadas Chanda, of O. P. S. Publishers Pvt. Ltd. and Sri Adhir Chakrabarty.



## A B B R E V I A T I O N S

- Ain** —Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazl.
- Albuquerque** —The commentaries of the great Alfonso Dalboquerque.
- AN** —Akbarnama by Abul Fazl.
- Anderson** —The English in Western India by Anderson, P.
- Anjali Chatterji** —Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb by Anjali Chatterji.
- Aurangzib** —History of Aurangzib, by Sarkar, Sir, Jadunath.
- BAI** —British Achievement in India by Rawlinson, H. G.
- Balkrishna** —Commercial Relations between India and England by Balkrishna.
- Barbosa** —Book of Durate Barbosa.
- Bayley** —The Local Muhammodan Dynasties, Gujarat by Bayley, Sir Edward Clive.
- BBWI** —British Beginning in Western India by Rawlinson, H. G.
- Beni Prasad** —History of Jahangir by Beniprasad.
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- Best** —The Voyage of Thomas Best.
- Bird** —The Political and Statistical History of Gujarat by Bird.
- Boxer** —The Dutch Seaborne Empire by Boxer, C. R.
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PART 1

**ANGLO-MUGHAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS  
DURING THE REIGN OF AKBAR : UNOFFICIAL  
ATTEMPTS OF THE ENGLISH TO OPEN  
INDIAN COMMERCE**



## CHAPTER I

### THE FIRST ENGLISH COMMERCIAL MISSION TO THE COURT OF AKBAR : RALPH FITCH

( 1583-1591 )

#### *1. The Background :*

The first Englishman who arrived at India on a commercial mission to the court of Akbar in 1584 was Ralph Fitch, a merchant adventurer of England.<sup>1</sup> To understand how this contact took place it is necessary to look backwards.

As early as September 1581 the new Levant or Turkey Company had been established to carry on trade with Turkey by the Syndicate of merchants of London headed by Sir Edward Osborne, Lord Mayor of London for sometime and Richard Staper, a London merchant. The Company managed to obtain some commercial privileges from the Government of Turkey under the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574-95).<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, they turned their attention towards India. The factors responsible for this diversion are not definitely known. It is, however, believed by several modern writers that the letter of Father Thomas Stevens<sup>3</sup> written from Goa (1579) to his father, a London merchant, had a deep commercial significance and stimulated the business instincts of the English merchants. But the matter is highly controversial.<sup>4</sup> Another plausible factor may be found in the efforts of the Turkey Company or the new Levant Company to open an overland trade to the East Indies. Their traders carried merchandize 'from Aleppo to Baghdad



and thence down the Persian Gulf, and obtained articles from Agra, Lahore, Bengal and even from Malacca. Returning to England with Indian goods, these merchants brought information of the 'riches to be acquired by a trade to the East Indies'.<sup>5</sup> It is also not improbable that the English merchants gathered information (specially) from the voyage of Sir Francis Drake (1577-1580) about the rich Indian trade then monopolised by the Portuguese. This together with the information brought by Thomas Cavendish (1586) 'induced the English merchants to form the opinion, that great profits and national advantages might be acquired, by fitting out ships to follow a direct trade to India.....'.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, Osborne and Staper undertook the initiative in forming a team to explore the possibility of direct trade with India. For this purpose they procured from Queen Elizabeth a letter of introduction to emperor Akbar seeking some commercial privileges, just as the Queen's previous letter to the Grand Turk for grant of commercial privileges, had produced favourable reactions.<sup>7</sup> John Newbery, who had already some experience of Syrian and Persian Gulf route, was entrusted with the leadership of the team which included Ralph Fitch, a merchant 'eminently fitted for the task' and John Eldred, another merchant, Leedes, a jewellery expert and James Story, a painter. The party sailed with the Queen's letter from London aboard the *Tiger* for India on 13th February 1583.<sup>8</sup> The team, excluding Eldred who had got down at Basra, came to Ormuz where they were imprisoned by the Portuguese and brought to Goa.<sup>9</sup> However, they all managed to escape therefrom. As Story settled at Goa<sup>10</sup> the first two and Leedes finally arrived at Agra in 1584.<sup>11</sup>

## II. *The Prospects of the English :*

What were the commercial prospects of the English in Mughal India then? To understand this we have to take stock of the situation and also of the Portuguese dominance on the west coast. Judged in this light the moment would appear to be highly opportune. Akbar had annexed a large part of Northern India and established his position firmly. Further only a decade ago he had

conquered Gujarat. With important seaports like Surat, Cambay and Broach,<sup>12</sup> Gujarat was enjoying a high state of prosperity. According to Abul Fazl it was almost 'unrivalled for the pleasantness of its climate and its display of the choicest productions of the whole globe'.<sup>13</sup> It was from its 'celebrated port',<sup>14</sup> Surat, situated on the bank of the Tapti, that cargoes of Mughal India were despatched overseas and pilgrim ships set sail. In fine it was then one of the most eminent ports for trade in India.<sup>15</sup> The volume of export and import trade carried through it can best be understood by the amount of money drawn from the port dues. The sum amounted to 125, 228 mahmudis<sup>16</sup> equivalent to about '£6,000 sterling'.

Another important port in Gujarat was Cambay, situated on the Gulf of Cambay.<sup>17</sup> It was a large city where different kinds of merchants and traders resided. Plenty of commodities especially in cotton and silk cloths<sup>18</sup> were available there. Abul Fazl says: 'vessels sail from and trade to Gogha. The cargoes are put into small ships called *Tawari* which transport them to Kambhayat'.<sup>19</sup> Du Jarric observes in 1595 that it was 'the chief Seaport of Gujarat and one of the biggest centres in the East'.<sup>20</sup>

Broach, which was a most ancient port of Western India continued to be one of the largest ports during this period also. Abul Fazl says that it was 'accounted a maritime town of first rate importance'.<sup>21</sup> It was also noted for its calicoes.<sup>22</sup>

### III. Akbar's attitude towards the Portuguese :

The conquest of such an important kingdom as Gujarat just a decade before (1573) gave an opportunity to Akbar to carry on oceanic trade and stimulate the commercial position of his empire. The contemporary Jesuit Father Monserrate makes a direct reference to Akbar's trading activities, saying that 'he had a great trade both in exports and imports' and that he 'largely exploited all possible sources of profit'.<sup>23</sup> Vincent Smith just echoes him when he says: 'Akbar himself was a trader, and did not disdain to earn commercial profits'.<sup>24</sup> Again, the Mughal state itself was then both a manufac-

turer and a trader. This seaborne trade could, however, be carried on only at the mercy of the Portuguese.<sup>25</sup> By not taking any initiative in building a navy, the 'Great Mughal' failed to protect the Indian mercantile classes and pilgrim traffic from Portuguese piracy, though he adopted some minor measures like reorganizing his fleet of boats (*Nawwara*) with gunners occupying an important position and putting the harbours into excellent condition and utilising the services of experienced seamen.<sup>26</sup> The Indian merchants were thus deprived of spectacular profits which were expected under normal conditions.

On account of the Portuguese domination of the sea the Indian merchants and pilgrims sailing on the Arabian sea to ports of the Red sea<sup>27</sup> had to pay fees for licence (*cartaz*) to the Portuguese.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless they often plundered their ships and subjected them to various indignities.<sup>29</sup> The Portuguese grip on the Indian Seas was so tight that Fitch observed: 'The Moors (i.e. the mussalmans) cannot pass except they have a passport from the Portugals'.<sup>30</sup> Even Akbar himself had to pay the fees for licence (*Kaul*) for the safety of his trading and pilgrim vessels.<sup>31</sup> Still the Portuguese at Ormuz once intercepted a present of thirteen female slaves sent by Akbar to Shah Abbas.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the Indians were afraid of the cruel acts of the Portuguese.<sup>33</sup> When Akbar came to conquer Gujarat, the Portuguese at first came from Goa to Gujarat to resist the emperor but finding his irresistible army they negotiated a treaty with him, which enabled the emperor to secure a safe conduct for the ships of the Indian merchants and pilgrims.<sup>34</sup> It may naturally be presumed that Akbar's annexation of Gujarat might have roused in the minds of the Indian traders not only hopes of relief but also of provision of adequate security for their ships by the mighty emperor. But actually Akbar could do nothing of the sort.

If the conquest of Gujarat raised hopes in the minds of the Indian merchants it alarmed the Portuguese. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar regarded their existence in the adjacent settlements viz. Goa, Diu and Daman as a constant source of danger for his overseas trade<sup>35</sup> and cherished a hope of driving them out. This is corro-

borated by Du Jarric who says that Akbar had always one 'design' how to turn them out of India. For this purpose, Du Jarric goes on, Akbar 'frequently sent his agents to Goa, ostensibly as ambassadors but whose real business was to keep an eye on the Portuguese, and to ascertain their military strength'.<sup>36</sup> In a subsequent letter to Abdulla Uzbek of Turan in 1586, Akbar explicitly referred to this design; I have kept before my mind the idea that.....I should undertake the destruction of the Feringhi infidels who have come to these islands of the ocean.....They have become a great number and are stumbing blocks to the pilgrims and traders'.<sup>37</sup> His deepseated resolve could not, however, be implemented on account of his vulnerability at sea and he had to come to an understanding with the Portuguese.<sup>38</sup> Several missions were sent to Goa by Akbar to settle the question of Mughal foreign commerce and pilgrim traffic, viz. under Abdulla Khan, whom Fitch overtook on his way from Mandu to Ujjain, in 1582,<sup>39</sup> under Sayyid Muzaffar in 1583,<sup>40</sup> and again somewhat later under Sultan Hamid in 1601.<sup>41</sup> Again three Portuguese Jesuit missions invited by Akbar from Goa, arrived at the Mughal court in 1580, 1591 and 1593 respectively.<sup>42</sup> Though the missions were primarily religious the activities of the Jesuits were not confined to religious sphere alone but extended to preservation and protection of the commercial interests of the Portuguese. In fact, the Jesuits in the court of Akbar subsequently resisted Mildenhall's attempt to secure commercial privileges for the English in the Mughal empire.<sup>43</sup>

In this background it may reasonably be surmised that the Emperor might have thought of taking the help of the English and establishing commercial relations with the English in order to counter the Portuguese naval supremacy and ensure the safety of Mughal ocean-going vessels from Portuguese high-handedness.

#### *IV. The Upshot of Fitch's Mission :*

How far did Fitch and his party avail of this situation to serve the interests of their countrymen? He was, as we have seen earlier, quite fit by virtue of his experience and ability. But his

role in this respect cannot be clearly assessed on account of his own silence which throws a veil of doubt over some important aspects of his mission.

First, the question of interview with the Emperor. As we have seen, Newbery and his party reached Agra in 1584. From there they went to Fatehpur Sikri, where the Emperor then resided.<sup>44</sup> They first sought an interview with Akbar to present their sovereign's letter. But Fitch himself is silent on whether the interview even took place or not. There is no detail of reception accorded by Akbar to the party. We can only surmise that Fitch met Akbar from certain incidental references in the former's narrative ; (i) Fitch describes the dress of Akbar : 'The king is apparelled in a white cabie made like a shirt tied with strings on one side, and a little cloth on his head coloured often times with red or yellow'.<sup>45</sup> This suggests that Fitch might have seen Akbar at close quarters. (ii) Leedes, an associate of his, was given an employment by Akbar with a handsome remuneration ; but the details and nature of this appointment are not known. Perhaps it is these which led Ryley to assume that they were well treated by Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri. The party was also given perfect liberty of movement, otherwise Fitch could not have made an extensive tour<sup>46</sup> without any hindrance within the empire. If this interpretation is correct, we may reasonably hold that Fitch was the first Englishman whom Akbar had seen and talked to.

Second, Fitch has also kept us in the dark as to whether Elizabeth's letter which sought to establish commercial relations between England and the Mughal Empire was actually delivered to Akbar. It is also not known whether the letter was intercepted by the Portuguese during the period of captivity of the party at Goa. Foster thinks that the letter might have been presented to Akbar by John Newbery,<sup>47</sup> the leader of the team. But he does not mention the source of his information. Fitch's silence in this respect was, however, most unusual and inexplicable.

However, it must be admitted that Fitch could not do justice to his job. (i) He failed to test the emperor's real attitude towards

the English. (ii) He failed to utilize the opportunity of free movement in collecting complete information about the state of trade and commerce in Mughal India. Although the primary object of Fitch's mission was to obtain commercial privileges for the English merchants to come, he failed to visit Surat, the most important seaport of the time in the western coast of India, where the first English vessel arrived in 1608 to establish a commercial foothold in Mughal India. Thus he could not describe the commercial condition of the port of Surat as he did with regard to some other ports as in Orissa, Bengal,<sup>48</sup> Diu, Daman, Bassein, Thana, Chaul and particularly Goa.<sup>49</sup> (iii) He failed to establish commercial contact with native merchants as was done later by Captain William Hawkins and Captain Thomas Best.<sup>50</sup>

From Fatehpur, Fitch proceeded *via* Agra, Allahabad, Baneres and Patna to Bengal. Thence he went to Bassein, Pegu, Malacca and returned *via* Pegu. Leaving Bengal (February 3, 1589) he came *via* Ceylon to Cochin, and thence to Goa. Finally he reached London on April 29, 1591.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, Fitch's commercial mission to the court of Akbar produced some important results. He visited several parts of India from Diu to Agra and from Agra to Bengal and everywhere he found plenty.<sup>52</sup> From Agra to Bengal he travelled with a fleet of 180 boats, laden with merchandise.<sup>53</sup> His narrative when published by Hakluyt (1599-1600),<sup>54</sup> provided the merchants in England with information of lucrative trading possibilities in Mughal India, as also of freedom of the traders of all nations in transacting commercial activities there. He notes in this connection that 'Hither (Fatehpur Sikri) is great resort of merchants from Persia and out of India'.<sup>55</sup> In fact, Akbar followed a liberal commercial policy without any discrimination between merchants of all nations, alien or native. He realised that the maintenance of commercial relations with foreign countries was of vital importance to the empire's economy. His measures to improve the condition of the harbours mentioned above facilitated and promoted the movement of goods in and out of the empire. We may thus

conclude that the silence of Fitch and the uncertainties in his narrative did not in any way minimise the potentialities of Fitch's commercial mission on behalf of the Queen of England.<sup>56</sup>

### FOOT NOTES

- 1 Ryley, 48 ; Purchas, i, 114 ; ETI, 2 ; EQ, 92.
- 2 ETI, I ; OR, 7. Osborne was Sheriff on August 1575 and Lord Mayor from 24 Sept. 1583 for about a year. DNB, 1178.
- 3 Father Thomas Stevens was the 'first Englishman' demanded by R.C. Prasad, (1) who is known to have reached Indian mainland in 1579. He came from London *via* Lisbon to Goa on a religious mission and settled there. He not only made a scientific study of two Indian languages, Marathi and Konkani, but also wrote two religious works, one of which was a long epic in Marathi. Rawlinson, 24 ; IA, 1878, 118 ; Anderson, 3-4 ; Mill, 12 ; PN. 377-385.
- 4 Mill (1817) points out that Stevens' account contributed to swell the general current of enterprise which now ran so vehemently towards India, HBI, i, 12, Rev. P. Anderson (1854) holds that Stevens' letter contains quite a mercantile spirit, on the state of Portuguese trade with India. EWI, 3-4. F. M. Mascarenhas (1878) notes that Stevens had sent home a 'most favourable report of the fertility of the region' around Goa, the opportunities it afforded for trade and the liberty with which the port was accessible to vessels of every nation'. IA, April, 1878, 118. J. L. Saldanha (1907), however, disbelieves that Stevens ever wrote such a tempting letter. CP, XXVI. Rawlinson (1920) points out (B B W I 24n) that we should 'guard against' holding that Stevens' letter aroused the cupidity of English merchants to trade directly with India. Rawlinson also points out that Stevens actually wrote one letter, though he promised to write again. There is no doubt that as a result of Stevens' letter the English came to have an added interest in Indian trade. BBWI, 24n, 27 ; BAI, 7. R. C. Prasad (1955) says that Stevens' 'letters' are not known to be extant (EETI, 4). But actually there is only one letter of Stevens to his father and this is extant in original. For letter see PN. vol. V, (377-385). This, however, contains no report as was held previously. John Hamilton Moore (undated) points out that Stevens' account of Voyage to India 'is not so remarkable.....for anything as for its being the first given of any Englishman of this navigation N & CCVT, 338.
- 5 Bruce, i, 108 ; OR, 7.
- 6 *Ibid.*

- 7 OR, 7 ; ETI, 1.
- 8 Ryley, 37, 48, 204. Newbery took the initiative and was the personal director of the Indian scheme.
- 9 ETI, 2, 12.
- 10 ETI, 13. Fitch in his narrative has not mentioned anything. Linschoten observes that Story obtained liberty by agreeing to become a lay brother in the Jesuits convent of Goa.
- 11 Fitch in Ryley, 98 ; ETI, 13 ; Regarding the date of their arrival at Agra, there is confusion. While Fitch in his narrative says that they arrived at Agra in June, 1585, Foster asserts that the date should be 1584. We accept Foster because Fitch arrived at Chaul on 20th (?) November, 1583. To reach Goa from Chaul one cannot take a year even in the sixteenth century.
- 12  $21^{\circ}42' N$ ,  $73^{\circ}2' E$ , situated in the north bank of Narmada about 30 miles inside from the Lohara point where the river meets the Gulf of Cambay. GSG, Broach, 731.
- 13 AIN ii, (Jarrett) 247.
- 14 IDA, 205 ; AIN, ii, 249.
- 15 AIN ii, 240, 259.
- 16 Smith, Akbar, 411. For Mahmudis see Appendix A.
- 17 Previously called Kambayat, Thevenot, 282 : Cambaut, Hamilton, i, 142. Cambaietta, Purchas, X, 288 ; Kambhayat, AIN ii, 248 ; Combayetta. DJ 53.
- 18 Linschoten, i, 61.
- 19 AIN, ii, (Jarrett), 248.
- 20 DJ, iii, 233.
- 21 AIN, ii, (Jarrett), 250.
- 22 L. R. ii, 100.
- 23 Monserrate (H & B), 207. In 1573 Akbar concluded a peace treaty with the Portuguese and established friendly relations with them. AIN, Vol. iii, (Jarrett), 17-18, 27-29.
- 24 Smith. 411.
- 25 Badauni, (E & D, V), 502.
- 26 AIN, i, 290.
- 27 The Red Sea or Mare de la Mecca is a branch of the Indian Ocean which parts Arabia from Africa and Egypt. RSAC ed. Foster. It is a narrow strip of water extending south-east from Suez to the Strait of Bab el Mandeb in a nearly straight line, and separating the coasts of Saudi Arabia and Yemen from those of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. Its total length is about 1900 Km. and its breadth varies from about 402 Km. to 209 Km. In  $27^{\circ}45' N$ , it divides into two parts, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, separated by each other by the peninsula of Sinai, Ency. Brit. Vol. 19, 32.
- 28 PSE, 48.



- 29 Monserrate (H & B), viii.
- 30 Ryley, 57 ; ETI, 12.
- 31 Decadas. e. g., x, i, 441 ; Nizamuddin Ahmed (E & D, V), 403.
- 32 Hist., Frag. (Reprint, 1971), 92.
- 33 (Badauni, (E & D, V), 503, 520.
- 34 AN, in E & D, V, 42 ; Smith, 113. A treaty was entered with Antonio Cabral, the Portuguese envoy from Goa, one of the principal terms of which was assurance of the safety of the pilgrims to Mecca.
- 35 AIN, ii, 243.
- 36 DJ, XVI, 114.
- 37 AIN, iii, (Beveridge), 758.
- 38 E & D, VI, 57.
- 39 ETI, 17. About this time (1578 or 1580 ?) Haji Habibullah who had been sent to Goa returned from there, AN, iii, 322.
- 40 Monserrate, 159, 163, 172 ; EQ, 92.
- 41 DJ, 114.
- 42 DJ, XXXI.
- 43 JASB. Maclagan Vol. LXV, Pt. I, 94. For Mildenhall's activities see Chapter II.
- 44 Ryley, 97-98.
- 45 Ryley, 99.
- 46 Fitch describes in his narrative that he freely moved from one place to another. From Agra to Bengal he went through the river Yamuna along with one hundred and eighty 'boats laden with salt, opium, hnge (asafoetida : Hindustani Hing), lead, carpets and divers other commodities ..... ' we do not have any information that he was ever intercepted by any Mughal official throughout his journey. Ryley, 100.
- 47 EQ, 92.
- 48 ETI, 24-26 ; Orissa became part of Akbar's territories in 1575, though not definitely subjugated until 1592.
- 49 Ryley, 57-61.
- 50 Along with Hawkins came some English merchants who obtained permission from the Mughal authorities and carried on commercial transactions with Indian merchants. Captain Best, also accompanied by merchants, obtained the same permission. ( see Chapter III & IV).
- 51 Ryley, 177-191.
- 52 ETI, 12-28 ; Ryley, 57-63, 92-115.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 54 PN, VI.
- 55 ETI, 18. Abul Fazl remarks that Fatehpur Sikri was rendezvous of merchants from all the known quarters of the globe. AIN, ii, 191.
- 56 For Fitch's journey London to India, see Appendix B.

## CHAPTER II

### JOHN MILDENHALL'S COMMERCIAL MISSION TO THE MUGHAL COURT

( 1599-1606 )

#### I. *Mildenhall's Journey :*

The failure of Fitch's mission in obtaining specific commercial privileges from Akbar did not, however, damp the ardour of the English merchants. On the contrary, Fitch's disclosure of the riches<sup>1</sup> of India whetted their appetite to get a share in the lucrative India trade. It was further intensified by the capture of a Portuguese carrack 'S. Filippe', richly laden with Indian merchandise by Sir Francis Drake (December 1587) on her way from Mozambique to Lisbon;<sup>2</sup> the destruction of Spanish Armada (1588);<sup>3</sup> and the capture of an India-bound Lisbon vessel 'Madre de DIOS' along with its 'Register' containing valuable information about the rich trade of the Portuguese in India.<sup>4</sup>

Just then Mildenhall, or Midnall or Mildnall<sup>5</sup> a 'trader in the Levant', sought to make an expedition to India 'on his account' seeking privileges of trade in the Mughal empire for himself and his fellow countrymen.<sup>6</sup> Regarding Mildenhall's earlier career we know very little. All we know is that he was a 'trader in the Levant and servant of Richard Staper', one of the sponsors of the Levant Company and that he was at Constantinople early in 1598. Returning therefrom to London he again set sail on 12th February

1599 on board *The Hector* and reached Constantinople at the end of October. He had then no idea of going to India until the beginning of May 1600. Subsequently, however, he seemed to have changed his mind on learning of the information of the English East India Company in London which was expected to undertake an expedition to the 'East Indies'. For if Mildenhall was able to 'secure a grant of trading privileges in India he might expect to reap a handsome reward for his pains'.<sup>7</sup>

Original sources like *Calendar of State Papers* and *Letters Received* shed no light on Mildenhall's credentials, i.e., what was his position and who had sent him to the Mughal Court, nor his activities there. Both these sources deal with Mildenhall's second Voyage to India in 1611 but not with the first. In *Calendar of State Papers*, the reference to Mildenhall first appears in connection with a letter which he had written 'to his master Richard Staper', declaring the 'privileges' he had obtained in the Indies, and offering them and his service to the Company for Rs. 1,500 in hand<sup>8</sup> after his return from his first visit to India. The editors of the *Dictionary of National Biography* do not mention this traveller. Contemporary writers like Abul Fazl and Badauni are silent about him as usual.

Modern writers like Bruce and Macpherson deal more with his journey than his activities in the Mughal Court. Macpherson, however, states that Mildenhall was sent by Richard Staper and his associates. William Milburn and James Mill point out that Queen Elizabeth sent Mildenhall to the Court of the great Mughal for obtaining certain privileges for the future English East India Company for which she was then preparing a charter. On the other hand, Foster regards Mildenhall's deputation by Queen Elizabeth to be an absurd proposition. He bases his opinion on documents written by Mildenhall himself viz. (i) a memorandum illustrating an account of his outward journey as far as Kandahar, (ii) Mildenhall's letter to his master Richard Staper from Kazvin on his homeward way describing his experiences at the court of the 'Great' Mughal. From his letter, it is evident that he was neither

sent by Queen Elizabeth nor by Richard Staper, but that he undertook the expedition on his own account.

## II. *Activities in the Mughal Court :*

Proceeding overland *via* Aleppo (8th July), Mesopotamia and Persia he arrived at Lahore in the Punjab in 1603.<sup>9</sup> From Lahore he sent a messenger with a letter to the emperor at Agra praying for an interview. In his letter he described that he had to do some business with the Great Mughal on behalf of his prince i. e. King James I.<sup>10</sup> Akbar advised the governor of Lahore to treat him honourably and to provide him with an escort to Agra. Mildenhall has not mentioned the date of his arrival at Agra. No modern writer has yet been able to trace out the date of his arrival at Agra. But we can infer from the calculations noted later<sup>11</sup> that Mildenhall arrived at Agra approximately by the end of November 1603. On his arrival there he was provided with a good residential accommodation. He met Akbar on the third day with valuable presents consisting of twenty nine very good horses<sup>12</sup> and various kinds of jewellery. Three days after, Mildenhall managed through the mediation of an influential courtier, to attend Akbar's 'Councell' (Council). The emperor ordered him to state his wishes. Mildenhall eulogised Akbar saying that the news of emperor's 'greatness' and 'kindness' was so much 'blased (i.e. blazed, i.e. spread) through the world that it 'arrived in the court of our Queen of England's Most Excellent Majesty'. He pointed out that the Queen was desirous not only to have (a) friendship with the Emperor but also (b) commercial privileges similar to those granted to the Portuguese and other Christians. (c) But the most significant of Mildenhall's demands was that the Emperor was not to interfere in cases of any seizure of Portuguese ship or port by the English reflecting their longstanding rivalry. Mildenhall was dismissed with an assurance of a speedy answer. After a few days Akbar sent to him not only cash amounting to £ 500 sterling but also satisfied him with 'comfortable speeches', i.e. hopes.

Thereafter, as Mildenhall came to know from some friendly

courtiers, Akbar showed his demands to the Jesuits<sup>13</sup> and the high Mughal officials. They were absolutely unwilling to grant any privilege to this Englishman. Akbar is said to have issued 'five commandments' (i.e. orders)<sup>14</sup> and sent these to Mildenhall without any permission to the English to seize any ship or port belonging to the Portuguese. Being dissatisfied Mildenhall went to the court and 'made demand of the other articles'. Akbar assured reconsideration only after consulting his 'Councell' (i.e. Council of Ministers and Officers). Days wore on without any answer from the Emperor. Mildenhall began to send 'ars' (i.e. *arz* or petitions) every eighteen or twenty days. In disgust he stopped going to the court for thirty days. Then at the Emperor's summons Mildenhall appeared before him and gave vent to his dissatisfaction at the delay in granting the concessions. Akbar satisfied him temporarily by presenting garments of 'Christian fashion very rich and good' and expressed his willingness to grant all his demands. But nothing was accomplished even in six months.<sup>15</sup>

Mildenhall tenaciously clung to all his demands. After learning Persian language he came to the court one day and had the audacity to accuse the Emperor of excessive dependence on the report of the Jesuits saying that he could prove that they 'were not his (Akbar's) friends and that they cared not for his profit nor honour.....'. He then sought 'licence to depart'.<sup>16</sup>

Akbar now resorted to a novel plan by arranging a public audience on the Sunday in which both Mildenhall and the Portuguese spokesman were asked to plead their respective causes. When Mildenhall's turn came he attempted to undermine the hold of the Jesuits on the Great Mughal. He said that Queen Elizabeth intended to send an ambassador with 'a great and princely present' to His Majesty's court where he would be, in effect, a hostage for the good behaviour of his fellow countrymen, that the Emperor was depriving himself of this benefit owing to the Jesuits who created animosity between the Emperor and the English. He sarcastically pointed out that the Emperor had hardly received any benefit for his friendship with the Portuguese: 'How many ambassadors

and how many presents have you procured to the benefit of His Majesty' ?<sup>17</sup>

Then referring to Akbar's grant of all his demands 'within thirty days after', Mildenhall boasted thus : 'I had then signed to my own contentment and to the profit of my nation'.<sup>18</sup> Vincent Smith, who supports this version, dates this 'discomfiture of the Jesuits' in August or September, 1605.<sup>19</sup>

Mildenhall's second visit to India early in 1611 was not of much consequence for our purpose.<sup>20</sup>

### III. Akbar's Attitude :

A critical study of Mildenhall's narrative not only evinces Akbar's diplomatic sagacity<sup>21</sup> but also throws light on a wholly new aspect of Akbar's commercial attitude. Akbar had to consider Mildenhall's credentials,<sup>22</sup> the desirability of according privileges to him and the possibility of getting any effective assistance from the English East India Company in times of danger. Akbar could not take an immediate decision and Mildenhall had to wait for some months.

Mildenhall's narrative, however, appears to be inconsistent or improbable in several respects. First, Mildenhall tells us that it was his pressures, as illustrated by his repeated insistence, which led the emperor to grant all the privileges he asked for. Contemporary records throw no light on it. No modern scholar has offered any comment on it. Father Jerome Xavier in his letter dated Agra September 6, 1604 (N. S.) mentions that Mildenhall had offered heavy bribes to the Mughal nobles to secure the commercial privileges.<sup>23</sup> If Akbar granted any concession it was not under any pressure from Mildenhall but out of his sweet will. By enquiring from Mildenhall about his demands for privileges, ordering his secretary to take a note of these and sounding the Jesuits and his high officials about these, Akbar first endeavoured to demonstrate to the Englishman that none was inclined to espouse his case. The Jesuits' long residing in the court on fairly good terms with Akbar and serving the interests of the Portuguese merchants,<sup>24</sup> were

naturally jealous of the efforts made by any other nation to get a share in their commercial privileges. The high Mughal officials also did not dare risk a breach with the Portuguese.

The second inconsistency is that Mildenhall writes that Akbar issued 'five commandments' i.e. orders re : commercial privileges, though he himself had prayed for three. He has, again, not specified what the orders were.

Third, Mildenhall claimed that Akbar also granted his demand of seizing any ship or port belonging to Portuguese. But this was evidently against the interests of the empire. It would not only lead to war between two foreign powers within his empire but also dislocate its seaborne trade. Such a concession would be incompatible with the commercial policy of an emperor like Akbar.

Fourth, Mildenhall, as we know from his letter to Richard Staper from Kazvin on his journey to England, had offered in return for a payment of £1500 (equivalent to about Rs. 13,333) the privileges he had obtained and his own services to the East India Company (already established on 31 December 1600).<sup>25</sup> But the Company did not accept the offer on several grounds :

- (i) his demands were 'unreasonable' ;
- (ii) his concessions were 'considered to be of small value' ;
- (iii) he was thought unfit for the Company's job ; and
- (iv) the Company was then expecting news of success of William Hawkins who was sent to Surat in 1607 by King James I with a letter to the Great Mughal.<sup>26</sup>

Fifth, it is a matter of great surprise to us that an ordinary Englishman like Mildenhall could and did behave so insolently towards the 'Great Mogul' and that the Emperor, too, instead of taking offence at his rudeness is said to have endeavoured to satisfy him by repeated assurances. It would thus appear that Akbar showed obvious weakness for him, just he had also shown (if not to such extent) kindness to Fitch and his associates. Akbar, the Great Mughal, in all probability, did not take the behaviour of Mildenhall, a lone foreigner so seriously.

Perhaps an explanation of Akbar's attitude may be found in the Mughal-Portuguese relations of the time, previously explained. Notwithstanding the treaty of 1573,<sup>27</sup> assuring safety of the Mughal merchant and pilgrim ships, the Portuguese plundered the Mughal vessels. Akbar felt helpless but did not deem it expedient to take any precipitate action against them owing to the empire's vulnerability on the seas. Beneath the outward cordiality of Akbar with the Jesuits ran a current of hostility towards the Portuguese. The letter of Philip,<sup>28</sup> the king of Portugal and Spain to the Governor of Goa clearly indicates that the Portuguese were aware of Akbar's design on Goa. Just then Mildenhall arrived at Akbar's Court. From him Akbar learnt that England was at war with the Portuguese. He might have reasonably thought of using the English against the Portuguese. So he tried his best to make Mildenhall satisfied by giving him not only repeated assurances regarding grant of privileges but also cash amounting to £500 sterling as stated before. The delay on the part of Akbar would, thus, seem to be politic. This automatically delayed Mildenhall's return. Akbar's attitude to Mildenhall, otherwise inexplicable, becomes clear only in the light of this new strategy or realistic approach to commercial policy. That is why Akbar did not take Mildenhall's audacity as an offence.

Last but not the least, Mildenhall tells us that the emperor's commercial privileges were confirmed by Salim (Jahangir). He, however, has not explained why he required confirmation from the emperor's son. Mildenhall says that he secured the grant "within thirty days" after the audience (held according to Smith, in August or September 1605) i. e. in the month of September or October. Most probably Akbar, satisfied with his arguments, granted him some formal concessions. Foster observes that the concessions he obtained were "of small practical importance.....".<sup>29</sup> We are told that Mildenhall 'afterwards' went to Prince Salim and 'demanded' confirmation from him which Salim gladly did. Why did Mildenhall require confirmation from the Emperor's son? The reasonable answer is that Akbar fell ill (September, 11, 1605) and



died in October, 15, 1605. Hence he required confirmation from the new emperor. Macpherson holds that Mildenhall obtained some commercial privileges for the English in 1606. This would suggest that Mildenhall was present at time of Akbar's death.<sup>80</sup> In all probability, Mildenhall got verbal assurance from Akbar that the latter would allow the English to carry on trade in Mughal India. Mildenhall could not produce, as it is found in the contemporary records, any written document to the Directors of the Company in London in support of his version. So the story that Mildenhall received imperial *firman* is a myth. He might have received from Akbar a mere permission for English merchant ships visit the ports of the Great Mughal, but this concession may well have appeared useless, unless the emperor could be induced to veto any interference with the English on the part of the Portuguese. Evidently his concessions were considered to be of small value. It is thus reasonable to hold that no Anglo-Mughal commercial relations could be established during the reign of Akbar.

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### FOOTNOTES

- 1 PN, 2nd ed. ii, Pt. i, i, 250.
- 2 RSS, 15-16 ; The value of the Cargo was £108, 04, 9. 3s, 11d (equivalent to Rs. 9,60,391) CSP, 1588-90, 428.
- 3 EQ, 99.
- 4 RSS, 16.
- 5 Wheeler, 65.
- 6 ETI, 48.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 8 CSP 1513-1616, 174 ; ETI, 50.
- 9 ETI, 53-54 ; Purchas, (3rd Book) Chap. I, S, iii, 114.
- 10 Nearly twenty years after the visit of Ralph Fitch to the Court of the Great Mughal, Mildenhall set out in 1599 when Elizabeth I was on the throne of England. In his letter from Lahore in 1603 to Akbar at Agra he mentioned that he was the messenger of King James I. ETI, 54. It means that at Lahore he received the news of Elizabeth's death.
- 11 See Appendix C.

- 12 The source wherefrom the horses were brought is not known. Some of them cost him, 'fifty or three score pound per horse'. Foster assumes that these were probably brought from Persia, EQ. 176.
- 13 ETI, 55. The two Jesuits at Agra were Jerome Xavier and Anthony Machado, while those at Lahore were Manoel Pinheiro and Francisco Corsi. JASB Vol. ixv, Pt. i; Vol. V No. 4.
- 14 This is inconsistent as shown subsequently in 25-26.
- 15 ETI, 57.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 58.
- 17 Mildenhall narrates ".....Kings eldest sone Prince Salim stood out and said unto them (Portuguese) that it was most true that in eleven or twelve years not one came; either upon ambassage or upon any other profit unto His Majesty', ETI, 58-59.
- 18 Later Mildenhall met Prince Salim and demanded of him the "Like commandments : which he most willingly granted" ETI 49-50.
- 19 Smith Akbar. 294.
- 20 On his second journey to India, Mildenhall made good his escape with the merchandise entrusted to him for sale in Persia by Staper and other London merchants. Two Englishmen Richard Newman and Richard Steel pursued and forced him to disgorge the value of the stolen property. Then resuming his journey he came to India but fell ill at Lahore. He managed somehow to reach Agra and subsequently died at Ajmer in June 1614. L. R. II, 104, 141; LR iii, 20-21.
- 21 Ryley (p. 91) describes Akbar as the most 'intellectual brilliant personality ever seen on the throne of Hindustan.'
- 22 Mildenhall says, 'The third day after, having made before a great man my friend, he (Akbar) called me into his Councill, and coming into his presence, he demanded of me what I would have and what my business was. I made him answer that his greatness and renowned kindness unto Christians was so much blased through the world that it was come into the furthermost parts of the Western Ocean and arrived in the Court of our Queen of Englands Most Excellent Majesty.....' ETI, 55; Purchas, Pt. I. BK. III, Chap. II, 114.
- 23 One Mughal courtier who was on their (English) side had been heavily bribed to prepare matters with the Emperor. According to Mildenhall the Jesuits had not been behind hand for they had given to the two chiefest counsellors that the king had, at least five hundred pounds sterling a piece that they should in no way consent unto these demands of mine' i.e. demand for trading privileges. JASB Vol. LXV, Pt. I, 95; Smith, Akbar, 293.
- 24 ETI, 56.
- 25 The Directors of the East Indian Company adjourned the consideration of

his proposal until his arrival in England. The matter was again referred to a special committee but the committee turned down his proposal on grounds mentioned in the text. Towards the end of 1609 Mildenhall presented a petition to the King mentioning that as the Company did not pay any heed to the privileges he had obtained from the Great Mughal at the cost of three thousand pound (?) and after spending ten years in travel, so his co-adventurers, Richard Persons, the master of the *Hector* accompanied him upto Turkey; and John Cartwright, a preacher, leaving him at Kashan went to Ispahan. In India he was alone and returned also alone. ETI, 50.

26 See Ch. iii.

27 See Ch. i ante. 6.

28 The terms of the Treaty that ended war between England under Elizabeth and Spain did not include the claims of English traders to trade with Spanish America and the regions monopolised by Portugal in Africa and Asia. But the indomitable will of the English traders led them to establish the commercial transaction with those regions where already Portugal established her trading right. So private war against Spain and Portugal was continued without the countenance of the state, Trevelyan, *Illustrated History of England*, 386.

29 E. A. H. Blunt observes that 'he had never received any concession. He even goes so far as to observe, 'In plain words he was a dishonest scoundrel. He cheated or tried to cheat Akbar with an assumption of ambassadorial dignity'. JRAS 1910, 495-98. In fact he was not very dependable person. If we believe Purchas Mildenhall was even prepared to change his Protestant religion for the sake of profit. Nicholas withington reveals the darker sides of Mildenhall's character viz. his poisoning the companions of his second visit to grab the whole stock. JRAS, 1810, 495-98; Purchas (1926), 222n; CHI, IV, 152. The only doubt is about the number. While Orme (HF, 342) and Anderson (EWI, 11) speak of two, Purchas (1926, 22n) mentions three.

30 Foster, however, believes that as Mildenhalls had not alluded to Akbar's death, he had left India before the event (ETI, 49). But this seems to be an omission on Mildenhall's part. It can not also be assumed that after obtaining concessions from Akbar Mildenhall had left India and that he returned on receiving the news of Akbar's death for confirmation from Jahangir. For contemporary records mention that Mildenhall came to India for the second time in 1611. JRAS, 1910 495-96. According to Orme, Mildenhall obtained the *firman* from Jahangir in 1606. Hist. Frag. 342.

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PART 2

**OFFICIAL ATTEMPTS OF THE EAST INDIA  
COMPANY TO SECURE A FOOTHOLD  
IN INDIA'S COMMERCE**



## CHAPTER III

### JAHANGIR AND WILLIAM HAWKINS ( 1608-1611 )

#### I. Journey :

The individual missions of Ralph Fitch and John Mildenhall at the court of Akbar failed to achieve the desired results. But Englishmen persisted in their efforts to open a direct commercial link with India. Now it was the East India Company, established in December 1600, which entered the field as a corporate body with the object of carrying on regular trade with India.<sup>1</sup> This it was able to do in its third voyage. In 1607-08 the Company despatched three ships, the *Hector*, the *Dragon*, and the *Consent* first to Socotra island and then to Aden to see whether any commercial relation could be established there. If a sufficient cargo could be obtained from Aden the *Hector* would be sent home direct ; the other two vessels were to proceed to Bantam. But if the monsoon did not permit any voyage to Aden, all the three ships might call on the coast of Gujarat to probe into the prospects of trade there. If these were favourable the *Hector* and the *Consent* would remain there to open up trade while the *Dragon* would sail towards Bantam. William Hawkins, who had previous experience as a merchant in the Levant and in the west Indies and was well acquainted with the Turkish language, was appointed Lieutenant General of the fleet and captain of the *Hector*.<sup>2</sup> He carried two letters from King James I, addressed respectively to the Governor of

Aden and to the Mughal emperor, Akbar,<sup>3</sup> and was commissioned to conduct the negotiations in either case. To maintain his dignity, the Company in London gave Hawkins proper dress, suitable presents and broadcloth for distribution among the high officials of the Mughal court. Any article received in return from Aden or India was to become the 'property of the country'.

The fleet set sail in April 1607.<sup>4</sup> On the way the *Consent* 'lost company' i.e. lost contact with the fleet for good. Unable to anchor at Aden on account of contrary winds the *Hector* and the *Dragon* sailed to the Gujarat coast. Displaying the English flag for the first time in India the *Hector* anchored at the 'Bar of Surat' on August 24, 1608.<sup>5</sup>

## II. Administration of Surat :

To understand the subsequent course of events properly it is necessary to have an idea of the administration of Surat. It was run on lines different from that of other cities of Mughal India. Its administrative organisation was the outcome of its peculiar needs as well as its commercial and economic importance. It constituted a completely separate unit, entirely independent of the provincial authorities. It had two separate administrators. Of these one was a military officer entitled 'Quilladar (i.e. *qiladar*), who commanded the castle and the river Tapti on which the fort was situated. The other was a civil officer entitled *mutasaddi* (or the Superintendent of customs), who then administered the ports of Surat, Broach and Cambay and had the charge of collection of the customs revenue. Neither encroached upon the other's right and duties.<sup>6</sup> At that time Mukarrab Khan<sup>7</sup> was the *mutasaddi* of Surat. The *mutasaddi* held his post direct from the Delhi court through an imperial *sanad* under the seal of the *Diwan-i-ala* and was thus subordinate and directly responsible to the imperial authorities, whereas the Commander of the fort worked under the authorities of the Commander of the artillery. Both had more or less equal status.<sup>8</sup> The *mutasaddi* had with him several other officers like the *Sadar* and the *Qazi*<sup>9</sup> (Heads of the Judicial and religious

department), the *Bakshi*<sup>10</sup> (Paymaster of the army), the *Kotwal* (Head of the internal defence, health, sanitation and all other municipal functions), the *Sawanih nawis* (Secret reporter), the *Harkarah* (Information officer of secret service), the *waqianigar*<sup>11</sup> (Agent of the secret reporter), various *Daroghas* (Office Superintendents) the *Amin*<sup>12</sup> (Revenue assessor), the *Shahbandar* (the chief Customs Officer) and others. The *Kotwal* of Surat was then Mirza Nuruddin whom Hawkins termed as 'Governor' of Surat,<sup>13</sup> who actually controlled all matters relating to the civil administration of Surat. In addition to his duties connected with the work of the port, the *mutasaddi* also acted as a civil judge and supervised the work of the mint. The officers who came into direct contact with the mission of Hawkins were three in number, the *mutasaddi*, the civil administrator and the *Shahbandar*. According to the survey made by Raja Todarmal about the year 1576, the whole area of the Surat district as given in the *Ain*, was 770,985 acres (i.e. 312,315 Bighas) and the yearly revenue £ 47,558 (1,90,35,17 dams i.e. Rs. 4,75,897).<sup>14</sup> In the reign of Jahangir, Surat acquired the distinction of being made the seat of a royal mint.<sup>15</sup> Future events will reveal that the *mutasaddi* had the right of concluding agreement with foreign powers without obtaining prior permission from the emperor.

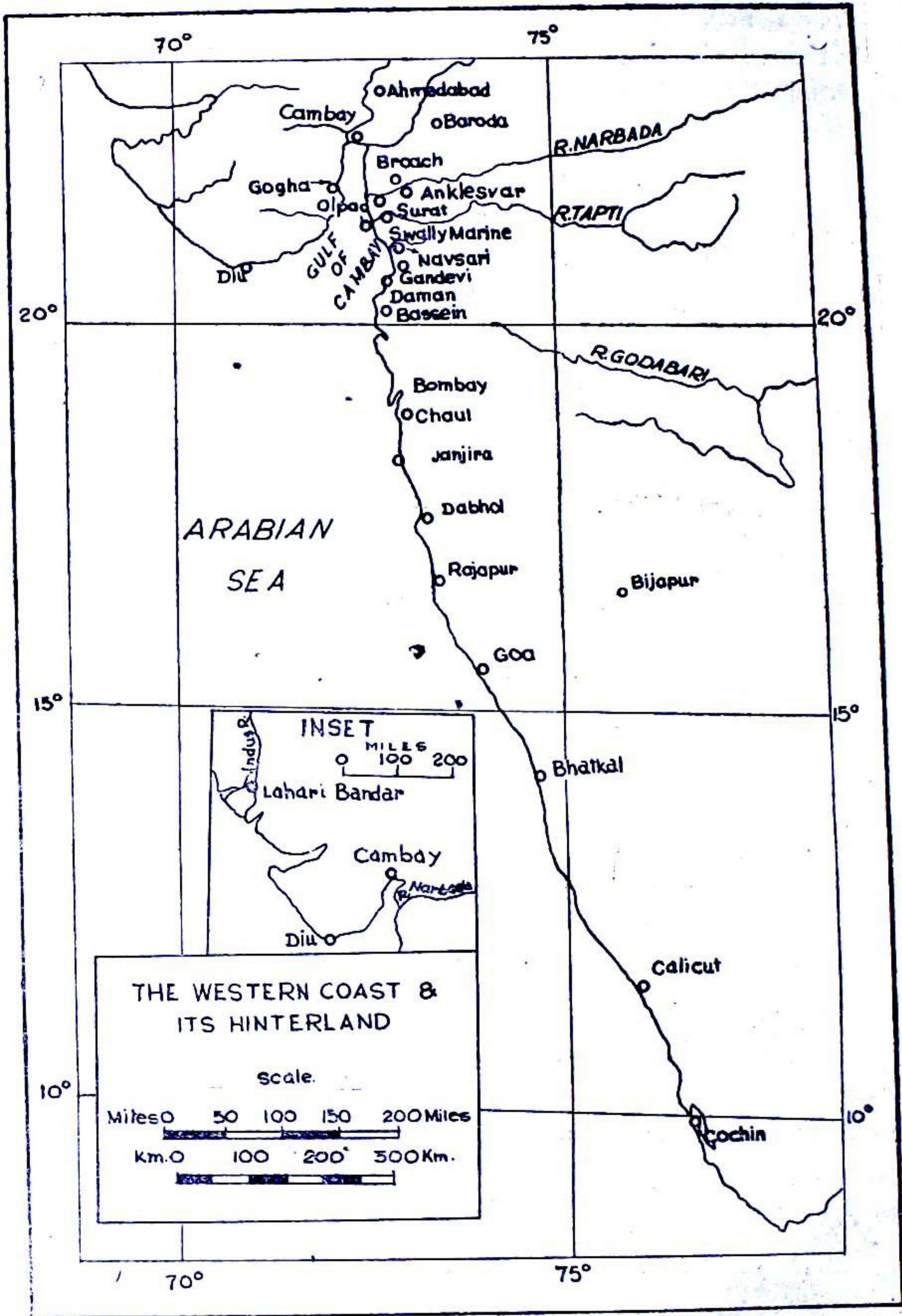
Francis Buck, the English merchant and two other Englishmen were sent by Hawkins to inform the *Kotwal*, Nuruddin, of the arrival of an 'ambassador'<sup>16</sup> of the king of England to the Mughal emperor with a royal letter and presents. The latter received the English cordially and sent three of his servants with a request to land and an assurance of cordial reception to Hawkins as well. Accompanied by English merchants, Hawkins went up by boat to Surat on 28 August, 1607. But as Nuruddin was ill, Hawkins met the *Shahbandar*.<sup>17</sup>

### III. Hawkins' Objectives :

Hawkins unfolded his principal objectives to the *Shahbandar* :

- (i) to establish and settle a factory at Surat, for which he had





brought a letter from king James I ; (ii) to have 'league and amity with his king i.e. the Mughal emperor ; (iii) to sell the cargoes of his ship as would be saleable in India.<sup>18</sup>

The *Shahbandar* i.e. the chief customs officer expressed his inability to do anything without the order of his master, Mukarrab Khan, then away at Cambay and Hawkins came back to the customs house where he was lodged temporarily.

Next morning Hawkins visited the *Kotwal* of Surat, Mirza Nuruddin, with a present and was kindly received. But when he disclosed his purpose he was told as by the *Shahbandar* before, that matters rested with Mukarrab Khan. Nuruddin, however, assured Hawkins of sending a footman to Cambay with a letter of request on behalf of the English, 'for unloading' of his ship, as also 'concerning a factory'. Hawkins was shifted from his temporary lodging to the house of a merchant who understood Turkish. After twenty days a messenger came from Cambay with Mukarrab Khan's reply. Hawkins was given 'licence to land' his goods and 'buy and sell for this present voyage'. In other words Mukarrab permitted the English to unload their goods at the customs house and to buy and sell goods only for this time. The Khan, however, made it quite clear that in future he would not be able to give any permission for a future trade and settling of a factory, without the emperor's sanction.<sup>18a</sup>

#### IV. *Mukarrab's Commercial Views :*

Mukarrab Khan, alias Hasan, son of Shaikh Baha<sup>19</sup> of Panipat, famous surgeon during the time of Akbar, was an important high Mughal official who played a direct and significant part in determining the commercial relations between Jahangir and the English.<sup>20</sup>

Why did Mukarrab express his inability to allow the English to carry on their commercial activities in future, when he allowed them once ? The reason can best be found in the contemporary commercial and political situation. The Portuguese vessels from Goa had long been carrying on uninterrupted intercourse with

Gujarat ports. They had no territorial settlements at Surat or elsewhere in Gujarat. True, there were several foreign Muslim mercantile settlements purchasing or taking on lease a piece of land (Arab, Persian, Egyptian and Turkish) at Calicut, Pulicat and Masulipatam before the advent of the Portuguese. But in Gujarat the position was somewhat different. There were, however, foreign Muslim merchants, such as the Turks, Egyptians, Arabs, Persians in Cambay but none had their own settlement as they had at Calicut. The efforts of the Portuguese to establish mercantile extra-territoriality in Gujarat were successfully resisted by Sultan Mahmud Beghara in 1507 and Bahadur Shah in 1535.<sup>21</sup> Thereafter the Portuguese desisted from these and were satisfied merely keeping vigilance on the coastal waters of Gujarat with their coasting fleets from their fortified base—Goa, Daman, Diu very near to Gujarat by enforcing the licence system on the Mughal vessels trading to the Red Seas.

Once some armed Portuguese came to Surat. In alarm Hawkins, complained to the civil administration who at once bade the foreigners to go out of the town. The incident shows that the foreigners were not allowed to come to Surat with arms.<sup>22</sup> It was in this circumstance that Hawkins sought to establish English commercial extra-territoriality by establishing an English factory at Surat. This undoubtedly required a convention or agreement of which the Mughals had no previous experience. The Mughals in general and Mukarrab Khan in particular were afraid of the Portuguese navy which visited the port from time to time and threatened to burn the Mughal shipping in case of slightest provocation.<sup>23</sup> Hence Mukarrab did not think it safe to take initiative in the matter. So he instructed Hawkins to go to Agra and meet the emperor. He also asked the chief customs officer of Surat to keep all the English goods in the local customs house. The reason for issuing such a directive has not been given in the narrative of Hawkins. Three factors may, however, be suggested: (i) to prevent evasion of customs duty,<sup>24</sup> (ii) to ensure safety of the goods, the English having no store house of their own, (iii) Shaikh

Abdur Rahim, Mukarrab's brother and agent, was instructed by Mukarrab to select some goods suitable for the emperor, in the words of Hawkins, 'such goods as were fitting for the king'.<sup>25</sup>

Realising that time was precious and the English ship would not be able to stay for long, Hawkins 'thought it convenient to send for three chests of money and with that to buy commodities' that could be sold at Bantam and Priaman, where the Gujarati merchants went every year for-selling Indian commodities. Hawkins 'began to buy against the will of all the merchants in the town' who protested vehemently and complained to the Governor and the chief customs officer for allowing them to buy commodities, 'which would cut their own throats at Priaman and Bantam'. We may infer that it was the Mughal nobles,<sup>26</sup> carrying on commercial activities, who sold goods to Hawkins. They were the only persons who could defy the decision taken by all Gujarati merchants. What was the motive of the nobles behind this transaction? In all probability it was their lure of profit i.e. profiteering motive of the nobles which led them to ignore the protest. Mukarrab Khan, who was then away at Cambay, most probably was not aware of the protest of the Indian merchants. He permitted Hawkins to buy Indian goods for the markets in England. The merchants should have intimated him at Cambay. However, one thing is crystal clear that the Indian merchants were conscious of their class interests, and they could launch a combined move against the government officials. Being lured by selfish profit, on the other hand, the officials could be made an easy prey to the foreign agents.

Shaikh Abdur Rahim came and allowed Hawkins to ship the cargoes which included different types of clothes and indigo purchased from Surat. Loading the cargoes the *Hector* was despatched under the captaincy of master Marlow to the Eastern Archipelago.<sup>27</sup> On the way the Portuguese siezed the *Barkes*<sup>28</sup> carrying 'goods to a considerable amount' and imprisoned<sup>29</sup> English men 'but did not venture to attack the ship.'<sup>30</sup> Hawkins tried much for the release of the men and goods but failed. The Portuguese abused the English king as the 'king of fishermen'.

Hawkins apprehended that Mukarrab Khan was in collusion with the Portuguese. It was probably because of Mukarrab's close association with the Jesuit Father Pinheiro who was then at Cambay. In fact, Master Marlow prohibited his men from fighting with the Portuguese and described them as their friend and betrayed' Hawkins and went to the side of the Portuguese. Hawkins decided to go to Agra and summoned a meeting of the English merchants to consider how the royal letter (i.e. letter of English king to Jahangir) would be delivered to the Great Mughal and trade established. They all opined that these 'weighty affairs' should be conducted by Hawkins himself, because of his experience of 'former travels and language' and also because every one of the *Hector* knew that Hawkins was sent as an 'ambassador'.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the cloths kept in customs house were bought by Mukarrab's agent.<sup>32</sup> But the price was not paid on account of a dispute over it. Being guided by Hasan Ali<sup>33</sup> Hawkins complained about non-payment to Mukarrab Khan, to whom he gave a present, on the latter's arrival from Cambay on 15th December 1608.<sup>34</sup> But the Khan refused to pay twenty *mahmudis* per yard,<sup>35</sup> demanded by Hawkins, but sought to deliver back his cloth.

#### V. Arrival of Hawkins at Agra :

Leaving Finch at Surat Hawkins proceeded on February 1, 1609 to Agra with the permission of Mukarrab Khan and with his letter of introduction to the emperor. It is evident from the letter of introduction that Mukarrab sought a good relation to be established between the emperor and Hawkins. Hawkins suspected, without assigning any reason, that Father Pinheiro 'plotted with Mukarrab Khan to overthrow' his journey. The escort of forty horsemen promised by the Khan was not given. After much toil and many a hardship he arrived safely at Agra on April 16, 1609. The news of his coming at Agra had preceded him. He was sent for by the emperor who ordered his 'knight marshall' to escort Hawkins to the court (*diwan-i-am*) with the honour befitting an 'ambassador' of the king of England.<sup>36</sup> In all probability Jahangir took him to be t

English plenipotentiary referred to by John Mildenhall four years before.<sup>37</sup> Hawkins delivered king James' letter and a 'slight present' to the emperor who heartily welcomed him. Jahangir called him 'to come near unto him, stretching down his hand from the seat royal'.<sup>38</sup> While the interpreter<sup>39</sup> was reading the letter, Jahangir enquired of Hawkins the contents of the letter when the latter told that the king of England 'demanded favour of your Majesty', Jahangir promised him to permit English trade with his ports on favourable terms. The emperor specially honoured him by admitting him to his 'chamber of presence' (*Diwan-i-khas*) for further discussions. In the meantime Jahangir came to know of Mukarrab's dealings with Hawkins from the latter's enemies as well as from the spies who, as Hawkins noted, used to report on every nobleman. The emperor then ordered the Khan to ensure that the English were left undisturbed. The emperor requested Hawkins to attend the court daily.<sup>40</sup> He was temporarily housed at the residence of one captain named 'Houshaber Khan' i.e. Khush Khabar Khan<sup>41</sup> so long a convenient residence was not available. It is highly interesting to find that during discussions Jahangir enquired about the affairs of England, West Indies and other countries. Jahangir's inquisitiveness regarding foreign affairs testifies to his intellectual alertness. Hawkins was now in high spirits. He was with the king day and night. At the audience, he stood within the *Red Rails* which was a place of honour. At first Hawkins had a smooth sailing in the court as a great favourite of the king. He solicited imperial orders for the establishment of a factory at Surat. He seemed to have caught the fancy of Jahangir who enquired how long he intended to stay in the court. Hawkins replied that he would do so till the arrival of the next ship from England. Jahangir, however, wanted him to prolong his stay till he was replaced and even expressed a desire to send an ambassador to the king of England. He also gave assurance of the establishment of a factory at Surat and offered to make him a *mansabdar* of 400, to be subsequently raised to 1000 with a yearly allowance equal to '£ 3,200 sterling' together with the title of Khan.<sup>42</sup> Realising that

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the proposal was 'beneficial' both to 'my nation and myself', Hawkins readily accepted the offer.<sup>43</sup> Rising on the crest of the emperor's favours and expecting to improve his own prospects and advance the company's cause or as he says 'feather my nest and do you (Company's) service'.

Learning of Hawkins' high position in the court, Mukarrab wrote a 'petition' to Jahangir expressing his anxiety that 'the suffering of the English in his land would be the cause of the loss of his own countries near the sea coasts as Surat, Cambay and such like'. In reply Jahangir tried to convince Mukarrab saying that 'he had but one Englishman in court, and him they needed not to fear, for he had not pretended any such matter, for I would have given him living near the sea ports but he refused it taking it near me here'. Obviously Hawkins enjoyed sound support of the emperor. He was now confident that all matters would be well on his side so long as the emperor's protection, was there. He complained to the emperor of a Jesuit conspiracy to poison him, saying that 'the Portuguese were like mad dogs labouring to work my passage out of the world'. Jahangir threatened the Portuguese and the Jesuits saying that if Hawkins died 'by any extraordinary casualty, that they should all rue for it'. It is quite evident that Hawkins earned Jahangir's confidence. Jahangir now proposed a remarkably ingenious remedy, at once clever and startling. He arranged Hawkins' marriage with a Christian 'white maiden' of the royal palace to cook his food. At this time Hawkins was informed by Finch that the *Ascension*, an English ship, was approaching Surat. Hawkins hastened to the court with the information begging that an order might be granted for the establishment of a factory at Surat and that he might be allowed to carry this himself. Jahangir is said to have given his 'commission' written under his golden seal.<sup>44</sup> But Abul Hasan,<sup>45</sup> the chief *Diwan*, modestly advised Jahangir that Hawkins' going to Surat with the 'commission would be the occasion of war, and thus harm might happen unto a great man' (i.e. Mukarrab Khan). Abul Hasan's observation in this connection was surprisingly correct. It signified that Abul

Hasan was aware of the contemporary situation. So the emperor forbade Hawkins to leave Agra. The order for the settling of English trade was sent to Surat by a messenger. Soon afterwards, however, Hawkins received further news that the vessel had struck a sand bank and had been wrecked and that her crew had landed in their boats at Gandevi,<sup>46</sup> proceeding thence to Surat. The local officials arranged their accommodation not in the city itself but in a village outside it. Some of the crew came to Agra and met Hawkins. Hawkins approached the emperor once again wishing of better behaviour to them by the emperor's officials. Jahangir gave him order for 'good usage' to the English and for giving assistance towards recovering the cargo of the wrecked vessel.<sup>47</sup> This indeed was an extraordinary favour. The reason of this is not known from Hawkins' narrative. Jourdain, a Jesuit missionary in the court of Jahangir, however, throws some light on the incident. According to Jourdain the order was given for 'hoping of some strange present in the ship'.<sup>48</sup> At this time by the insistence of Hawkins, Mukarrab was called for at the court. On his arrival, Jahangir attached all his goods many of which were taken by Mukarrab from Hawkins for the use of the emperor but misappropriated subsequently. Just at that time 'a very great complaint was made by a Banian' which incensed the emperor and Mukarrab was thrown into prison.<sup>49</sup> But shortly after Jahangir had restored him to his old place again. Hawkins took his place among the grandees of the court living and dressing in Muslim fashion. But the troubles were brewing. Basking in royal favours and enjoying apparent security, Hawkins complained to the emperor against Mukarrab at least thrice, incurring the latter's sworn enmity.

Towards the end of March 1610 Mukarrab arrived at Agra from Surat bringing a large array of presents for the emperor. At this time a rich present also arrived from Goa accompanied by a letter written to Jahangir by the Portuguese viceroy at Goa complaining against the privileges granted to the English which would endanger the friendship that had so long existed between the Portuguese and the Mughals. The letter also brought the news that a merchant had



arrived at Goa with a fair ballace ruby,<sup>50</sup> weighing three hundred and fifty ratis<sup>51</sup> of which the pattern was sent. Mukarrab Khan now was to go for Goa to buy the ruby. Before leaving for Goa Mukarrab made the emperor aware of the great loss which the emperor and his subjects would suffer if the English were allowed to enjoy commercial privileges. Mukarrab then called these merchants before the emperor, who told that the encouragement of the English would mean the ruin of the trade of Gujarat, owing to the reprisals threatened by the Portuguese. The Surat merchants perhaps did not forget Hawkins' commercial deal at Surat ignoring their protest. 'They affirmed that they were like to be all undone because of the English'. Thereupon Jahangir emphatically declared 'let the English come no more'. But on Hawkins' formal appeal with a toy, Jahangir relented and ordered that it was his desire that the English should carry on trade with Mughal ports. This was duly communicated by the Jesuits at the court to Mukarrab Khan and later Pinheiro at Surat by a speedy messenger. Learning this, Mukarrab who was then on his way to Goa wrote a 'petition' to the emperor and also to the 'head wa'sir',<sup>52</sup> in which he expressed his great concern that this deviation from the early promise, (i. e. the exclusion of the English) would endanger empire's sea borne trade. Jahangir again turned a cold shoulder to the English. For the second time Hawkins appealed through Khwaja Jahan,<sup>53</sup> an influential Mughal official of the court, but this also proved abortive.

As Jahangir's promise of a good accommodation and annual allowance to Hawkins were not redeemed, he complained to the emperor and the latter sent him to Abul Hasan. The complaint enraged Abul Hasan and he denied Hawkins not only comfortable living but also prohibited him from standing near the emperor where high officials generally stood (within the Red Rail, a place of high honour).<sup>54</sup> Hawkins again complained to the emperor but Jahangir did not pay much attention to this. Hawkins' exclusion from the place of honour was due to the malice of Abul Hasan as Hawkins observes. But it is obvious that Abul Hasan would not have dared to take such a step without the emperor's sanction. The real

reason was probably that given by Jourdain. According to him Hawkins broke the regulation which Jahangir issued in order to abstain himself from his usual indulgence in strong drink and ordered that none of his courtiers should come into his presence smelling of liquor.<sup>55</sup> This evidently brought about his discomfiture.

Abul Hasan in the summer of 1611 was sent to the Deccan and Mirza Ghiyas Beg, Itimad-ud-daula<sup>56</sup> became the new *wazir* who pleaded to the emperor for Hawkins. Besides, Hawkins presented 'jewels' to Nurjahan,<sup>57</sup> and also to Ghiyas Beg (Itimad-ud-daula) and his son Asaf Khan. Once more Jahangir allowed the English to trade freely at Surat and establish a factory there. In return Hawkins presented a ruby ring to Jahangir. This time the protest came from one of the high officials and 'chief favourites'.<sup>58</sup> He represented that this would entail 'the utter overthrow' of the trade of Gujarat. Thereupon, Jahangir issued orders that he would not grant trade privileges and allow to establish factory at the sea ports to the English. But he asked Hawkins to remain with him in return of a good remuneration.<sup>59</sup>

In this way Jahangir granted Hawkins commercial privileges thrice and withdrew these thrice. It indicates Jahangir's vacillating attitude. Being exasperated at this vacillating attitude of the emperor, Hawkins asked his 'dismissal' from the court and requested for the answer to the letter of the English king which he had brought to Jahangir. He was permitted to depart but the answer was denied. Fortunately at this time the fleet of Sir Henry Middleton arrived at Surat, seized three Mughal ships from the port and demanded the safe arrival of Hawkins. Thereupon, Hawkins arrived safely and boarded the ship with his wife on January 26, 1612.<sup>60</sup>

#### VI. Mukarrab's Farsightedness :

The motives which actuated Mukarrab to resist Hawkins' design of establishing factory at Surat are not on record. During his governorship at Surat and Cambay he had come in close contact with both the Portuguese and the English. But he knew the

former more closely than the latter. The Khan thought that the interests of the empire would be served better by maintaining the long-standing commercial contact with the Portuguese than by encouraging the 'tenuous English commerce'.<sup>61</sup> In order to understand Mukarrab's attitude to the English it is necessary to remember that even without any allotted land in the town of Surat the Portuguese had dominated its seaborne trade for nearly a century.<sup>62</sup> From their strongholds, Diu and Daman, they levied licence fees on Gujarat ships; their merchant fleets carried on extensive trading activities with the ports of Gujarat, and their navy, were ever vigilant to guard the coastal water left undefended by the Mughals.<sup>63</sup> Naturally, therefore, the local Mughal officials of Gujarat, long accustomed to regard the Portuguese not only as invincible, but almost as the supreme authority on the Indian seas, were frightened by the arrival of the English.<sup>64</sup> As a Governor of sea ports he was better posted with commercial matters than the emperor. Thus his anxiety was quite natural. Mukarrab even went to the extent of organising a collective resistance against the English with the help of other nobles and Surat merchants who raised a common outcry against them. Mukarrab apprehended that if the English got a footing in India they would pose a danger to their commercial interests and also they might acquire some coastal territories. Future events showed that this apprehension surprisingly became true. It is obvious from the above discussion that Mukarrab on account of his intimate knowledge of the white traders wanted to introduce a note of caution in the shaping of Jahangir's commercial relations with them and this prompted him to plead for a stiff policy towards the English.

#### *VII. Jahangir's attitude towards English :*

Jahangir's attitude towards Hawkins is somewhat vacillating and hence confusing. According Hawkins a hearty welcome Jahangir sought to keep him in his court as a resident ambassador. He even warned his favourite Mukarrab Khan not to impede the English in any way. The motives which actuated Jahangir are not on record,

but in all probability, Jahangir might have intended to grant him some commercial privileges and by keeping Hawkins in his court he wanted to exhibit him to the Portuguese as their possible contender and in the event of any further Portuguese hostility, the English presence would act as a counter force to them. But Jahangir's hesitancy in granting some of Hawkins' demands were most probably due to the following reasons :

- (i) Hawkins' demand of building factories was one of extra-territoriality and this extra-territoriality was a concept which was quite unknown to him and he had to assess the far-reaching significance of such grant ;
- (ii) he had to assess the reaction of the Portuguese because the grant of concessions to Hawkins might endanger the privileged position of the Portuguese in the Mughal empire ;
- (iii) finally, he could not ignore the opposition of his officers and the merchants of Surat. Nevertheless, Jahangir could not turn a blind eye to the possibility of future profit that might accrue from the Anglo-Mughal trade relations.

So Jahangir ordered that the English should come to his ports and nobody should oppose them.<sup>65</sup> But the stiff opposition against Hawkins continued and thus Jahangir had to withdraw finally all commercial privileges granted to Hawkins. Noticing the anti-English trend, Hawkins refused to stay any longer. After spending near about 30 months with Jahangir, he quitted Agra with his wife on November 2, 1611<sup>66</sup> not in disgust but really in disgrace and with an empty hand as the East India Company record show.<sup>67</sup>

### VIII. Futile Mission of Hawkins

From the very start Hawkins harboured a feeling of antipathy towards Mukarrab Khan, the influential nobleman, in charge of Mughal Ports in Gujarat. Hawkins repeatedly harped on his hypothesis of Mukarrab Khan's conspiracy with the Portuguese to murder him, though he failed to produce any proof thereof. It must, however, be conceded that the Khan showed much generosity in allowing Hawkins to unlade his cargoes, and to buy and sell at

Surat. Hawkins, in return, termed the Khan a 'dog' in his conversation with his colleagues.<sup>68</sup> Hawkins complained to the emperor that Mukarrab did not pay him his dues (i.e. the price of some goods purchased). When Abul Hasan, the emperor's *Wazir*, offered Hawkins the dues, he did not accept the same on the ground that it was less than his demand. This was his most unwise move. He repeatedly complained against Mukarrab as a result of which he not only earned displeasure of the emperor<sup>69</sup> but also of Mukarrab Khan and Abul Hasan. A shrewd and seasoned diplomat should have considered the advisability of remaining on good terms with these two most influential personalities of the Mughal court. But Hawkins persisted in his complaint to the king against them. Thus very unwillingly he turned them into becoming his staunch enemies. The Surat merchants and traders did not want to establish any trade transaction with Hawkins and his party. Hawkins himself admits that he began to buy Indian commodities at Surat 'against the will of all the merchants in the town'.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the sellers were not the merchants but the high Mughal officials who apart from their official duties used to carry on commercial activities and had the courage to ignore the merchants' decision.

### FOOTNOTES

- 1 RORIO, 179.
- 2 ETI, 60, William Keeling was chosen for the post of General of the fleet.
- 3 For letter to Akbar see FLB 105-106. The letter was addressed to the emperor Akbar in ignorance of the news of his death. Orme, however, mentions that Hawkins brought another letter from E. I. Co. to the Great Mughal, Jahangir, without giving his source of information. Hist. Frag. 319.
- 4 In ETI, 62, Foster shows that the fleet set sail early in March 1607. But in EQ. 186, he says that the fleet left Plymouth in the middle of April 1607. Since this is a later work, we may accept April as correct.
- 5 ETI, 62; Markham, 389; DNB, Vol. 7, 20; Elphinstone wrongly says 1609.
- 6 Saran, PGM, 216; Thevenot, Pt. iii, 19-20; JIH, April, 1966.
- 7 Identity of Mukarrab is given afterwords.
- 8 Saran, Loc. cit, 216.

## FOOT NOTES

- 9 These two departments were usually amalgamated under the Mughals although a distinction seems to have been kept up between the jurisdictions of the various officials connected with these departments. Saran, Loc. cit. 216.
- 10 Paymaster. Provincial *Bakhshi* was generally combined also that of the political remembrancer. Saran, Loc. cit., 176, 197. See also Glossary.
- 11 Saran, Loc. cit. See also Glossary.
- 12 *Ibid.* 215-16 ; JIH, April, 1966, 57 ; IHRC, iii, 1921, 36. The Embassy, 27n. In the LR (iii, 298) Mukarrab Khan is wrongly shown as viceroy of Gujarat. The viceroy of Gujarat was Qulij Khan. Ibn Hasan (158) has described Mukarrab as Governor of Gujarat.
- 13 ETI, 70.
- 14 Ain. ii (Gladwin) 241-42 ; Bird, 119. At the time of its conquest in 1573, including the receipts from port dues and from a provision tax, this territory was estimated to yield a yearly revenue of Rs. 4,00,000.
- 15 Commissariat, ii, 5.
- 16 The Company had directed Hawkins to call himself a 'messenger' merely but he announced himself as an ambassador from the king of England—a pretension to which plausibility was lent by the fact, that the royal letter spoke of 'this bearer our servant'. Embassy, xvi.
- 17 ETI, 71. Name is not given. He has been described as 'Manrott'. LR ; i, 24.
- 18 ETI, 7 ; Markham, 390.
- 18a ETI, 72.
- 19 Tuzuk, i, 27.
- 20 In his early years the Khan used to be associated with his father's professional activities. Once when Akbar was hurt by a buck in course of a deer fight, Mukarrab assisted his father in dressing and healing Akbar's wound (M. U., i, 616). As Jahangir's companion in childhood and youth he was highly esteemed at court. Jahangir liked him so much that he used to say that few kings possessed a servant like Hasan (LR, iii, 298). As a reward for his professional services, Jahangir, on becoming emperor conferred on him the title of Mukarrab Khan (the Lord of my health IHRC, 1921, 36 ; LR, iii, 298), as well as the rank of 5000 (MU, i, 616).
- 21 Barbosa, ii, 76 ; Correa, i, 189 ; ii, 253 ; Albuquerque, iii, 96 ; Moreland, From Akbar to Aurangzeb, 221-22.
- 22 ETI, 76.
- 23 ETI, 77 ; Hist. Frag. 320.
- 24 Custom duties at Surat during this time were 3½% on all imports and exports 2% on money either gold or silver. Pelsaert, 42.
- 25 ETI, 72.
- 26 There are several references in the Travellers' Accounts, Letters Received, and Factory Records about the commercial activities of the Mughal nobles.

- 27 ETI, 70, 125 ; LR, i, xxix.
- 28 Long boats, Hist. Frag., 320.
- 29 Hist. Frag., 320.
- 30 ETI, 73-74.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Finch notes that the governor of Surat called all the chief merchants of the town on October 13, 1608 upon their conscience to value the English cloth and the rate fixed by the merchants. Mukarrab had no responsibility in fixing the value of the goods. ETI, 127.
- 33 Khwaja Hasan Ali afterwards became *Shahbandar* of Surat. The actual date of assuming his office is not known.
- 34 ETI, 127.
- 35 For *Mahmudi* see Appendix, A.
- 36 ETI, 77, 80. There is no allusion to Hawkins in the *Tuzuk*. It signifies that Jahangir did not give any importance to his coming.
- 37 EQ, 188. The letter of James I to Jahangir brought by Hawkins spoke of 'this bearer our servant'. Embassy, XVI.
- 38 Du Jarric testifies that Hawkins brought with him a Spanish version of the royal letter. DJ, iii, 194.
- 39 Interpreter was Father Jerome Xavier. Maclagan, 79.
- 40 ETI, 81.
- 41 The title given by Jahangir to the man who brought him the news of the defeat of his rebel son Khusru. *Tuzuk*, i, 63.
- 42 ETI, 82-83 ; L. R. i, 23 ; DJ, iii, 194 ; Payne 80. The Jesuit account gives Hawkins' stipend as 30,000 rupees. But the contemporary value of £3,200 in rupee was 28,444. Jahangir called him by the name of English Khan. Red Rails in the court was a place of high honour.
- 43 ETI, 82-83.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 82-84 ; LR, i, 23 ; Payne, 80.
- 45 The office of *vakil* was conferred upon Asaf Khan. But Jahangir did not trust him. So Abul Hasan acted as his *diwan*. Khwaja Abul Hasan at first entered the service of Prince Daniyal during the reign of Akbar and was made *diwan* of the Deccan. When Jahangir ascended the throne, the Khwaja was summoned from the Deccan to court. In 1613, he attained the high office of *Mir Bakhshi*. When Itimadu-d-daulah, died, the Khwaja was made chief *Diwan*. He had the title of *ruknu-s-Sultanat*. MU, i, 128.
- 46 Gandevi, about 30 miles south east of Surat, at that time a port and manufacturing town of some consequence. Kerr, viii, 331.
- 47 ETI, 85-86.
- 48 Jourdain, 136.
- 49 In fact the complaint was made by a widowed woman, whose daughter was put to death in Mukarrab's house at Cambay. On investigation it was found that outrage had been perpetrated by one of Mukarrab's servants, who

- was thereupon put to death and allowance granted to the complainant ; while Mukarrab himself had his pay reduced by one half. Tuzuk, i. 172.
- 50 Ballace i.e. Balass is said to mean Badakhshi, from Badakhshan their place of origin. ETI. 88n.
- 51 Rati, the seed of Abrus precatorious, used as Jeweller's weight ETI. 88n.
- 52 The letter was actually written to Abul Hasan, the chief *diwan* of Jahangir whom Hawkins wrongly mentioned as 'head *wazir*'. ETI. 11n.
- 53 Khwaja Jahan Kabuli, whose name was Dost Muhammad, was a native of Kabul. He became Jahangir's *wazir* as his daughter was married to prince Salim. He obtained high rank and became a colleague of I'timad-ud-Daula and title of Khwaja Jahan Kabuli was given by Salim when he became Jahangir. The empire was divided half-by-half (*az-carar-i-manasifa*) I'timad was appointed '*vazir* of the half dominions'. Tuzuk, i. 9, 27.
- 54 ETI, 91. According to Jourdain, Khwaja Abul Hasan told Hawkins that 'being a merchant he might ply his merchandise and not look for anything at the kings hands' i.e. emperor's activities. Jourdain, 155.
- 55 Jourdain 156. Foster comments, Hawkins' own indiscretion in disregarding the emperor's order.....provided his enemies with an excuse for excluding him from his favoured position "within the Red Rails" ETI. xxxiii. But Hawkins used to drink wine with Jahangir on the same table.
- 56 Abul Hasan was put incharge of the province of the Daccan and Ghiyas Beg was made *diwan* and given the title of I'timad-ud-Daula and was afterwards appointed as *Wazir*. His daughter Nurmahal (Nurjahan) was married to the emperor in 1611. The marriage entirely changed the position of the *wazir*. I'timad became the chief *diwan*, Ibn Hasan, 172-177.
- 57 Markham. 415, Nurjahan is described by Hawkins as Jahangir's 'paramour'.
- 58 Name is not known. He was most probably Mukarrab Khan.
- 59 ETI, 95.
- 60 Hist. Frag. 322-23.
- 61 EQ. 190.
- 62 Danvers, i, 3.
- 63 From the days of Albuquerque, who had forged the links of his country's empire, the Portuguese had enjoyed an unchallenged supremacy in the eastern seas. SFFI. 12.
- 64 Many contemporary writers have alluded to the helplessness of the Mughals even when they were sometimes forced to assert their strength against Portuguese. De Laet (H & B) 116 ; ETI, 89.
- 65 ETI, 89.
- 66 LR, i, 175 ; ETI, 83-84 ; Maclagan, 79-81.
- 67 LR, i, 158.
- 68 ETI, 75, 86.
- 69 Jourdain, 155:
- 70 ETI, 73.



## CHAPTER IV

### COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF WILLIAM FINCH IN JAHANGIR'S INDIA ( 1608-1611 )

#### I. *Finch at Surat :*

Among the merchants on board the *Hector*<sup>1</sup> was William Finch, a native merchant of London, who landed with Hawkins at Surat in 1608. He narrated an interesting episode according to which they had attended a dinner party given by an Indian merchant. There they were quite taken aback to learn this was the very merchant whose ship was plundered by an English Captain and his men.<sup>2</sup> Finch and his associates tried to impress upon him that the pirates must have been the 'Flemings' and not the English, but they could not convince him. However, the Indian merchant assured them of his good will.<sup>3</sup> It is worth-while to note that the Indian merchants felicitated the English merchants with dinner. The question arises, why this felicitation? The Indian merchants perhaps wanted to establish commercial transaction with the English which they thought would be a lucrative one. Thus the commercial attitude of the Indian merchants was clear. Finch's other experience was something bitter. He found that Mukarrab Khan's<sup>4</sup> agent had bought some of their articles<sup>5</sup> at the rate fixed by the local merchants which according to him was far below the market rate. Finch was obviously unhappy. He remained at Surat in charge of a

small stock of goods when Hawkins himself proceeded to Agra. From Finch's letter in reply to Hawkins dated 12th July, 1609, it is learnt that at least on one occasion, he criticised Hawkins for his wrath against Mukarrab which according to him was quite unreasonable. In the letter Finch writes that Hawkins was incensed as the price paid by Mukarrab in purchasing iron from the English was below the market rate. But the iron, Finch writes, was mostly eaten with rust and almost spoiled.<sup>6</sup> Mukarrab did not return the damaged article though he could have easily done so. But once Mukarrab had accepted the consignment irrespective of its quality no question arose of returning it. It is clear that in the quarrel between Mukarrab and Hawkins, Finch did not support Hawkins wholeheartedly.

## II. Finch's Shabby Commercial Dealings:

On getting Hawkins' summons Finch left Surat in January 1610, and reached Agra on April 4.<sup>7</sup> In the afternoon Hawkins brought him before Jahangir. The reaction of Finch consequent upon the meeting is not known. He remained there with Hawkins for more than a year. Towards the close of the year Hawkins sent Finch to Biana<sup>8</sup> to buy indigo. At that time a vessel belonging to emperor's mother,<sup>9</sup> who carried on extensive trading operations, was being laden at Surat for a voyage to Mokha. A merchant had accordingly come on her behalf to buy indigo at Biana and he nearly concluded his bargain when Finch arrived there. No Indian would have dared hinder royal interest, but the Englishman ignoring the court reaction, made the bid against the Queen-mother's agent and bought the indigo.

The angry merchant informed Abul Hasan, the Mughal *Wazir*, and the Queen-mother was duly informed of this English interference. Consequently it must have come to the notice of Jahangir with the result that Jahangir's wrath against Hawkins knew no bounds and Hawkins' position at court became critical.<sup>10</sup> It is strange that Finch did not mention the event in his narrative. But John Jourdain, an English employee of E. I. Co., at that time residing at

Agra, and not unfriendly towards Finch had left the above account. The event very clearly suggests that while bargaining, the Mughal agent did not prohibit Finch from purchasing the article for which Finch must have paid a larger amount. The indigo-seller also did not hesitate to sell his article to a foreigner ignoring the royal agent. This clearly reveals that the merchants were not deprived of liberty in matters of commercial transaction.

### *III. Rupture with Hawkins :*

Finch was then sent to Lahore to sell the indigo which he had bought at Biana. Reaching Lahore he gathered information that 'there was good profit to be made of it at Aleppo'. So he wrote to Hawkins, seeking permission either to depart overland with a caravan bound for Aleppo, 'upon his own charge' or to be paid off from the Co's service. Hawkins disliked the idea. He, on the other hand, wanted to stop him.<sup>11</sup> It is not clear why Hawkins did not allow Finch to go to Aleppo for selling indigo that belonged to the E. I. Co. As the Co's main object was to derive high profit—and, if this purpose could be served by Finch,—it is not clear what fault Finch committed for which Hawkins became cross with him. In all probability Hawkins could not believe Finch and thought he 'might abscond with the indigo'. Being in charge of all commercial dealings in India on behalf of the Co., Hawkins did not want to put anybody out of his reach as far his authority is concerned. Hawkins tried to stop Finch's journey and get hold of the caravan with Portuguese help. For this he gave a 'power of Attorney' to the Portuguese Jesuits at Lahore. Not only was a power of attorney despatched secretly, but Nicholas Ufflet another Englishman was sent for the same purpose. But what action was actually taken by the Portuguese is not known. The safe arrival of Finch at Baghdad makes it clear that the Portuguese did not take any action against Finch and Finch managed to escape without any hindrance.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the hostility between Hawkins and the Portuguese, the former did not hesitate to seek the assistance of the latter. He preferred the Portuguese to the Mughals in this respect. In fact, he

did not rely upon the Mughals and utilised the opportunity to come to an understanding with the Portuguese.

Finch, however, was shocked at this humiliation when he came to learn all these from Jourdain's letter to himself informing him of the coming of an English fleet towards India and urging him to come to Agra so that they might start journey together to Surat. Finch not only declined to come, he told that he did not want to see the face of Hawkins.<sup>18</sup> Thus the rift between Hawkins and Finch widened.

Finch left Lahore along with some other English merchants and safely reached Baghdad. But there all except one (Mr. Thomas Styles) died as a result of drinking infected water in August 1613<sup>14</sup>. The local ruler at once confiscated Finch's goods and imprisoned the survivor. Eventually with the help of venetian vice-consul, Styles effected his escape and at once set out for Aleppo.

Finch held that the 'prospects of English trade in India were hopeless'.<sup>15</sup> No other foreign visitor had expressed such a view. Finch did not explain why he had such a dark view of India's trade. But this by itself is striking. In all probability, his experience regarding the Biana indigo led him to apprehend that free trading in Mughal India was impossible. Future events showed that Finch was a poor prophet.

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### FOOT NOTES

- 1 Others were Anthony Marlow, Mr. Buck, Mr. Pennel and Mr. Dorchester, LR, i, 12.
- 2 Sir Edward Michelbourn was that captain. He obtained James I's permission in 1604 to undertake an expedition to Asia, disregarding the Co's charter. He returned home in 1606, and the Co's Court obtained the impression, that he had financed his voyage by means of Piracy. Steensgaard, CCC, 112, 115.
- 3 ETI, 126.
- 4 The then *Mutasaddi* i.e. Port Administrator of Surat. See for him Ch. III ante.

- 5 English cloth, some were Devonshire kersies and the rest were other kersies. Kersies means coarse woolen cloth. ETI, 125-126.
- 6 LR i, 23-24.
- 7 At Agra he received 'tempting offers to attach himself permanently to the service of Jahangir'. DNB (1908), vii, 20. But nothing is found in Finch's journal, LR, Purchas. Jourdain does not support the statement, Hawkins is also silent.
- 8 Near Agra, famous for its indigo.
- 9 Jahangir's mother, was a daughter of Raja Bharmal Kachhwaha of Amber, called Maryam Uzzamani after marriage. Her Hindu name was Man-Mati. In Jaipur records she is called Shah Bai. A. L. Srivastava, Akbar, i, 57n.
- 10 Jourdain, 156; ETI, 103, 124.
- 11 ETI, 124.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Jourdain, 157-158.
- 14 Other merchant was Capt. Thomas Boyes and his servant Lawrence Pigot.
- 15 Sir Henry Middleton notes that in October 1611 he received a letter written by Finch at Lahore, addressed to the Commander of any of the Co's ships arriving off Surat, and announcing that he was going home overland, as there was no hope of the establishment of English trade in India. ETI, 124.

## CHAPTER V

### INCHOATE BEGINNINGS OF THE ANGLO-MUGHAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

( 1611-1615 )

While Hawkins was still in the Mughal court in expectation of some rosy prospects, the experience of Sir Henry Middleton, the General of the Sixth Voyage (April 1610) of the English East India Company, was different. He had reached the bar of Surat on September 26, 1611. But the local Mughal authorities of Surat did not permit the English to engage in any commercial transactions with the Indian merchants for fear of Portuguese reprisals.<sup>1</sup> In great resentment Middleton left the Indian coast in February 1612, leaving behind his letters, describing his experiences that the Indians were treacherous and that no commerce was to be expected, for being delivered to any Englishman who would come after him.<sup>2</sup> He then proceeded to the Red Sea, where he took his revenge by forcing the Indian vessels he found there to exchange goods with him at his own rates, and further—in the case of Gujaratis—to pay a heavy ransom as the price of release. Nicholas Downton, accompanying Middleton, outlined this policy of vengeance. The English fleet would for the present return to the Red Sea but would force the Mughal ships there to exchange their goods for their own and at their price. In addition, the ships from Surat would also be obliged to pay a heavy ransom before they were released.<sup>3</sup>

A. M. C. R.—4

*I. Eagerness of the Surat authorities for establishment of commercial relations with the English :*

The English company had despatched yet another fleet (April 1611) under John Saris (eighth Voyage) with instructions to try for trade at Aden, Mocha and Surat. He reached the Red Sea in March 1612 and cherished great hopes of establishing a permanent trade, but this hope was shattered by the re-appearance of Middleton on his mission of vengeance. Much against his will, Saris was forced by Middleton to take part in his subsequent piratical activities on the Indian shipping in that area and to join in the blockade of Mocha in return for a share in the plunder. Giving up his expectation of establishing trade at Aden, Mocha and Surat, Saris sailed for Bantam.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile the Company despatched the *Dragon* and the *Hosiander* (tenth voyage) of which Thomas Best was the Captain (or General, as he was usually styled). He had had considerable knowledge of commercial transactions, navigation and also naval warfare.<sup>5</sup> Hitherto a professional merchant with some knowledge of navigation had been employed as the commander of the fleet. But the selection of Best indicated clearly that the Company grasped the importance of having a General in the real sense of the term. Fighting with the Portuguese was unavoidable in order to obtain an access to Indian markets. A royal commission was given to Best authorising him (January 6, 1612) to negotiate an agreement on behalf of the king of Great Britain with the 'Great king of the Mughals or any of his deputies'.<sup>6</sup>

The fleet sailed in February 1612 and reached the coast of India near Daman where Best anchored at day-break on September 1. Learning of their arrival, the local authorities of Surat sent a deputation (including the brother of the *mutasaddi* of Surat,<sup>7</sup> Jadu<sup>8</sup> and 3 or 4 Indian merchants) on September 5 to Captain Best. They came by boat and boarded the *Dragon* and stayed with the English till September 7. It is not known why they did so, but future developments would suggest that they came to persuade Best for opening up English trade with Surat.<sup>9</sup>

This eagerness on the part of the local Mughal administration at Surat for English friendship is in sharp contrast to the earlier refusal to permit trade to Middleton. This was perhaps due to the following reasons. Firstly, Middleton's piratical activities against Mughal shipping demonstrated that the English could inflict as much damage on Indian overseas trade as the Portuguese. Hence the Surat administration might have apprehended that this batch of Englishmen under Best arrived with the same purpose of retaliation as that of Middleton, if commerce were denied to them. Surat lived by its sea-borne trade and its merchants recognised the fact that Mughal commercial intercourse with the Red Sea ports, the mainstay of the foreign trade of Surat, was at the mercy of any nation having a strong navy.

Secondly, Middleton 'had taken one of the Portugal's frigates and sunk another' in the Red Sea.<sup>10</sup> By this spirited action, the English must have created an impression that the English as a nation were by no means inferior to the Portuguese on the sea of which hitherto the latter had been the unchallenged masters.

Thirdly, by establishing friendly relations with the English, the local authorities at Surat sought to retrieve the captured Mughal vessels from Middleton. Jourdain who accompanied Hawkins and was then at Surat wrote in his letter from Surat to Middleton (Oct. 12, 1611) apprising the latter that the Indian merchants were requesting Jourdain almost 'daily' to write to Middleton 'to release the ships'.<sup>11</sup>

The negotiations of the Indian mercantile deputation proved successful when Best 'came to anchor at the bar of Surat' at four in the afternoon. Therefrom Thomas Kerridge<sup>12</sup> together with the Indians and three other Englishmen<sup>13</sup> were sent up to the city in a country boat in order to examine the possibility of trade. In a few days Kerridge came back (September 11) and reported that the party had been warmly received at Surat. He brought with him a formal assurance signed by Mirza Faizullah, the *mutasaddi* of Surat,<sup>14</sup> and the 'justice' (probably the Qazi) for 'quiet and peaceable trade and intercourse' with the English.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, a Council held on



September 22 on board the *Dragon* decided to send a messenger to the emperor at Agra requesting to 'permit' the English to 'settle factory, otherwise to depart his country'. They also decided to land a substantial portion of cargo at Surat. Thereafter, some English merchants landed to 'dispatch the post', i.e., to arrange to send the letter written to the emperor and also to 'send barks' to their ships for loading goods.<sup>16</sup>

Incensed by this close Anglo-Mughal commercial relations, some small Portuguese vessels intercepted a boat (September 30), having three Englishmen,<sup>17</sup> whom the Portuguese arrested, and, sent them as captives to Goa.<sup>18</sup> Apprehending a secret understanding between the Mughals and the Portuguese, behind this move of the latter, Best detained a Gujarati vessel coming from the Red Sea to Surat and also a boat laden with rice, declaring these two would be held as long as all the Englishmen arrested by the Portuguese on September 30 were not returned to him. Best, however, decided to wait for this till October 5.<sup>19</sup> Obviously Best wanted to use the Mughals as a lever thinking the latter would exert pressure on the Portuguese.

## II. Commercial arrangement (1612) between the Mughals at Surat and Captain Best :

The hard-pressed local Mughal authorities at Surat at once opened negotiations with Best.

A local deputation comprising four important local merchants of Surat, headed by Mir Jafar, (a leading local merchant), and many other local merchants, came aboard the *Dragon* on October 6. Giving a 'great present'<sup>20</sup> to Best, Mir Jafar requested him to release the vessels and the men, expressing their inability to do anything for the English captives held by the Portuguese. Best, however, did not release the ship but allowed the remaining passengers and crews of the captured ship to go ashore.<sup>21</sup> On October 10, Best sailed back to Swally and there awaited developments.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile the messenger sent by the English to the emperor at Agra negotiated with the latter and requested him to allow the

English to trade freely at Surat. Accordingly, Shaikh Yusuf, the *Diwan* of Ahmedabad<sup>23</sup> being directed by Jahangir, came to Swally on October 17<sup>24</sup> accompanied by the *mutasaddi* of Surat<sup>25</sup> and a number of principal local merchants.<sup>26</sup> Best also landed with some of his followers on October 19 and concluded an agreement with them for free trading and 'settling a factory in any part' of the empire. The agreement was signed by the *diwan* of Ahmedabad, *mutasaddi* of Surat and four principal Gujarati merchants, but subject to confirmation by the emperor himself within forty days. The terms of the agreement were as follows :

- (i) Middleton's high-handed activities were to be 'remitted, acquitted and cleared' i.e. to be excused and for that reason no retaliation was to be taken against Best's fleet.
- (ii) The Surat authorities were to obtain royal confirmation of the agreement at their own 'cost' within forty days.
- (iii) An English plenipotentiary was to be stationed at the Mughal Court 'during the tyme of the sayd peace and commerce' to settle all disputes and 'weighty questions' that might be developed and 'tended to the breach of the said peace'.
- (iv) Upon the arrival of English 'ships in (the) road of Swally', announcement was to be made for 'three several days together', that the Indian merchants were free to trade with the English.
- (v) The English were to pay 3½% customs (*ad valorem*) for their 'commodities'. But the 'Governor of Ahmedabad' could allow them 'to write unto the Great Mughal' to reduce it further by ½%.
- (vi) All small wares ('pattie and pedlary')<sup>27</sup> not exceeding '10 rialls of 8'<sup>28</sup> were to be 'free of customs'.
- (vii) 10 maunds<sup>29</sup> of mahmudis<sup>30</sup> were to be allowed to carry by the English from the shore to Surat town (evidently for purchasing Indian commodities) and back again 'after the same rate'. The '*Mukadam*' (*Muqaddam* i.e. Headman of the village) was to supply carts (for sending goods purchased

by the English) for Surat and on the return journey from Surat carts would be supplied by the broker.<sup>31</sup>

- (viii) Neither the law of escheat was to be applied to the property of any deceased Englishman nor 'fees nor any kind of taxes nor customs' was to be demanded on the deceased property.
- (ix) If all the Englishmen would 'die here in this part', i.e. in the Mughal empire, Mughal officers would be 'appointed' for preparing 'true inventorie' of 'all such monies, goods, jewels, provisions, Apparell' etc. belonging to those deceased Englishmen. These would be preserved 'safely' and delivered to the 'Generall, Captaine, or Merchants' of English ship newly arrived in lieu of delivery receipt.
- (x) The Mughals would have to liberate the English and their goods from the captivity of the Portuguese and those to be delivered to the English or the value of goods instantly without demanding any charge.
- (xi) The servants of the Company were not to be held responsible for any acts of piracy committed by any European or 'disobedient servants of England'. Such cases would, however, be brought through proper channel, to the English sovereign for 'redress and restitution'.
- (xii) All 'provisions or victuals' (i.e. food articles) costing not 'above 1000 dollars'<sup>32</sup> were to be customs free.
- (xiii) 'Speedy justice' was to be dispensed to the English to remove the cause of dissatisfaction.<sup>33</sup>

On 24th October, 1612,<sup>34</sup> Capt. Best landed at Surat with the presents and the letter from the English King for Jahangir and came to the tent of Shaikh Yusuf, the *Diwan* of Ahmedabad, to show him and then took the same back to the ship. Best showed the presents (meant for the emperor) to the *Diwan* perhaps with the specific hope that the novelties would make his way clear when its news would reach the court. Best demanded that unless the 'articles concluded' earlier were confirmed by the Great Mughal and an assurance for the reply of the letter of the king of England to the

Mughal emperor was received by him, he 'would not deliver the present' and the royal letter. Another set of presents were given to the *Diwan* and his son. On October 28, the *Diwan* Shaikh Yusuf, his son, and some of his servants came aboard Best's ship and left that night leaving the servants there with money for purchasing 2000 covados (yards) of English cloth. It indicates that Shaikh Yusuf also carried on commercial activities on his own account.

Jahangir endeavoured to improve Anglo-Mughal commercial relations, by directing the *Diwan* of Ahmedabad, to negotiate with Best, and to allow him to carry on trade. Resenting the English bid for entry into Mughal India's commerce, the Portuguese viceroy of Goa, Nuno da Cunha, in November 1612 sought to destroy the English fleet once for all. But the Portuguese fleet was routed by Captain Best with heavy losses before thousands of country people.<sup>35</sup> The victory had a great impact on the Indians. Having no strength on the sea, the Indians regarded the Portuguese as an invincible naval power. But the successful defence of the English against the whole Portuguese armada, opened the eyes of the Mughal authorities to the fact that the Portuguese supremacy was no longer unchallenged.

The news of the discomfiture of the Portuguese was relayed to Jahangir by Sardar Khan,<sup>36</sup> Mughal army commander, who happened to be present there at that time. The prestige of the English immensely grew in the court as they now appeared as a possible contestant of the Portuguese navy. In the words of Kerridge, Jahangir showed more affection 'to us than to our enemies', i.e. the Portuguese.<sup>37</sup>

Notwithstanding Jahangir's apparently favourable attitude to the English then, the latter were soon disillusioned in Jahangir's unwillingness to give the English an imperial *firman* for they found it extremely difficult to obtain the emperor's seal on the *firman*. Most probably, Jahangir desired the English to stay in Mughal India as long as the Portuguese menace would exist, but did not want the English to stay permanently in this country. The manifestation of

this motive is clear from the subsequent dilly—dallying on the part of Jahangir.

*III. Draft of Imperial firman to the English left unsigned :*

Best's defence against the Portuguese was followed by the formal grant to him of what purported to be an imperial *firman* (January 11, 1613),<sup>38</sup> confirming the terms of agreement which had been settled provisionally with the Surat authorities. But the document lacked the imperial seal and Best suspected it as a 'counterfate'<sup>39</sup> i.e. counterfeit. No copy of this document is extant, nor is anything known of its contents, beyond the statement that it gave a general approval to the arrangement made with the English, but that its terms were vague and non-committal may be inferred from the fact that the Surat authorities endeavoured to evade the formal presentation of the document to Best.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, he decided to send Paul Canning,<sup>41</sup> one of the factors at Surat, to the imperial court. The business entrusted to Canning were :

- (i) to get the King's seal on the document issued to them ;
  - (ii) to present to the emperor, the royal letter which Best's fleet had brought from King James ;
  - (iii) to secure a fit place for the English shipping to anchor ;
  - (iv) to fortify it for defence against any possible attack ;
- and (v) to procure an answer to the letter of the king of England.

Thinking probably that 'Music was a rage'<sup>42</sup> in the Mughal court, Best sent two English musicians with Canning.<sup>43</sup> The party reached Ajmer (where the imperial court was then), in April 1613 after overcoming several difficulties on the way Canning delivered the presents and the royal letter to the emperor. But Canning failed to win royal favour and could not meet the emperor for the second time and subsequently died of smallpox.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile Best left Surat (January 17, 1613) leaving a handful of staff under the Presidentship of Thomas Aldworth.<sup>45</sup>

*IV. Deputation of Thomas Kerridge to Imperial Court :*

Thomas Kerridge, who also came in Best's fleet was then deputed

in June 1613 by Aldworth, the President of the Company at Surat, to get the emperor's seal on the document granted to them and to complete the unfinished task of Paul Canning. Kerridge wrote to the Directors of the Company in London from Ajmer (September 20, 1614) summing up the result of his mission at the imperial court. Describing his meeting with Mukarrab fruitless, he wrote that the Khan accused him for Middleton's piratical activities. At this Kerridge promised to make good the loss if the Mughal authorities granted them their demands. Meanwhile the information came from Surat that the Portuguese 'took a ship belonging to Surat valued at 8 or 9,00,000 dollars'. Immediately Mukarrab Khan was sent to Surat by Jahangir to retrieve the ship with its passengers and crews and cargoes. When Kerridge met Mukarrab before his departure, the latter told Kerridge that the emperor's 'seal to the articles were needless'. But the Khan instructed him to submit a 'petition to the king'. Receiving the petition Jahangir assured Kerridge that 'it should be effected' and Mukarrab was asked to give the English a 'convenient place to the English to fortify, provided it might rebound to the profit' of the emperor. Meanwhile Kerridge received from Surat the copy of the letters of the king of England 'in English and Portuguese' which were translated into Persian and delivered to Jahangir. The latter asked Kerridge to be present at the court 'next day'. He was then told that Mukarrab would give the answer to his king. Although Kerridge urged that the Khan was not the fit person to write an answer to the letter of the king of England yet Kerridge 'prevailed nothing'.<sup>46</sup>

#### V. *Anti-Mukarrab Campaign by the English :*

The English apprehended that the failure of Kerridge was due to Mukarrab's anti-English attitude.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the English merchants carried on a bitter campaign against him, as we gather from frequent references to it, in the letters written by the English to the East India Company in London. Nicholas Downton in his letter to the Directors of the Company in London on November 20, 1614, described Mukarrab as an 'arch enemy' of the English.<sup>48</sup>

Commissariat comments, 'The hostile personality of Mukarrab Khan, Governor (*mutasaddi*) of Surat from 1605-1615 (a pretty long time), looms like a dark shadow athwart the lives and fortunes' of the English at Surat.<sup>49</sup>

But soon, however, the shadow shifted. The hope of the English of seeing Mukarrab out of his office came to be fulfilled in 1613, when Jahangir transferred him to Bihar as Governor, in place of Jahangir Quli Khan,<sup>50</sup> whose record of service was unsatisfactory.<sup>51</sup> Abdulla Khan was appointed in his place as the *mutasaddi* of Surat.<sup>52</sup> As Mukarrab Khan was the chief advocate of the Portuguese cause in the court, his transfer made the position of the Portuguese insecure and bettered the prospects of the English. But a storm was brewing. Being disappointed in his endeavours to destroy Best's ships, the viceroy of Goa decided to put pressure on the Mughals to exclude the English.<sup>53</sup> Probably he was further incensed at the transfer of his trusted friend Mukarrab. In autumn of 1613 the Portuguese seized one of the largest Mughal vessels, the *Rahimi*, which was returning from the Red Sea with a rich freight although she was duly provided with a Portuguese pass. Jahangir described this act as 'contrary to treaty'<sup>54</sup> concluded during the time of Akbar, when the latter conquered Gujarat.<sup>55</sup> The Great Mughal closed all Jesuit churches, and ordered the arrest of all the Portuguese in his dominions. Mukarrab Khan was brought back from Bihar and was sent to launch an expedition against Daman and other Portuguese strongholds.<sup>56</sup>

But certain things, which he now found, on his arrival at Surat, completely transformed his earlier pro-Portuguese attitude. Firstly, on the arrival of an English fleet (of four ships) commanded by Capt. Nicholas Downton, at Swally (Oct. 15, 1614),<sup>57</sup> the Jesuits at Cambay sent one Dangie (a local banian) to Mukarrab Khan advising the latter not to allow the 'English in Surat'. In the event of disobeying the advice, the Portuguese would 'come with force, to burn' all Mughal sea towns and 'make spoil of all the ships' which the Indian merchants would 'send abroad'.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, he came to learn that the viceroy of Goa 'was preparing an armament to attack

Surat<sup>59</sup> which was then an unwallled town. These things prompted Mukarrab Khan to seek military assistance from the English against the Portuguese. Thomas Aldworth, (who had come with Best's fleet and was then in Surat), hastened to Swally, and told Downton to help the Mughals because Mukarrab had given 'large promises of future good respect'<sup>60</sup> to the English. Mukarrab also paid English gunners and trumpeters two hundred *mahmudis*<sup>61</sup> and the crews of the ships were given five hundred *mahmudis* and one hundred 'books of white *baftas*', costing two *mahmudis* per piece.<sup>62</sup> This also indicates Mukarrab's pro-English shift.

The English followed a cautious course. Downton was reluctant to be involved in a Mughal-Portuguese war and, therefore, gave Aldworth a 'non-committal answer'.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless he did not leave Swally Hole. On the contrary, one Mr. Steel was sent by him to Mukarrab (November 4, 1614), asking him to allow the English to unload the cargoes of his ships. This he at once allowed. Thus they found Mukarrab to be equally responsive. Mukarrab perhaps thought that even if the English fleet merely stood by at Swally, the Portuguese fleet, in that case, would not be able to pass through the narrow strip of water there. When the Portuguese viceroy Don Jeronimo de Azevedo of Goa actually came, his large fleet was 'snugly ensconed' in Swally Hole, but as it was protected by sand banks, the fleet could not pass through it.<sup>64</sup> It was clear to the Portuguese that their success in the struggle with the Mughal empire depended on their ability to destroy Captain Downton's fleet of four ships, which alone stood between them and Surat.

So the Portuguese squadron made an all out attack upon Downton's fleet on January 20, 1615.<sup>65</sup> But the English fleet under Downton inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Portuguese.<sup>66</sup> This had a far-reaching consequence. In the first place, Surat was saved. Secondly, Mukarrab strengthened the Anglo-Mughal commercial relations by reversing his attitude towards the Portuguese and the English. Thirdly it can be surmised that by this defeat the Portuguese, who dominated the Indian seas, since the Treaty of Tordesillas (June 1494), buttressed by the Papal permission in 1502.



to the king of Portugal to style himself 'Lord of Navigation, Conquest and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India',<sup>67</sup> were on the way of decline from the second decade of seventeenth century. As a corollary the Portuguese grip on the commerce of Mughal India was loosened. The Mughal emperor also came to learn that the command of the seas had definitely passed from the Portuguese to the English in Eastern waters. But the English, like a colossal octopus, began to extend its widespread influence, for destroying India's foreign commerce. The foundation of British commercial power in India had also been laid.

#### VI. *Edwards' Embassy* :

Downton's fleet had brought fifteen merchants headed by William Edwards and the latter was already instructed by the authorities of the Company in London to proceed to the Mughal court under the 'title and profession of a merchant'.<sup>68</sup> But as in the past the English found that merchants were not respected in the court,<sup>69</sup> the English at Surat sent Edwards as a 'messenger'. Carrying a royal letter and some 'great presents', Edwards arrived at Ajmer, where the emperor was, on February 2, 1615. He was received by Asaf Khan, who gave him an assurance of procuring the royal seal for Edwards. Meanwhile Jahangir must have heard the discomfiture of the Portuguese by Capt. Best, the emperor at once formulated his policy for Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. Instructing Mukarrab to allow the English to carry on trade uninterrupted, he showed his favouritism towards the English, because he must have learnt that the English would be possible protectors of the Indians from the severity of the Portuguese. Thereupon Mukarrab provided the English with money for the journey, and made 'all kind promises for a privilege within his government'.<sup>70</sup>

The motives of this policy of Jahangir became clear when the latter gave Edwards Rs. 3,000 for the latter's personal expenses.<sup>71</sup> During the conversation with Edwards, Jahangir asked his interpreter to tell Edwards, that the emperor was 'much affected'<sup>72</sup> i.e. moved. The Portuguese by the time might have realised their actual position

in Mughal India and hence offered Jahangir to restore the Mughal junks if the emperor handed over the English at Surat 'in to their hands'. But Jahangir, who was already determined to 'have all his country under his own subjection', and to drive the Portuguese out of Diu and Daman, declined the offer.<sup>73</sup>

However, Jahangir's inherent weakness of character was not conducive to the formulation of a firm policy. His pro-English attitude did not last long. As soon as the danger of Portuguese attack on Surat was over, he might have thought that the English had received more than their due. So Jahangir declined to talk further with Edwards or grant any concession in favour of the English. Edwards thus wrote to Sir Thomas Smyth, Governor of the Company in London in December 1614 that the English representatives 'were gracious in eyes' of the emperor and nobles, 'but afterwards were much neglected'.<sup>74</sup>

Even then Edwards continued to strive for procuring the emperor's seal on the document issued to Best, and waited for that till 1615, when Thomas Roe arrived in the imperial court.<sup>75</sup>

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### FOOT NOTES

- 1 Hist. Frag. 323.
- 2 See f. n. 16.
- 3 LR. i, 155-161 ; Hist. Frag. 324. Details of Middleton's piratical activities against the Mughal shipping can be seen in SELMI, pp. 271-83. In fact, the Jesuits who looked after the interest of the Portuguese in the Mughal Court were obviously dissatisfied for the reception accorded to Hawkins by Jahangir and they were sending reports about the Anglo-Mughal relations to the viceroy in Goa. For further details see Chapter IV ante.
- 4 Best, xi-xii.
- 5 At a court meeting of March 10, 1611 the Governor of the Company in London Sir Thomas Smith declared that the Company expected a General to be partly a navigator, partly a merchant (knowledge of lading a ship) and partly man of fashion and good respect. Best, xiii.
- 6 Best, xxii-xxiii.

- 7 Mukarrab Khan, the *Mutasaddi* of Surat port (see Ch. IV ante for details) was then in attendance at court ; his brother was watching over affairs of the port administration of Surat.
- 8 For many years the chief agent employed by the English. Best, 105 ; Embassy, 124, 128, 196, 197, 218, 220, 268, 288, 336.
- 9 Best, 105.
- 10 When this news of capture reached Surat (probably by Indian merchants, coming from Red Sea Ports), the *Mutasaddi* ('governor') of Surat sent congratulations to Alex Sharpeigh and John Jourdain, two factors of the Company at Surat, who in turn wrote to Middleton on October 12, 1611 apprising him the impressions of Surat authorities. LR. i, 138.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 139.
- 12 He became the head of the Surat factory (1615-1623) and came in Best's fleet.
- 13 Viz. Edward Christen, Anthony Starkey, Steward of the *Dragon* and Thomas Davis.
- 14 Faizullah succeeded Mukarrab for a short period in 1612. Best, 28.
- 15 LR. i, 233-34 ; Best, 105.
- 16 They also brought a letter of Middleton which was left with the *Muqaddam* (i.e. Headman) of Swally and which the latter probably sent to the local authorities of Surat. The contents of the letter was an warning for the English who would come in future<sup>3</sup> advising them not to try for trade at Surat (LR. i, 256) and it appears that the Mughal officials of Surat did not know the contents of the letter because of language difficulty.
- 17 The Englishmen were Paul Canning, who was sent later to Jahangir's court, William Chambers and Edward Christen, a purser of the *Dragon*, Best, 29.
- 18 LR. i, 139 ; Best, 29-30.
- 19 Best, 30.
- 20 20 sheep and goats, 5 cwt. rice, 2 cwt. meale, lemons, plantains, sugar canes, onions store. Best. 30n.
- 21 Best, 30.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 The *Diwan* of Ahmedabad, styled in the text Governor of Gujarat because in the absence of Abdulla Khan (Firuz Jang), the viceroy of Gujarat, the *Diwan* was acting as Viceroy. Best, 31.
- 24 The messenger was sent on September 22 to Jahangir at Agra and the direction from the emperor reached from Agra to Ahmedabad before Oct, 17 is hard to believe. Most probably this was merely a propaganda of the English.
- 25 Mirza Faizullah.
- 26 Names are not known.
- 27 Pedlary, i.e. small wares such as pedlars sold.
- 28 Rupees Twenty. For rials see Appendix A.

- 29 The English exchanged gold into Mahmudis.
- 30 For Mahmudi see Appendix A.
- 31 Jadu, the Indian broker.
- 32 Dollar was not used in this part. Rials of eight are meant. Best, 33n. For rials see Appendix A.
- 33 Best, 31-33.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 33; Maclagan, 81; Withington, 188; Penrose, 104-105. Purchas reads 14 October wrongly.
- 35 Best, 34, 39; Danvers, i, 154.
- 36 This was Khwaja Yadgar, brother of Abdulla Khan (Firuz Jang), viceroy of Gujarat. In the spring of 1613 after successfully besieging a neighbouring fort with an expeditionary force from Gujarat, Yadgar was rewarded with the title of Sardar Khan, Tuzuk, i, 237.
- 37 Bayley, 233.
- 38 The imperial document was delivered to Best by Khwaja Hasan and Mehdi Jafar, his father-in-law. Best, 30n. Withington (pp. 188-89) mentions that the document came on January 7, but Best says the date was January 6. Best, 40.
- 39 Best, 40. The defects of the document are clearly brought out in LR, ii, xxix, 103, 180, Vol. iv, xxix, 311.
- 40 Referring to a letter of 26 September 1615 from Kerridge and John Brown to Capt. Keeling, it is stated that the, 'articles agreed upon by Captayne Best were never signed by the kinge' Best, 259n.
- 41 Canning also came in Best's fleet.
- 42 Mujeeb, 351.
- 43 Two musicians were Lancelot Canning (Paul Canning's cousin) and Robert Trully playing respectively on the virginals (used in 16th and 17th centuries) and cornet. While Trully satisfied the court, Lancelot failed. Jahangir himself tried to play Trully's instrument. LR, ii, 103-104.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 Best, 57.
- 46 LR, ii, 103-104.
- 47 For Mukarrab's anti-English attitude See Ch. IV ante.
- 48 LR, ii, 168.
- 49 Proc. IHRC, III, 1921, 36.
- 50 Shamsuddin, eldest son of Aziz Koka, was given the title of Jahangir Quli Khan (meaning 'slave of Jahangir') in 1608 and also the rank of 2000 *zat* and 1500 *sawar*. Tuzuk, i, 144.
- 51 Tuzuk, ii, 37-38.
- 52 LR, iii, 298; EQ, 239.
- 53 Embassy, xxv.

- 54 LR. i, 301, 308-9 ; ii, 96, 104 ; ETI, 203 ; Danvers, ii, 162 ; Maclagon, 82. Value of Cargo was 'one hundred thousand sterling pound'. LR. ii, 96.
- 55 Tuzuk, i, 255 ; Faria, iii, 245 ; Downton, xix, For details of Treaty, see Ch. I ante.
- 56 LR, iii, 298.
- 57 *Ibid.*, ii, 97, 168 ; Danvers, ii, 162 ; EQ, 241 ; Downton, 5. Sending Khwaja Alp, the *Shahbandar* of Surat to the Portuguese viceroy for 'making some treaty of peace, Mukarrab tried to avert the Portuguese onslaught. Downton, 17.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 176.
- 59 Embassy, XXVI.
- 60 *Ibid.*, Downton, 6. .
- 61 For *Mahmudis* see Appendix A.
- 62 LR, ii, 138 ; Purchas, i, 512.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 168 ; Downton, xxi, EQ. 242 ; Hist. Frag. 345.
- 64 LR, iii, xiv ; Downton, 16 ; Hunter, i, 320-26 ; Hist. Frag. 35-37, 40, 100, 158, 200.
- 65 Withington, 193 ; Danvers, ii, 171.
- 66 Downton, 20-22 ; Embassy, xxvi ; Withington, 193.
- 67 CHI, V, 2. Papal Bull divided three-fourths of the globe between the half-savage Spaniards and the half-savage Portuguese. According to the historian Barros (vol. i, 1) the Pope is empowered to distribute to the faithful all lands in the possession of the non-Christians. Whiteway (2nd ed. 1967), 21.
- 68 Downton, 7.
- 69 Embassy, xvii.
- 70 Downton, xxii.
- 71 LR, iii, 20, 65. Mahabat Khan, one of the Chief nobles in the Mughal court gave another 1000 rupees.
- 72 On December 2, 1615, Aldworth from Surat wrote to the Directors of the Company in London apprising them emperor's motive towards the English. He might have known Jahangir's motive from the letters of Edwards, which the latter wrote to Surat. LR, ii, 150.
- 73 LR, ii, 150.
- 74 Embassy, xvii.
- 75 See Chapter VI ante for Roe's activities in the imperial court.

## CHAPTER VI

### SIR THOMAS ROE'S COMMERCIAL MISSION TO THE COURT OF JAHANGIR

( 1615-1619 )

#### *1. Reasons for the Appointment of Roe as Ambassador :*

In the beginning of the year 1615 King James I, at the insistence of English East India Company, sent Sir Thomas Roe as an ambassador to the court of the Great Mughal. Initially the Company was reluctant to brook any interference with their affairs and was 'averse' to 'spending money' without any immediate prospects of financial gain.<sup>1</sup> But several circumstances soon combined to cause a change in their attitude and they determined to send a royal envoy to the court of the Great Mughal at their own expense. First, between 1601 to 1616, the company's trade with India increased almost by two and half times.<sup>2</sup> But the Company faced a stiff opposition from the Portuguese. The latter had attacked the Company's ship at Surat in 1608 and tried their best to persuade Jahangir to exclude William Hawkins, the Company's representative, from his dominions.<sup>3</sup> The Portuguese opposition and their claim to a monopoly of the trade between Europe and the East Indies<sup>4</sup> drove the Company to think of concluding a treaty with the Mughal sovereign for establishing permanent relations with them. Such a treaty would, as the English Company hoped, secure their right to participate in the trade with India and place the commercial

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'relations between the two nations on a stable and lasting foundation'.<sup>5</sup> Further it would ensure the protection of the English merchants from Portuguese attacks. The Company realised that the surest means of effecting this would be the despatch of a royal envoy to the court of the Great Mughal.

Second, a long established usage of carrying on trade with a foreign country was to establish 'factories',<sup>6</sup> (i. e. small colonies of merchants residing together regularly in the country). The cargoes to be sold or procured must have appropriate storing arrangements. A flying visit to a country for commercial purposes would inevitably result in lowering the prices of the goods imported and those of the goods exported. Despite the efforts of Company's merchants and agents like Hawkins,<sup>7</sup> Best, Kerridge, and Edwards<sup>8</sup> no factory could be established in Mughal India as yet and without some special convention the English merchants and their goods were at the mercy of the local officials. Therefore, it was hoped that a duly accredited royal ambassador might succeed, where the mere merchants and captains had failed.

But even before the Company realised the necessity of sending a royal ambassador to India, some English 'factors'<sup>9</sup> or merchants coming to India and acquainted with local conditions, had already concluded that the posting of a royal ambassador was imperatively necessary and sought to impress the need on the Company. John Mildenhall was the first English merchant who felt it and as early as 1599 he had made, in the presence of Akbar, a declaration to the effect that, Elizabeth intended to send an ambassador to reside at his court and that he would be responsible for the good behaviour of his countrymen. True, Mildenhall's declaration was wholly unauthorised but it reflected an acute awareness of the Indian scene. On his return to London he even apprised the Company of this.<sup>10</sup> William Hawkins who came from the Company with a letter from King James to the court of Jahangir in 1608 assumed the title of ambassador himself, also without any authorisation. For he was merely spoken of as 'this bearer our servant' in the royal letter he carried. He also could achieve nothing.<sup>11</sup> Next came Captain

**Thomas Best.** Possessing considerable mercantile experience, he negotiated an agreement with the local authorities at Surat on October 21, 1612 for certain commercial concessions as well as for the residence of an English 'ambassador' at the imperial court. Two other English merchants, Thomas Aldworth and William Edwards, deputed by the company aboard Captain Best's fleet also concurred with Best as regards the need of the posting of a royal ambassador in India. The former wrote from Surat in November 1613 to the Governor of the Company, Sir Thomas Smith, urging the desirability of sending an ambassador who would be able to command respect in the court of Jahangir, William Edwards, sent by English authorities at Surat to the court of Jahangir as company's representative, had a very bitter experience there. He was badly beaten by porters and peons,<sup>12</sup> if we believe Roe, though Edwards himself was silent about his own discomfiture. In fact, he found himself disregarded, and explained to the governor of the Company in December 1614 that merchants were generally 'despised' at the court.<sup>13</sup> This last letter, however, had not reached the hands of the 'Committees' before the despatch of a royal ambassador was decided upon.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Captain Best had returned to London by June 1614. The dazzling prospects of the trade in Mughal India portrayed by Captain Best and his understanding with local Mughal authorities at Surat for keeping an ambassador to the court of the Great Mughal led the 'Committees' to resolve to 'push matters vigorously.'<sup>15</sup>

On September 7, 1614, the governor of the Company placed the matter of appointment of an ambassador before the assembled 'Committees' and recommended the name of Sir Thomas Roe, 'a gentleman well known unto them all to be of a pregnant understanding, well spoken, learned, industrious, and of a calmly personage .....'<sup>16</sup> Indeed by dint of his lineage, education at Oxford and experience of a sea voyage to South America, and his knighthood in 1605,<sup>17</sup> Sir Thomas Roe was a fit person to hold the high ambassadorial post in distant India. The unanimous recommendation of the Directors was submitted to the king. The growing importance of English trade with India and the urgency of the Company's request



led king James to sanction the appointment of Sir Thomas Roe at the Mughal court in India. On January 14, 1615 King James I commissioned Sir Thomas Roe and sent him to the court of the Great Mughal '.....to make and contract a league between His Majesty and his subjects for commerce and traffic in his dominions, and to procure and establish a factory for our nation in sundry ports of his dominions as well sea ports as in land towns.....'<sup>18</sup>

His appointment raised high hopes among the Directors<sup>19</sup>. Backed by the royal imprimatur, the Company proved to both the Portuguese and the Mughals that their attempts to trade in India were authorised by the English sovereign and placed his subjects under his defence and thus discouraged further attacks from Goa.

### *II. Administrative set-up of Surat :*

To understand the environment in which Roe had to work for developing the commercial interests of the English E. I. Co. it is necessary to analyse the then administrative set-up of Gujarat. It was the same as it was during Mukarrab Khan. But there were certain changes in personnel.

Early in 1615 Prince Khurram was in charge of the province. The 'Subha of Gujarat', the English factory records observed, 'had been added to the Prince's dignities and he was, therefore, now the overlord of the English at Ahmedabad and Broach as well as Surat'.<sup>20</sup> As the Prince was reluctant to leave the capital he chose his favourite, Zulfiqar Khan,<sup>21</sup> to act as his deputy at Surat.<sup>22</sup> The Khan later arrived there on August 4, 1615.<sup>23</sup> He had no experience of handling the administration of such an important port. Consequently, the overall administration of the province deteriorated, as will be explained later on.

### *III. Commercial situation :*

What was the commercial situation then prevailing in Mughal India prior to the arrival of Sir Thomas Roe? The English had inflicted crushing defeats on the Portuguese in two naval battles waged for supremacy over the coastal waters of Gujarat in 1612 and 1614

respectively which greatly enhanced English prestige in the imperial court.

Secondly, the English Company were then exposed to the threat of expulsion from Mughal India. Being weary of war with the Mughals which began in 1613<sup>24</sup> and aware of the consequential injury to their commercial interests, Goncalo Pinto de Fonseca, the Governor of Daman, had signed on June, 7, 1615, through the mediation of the Jesuit Xavier,<sup>25</sup> a preliminary treaty of peace with the *Mutasaddi* of Surat<sup>26</sup>, subject to the ratification by the emperor and the viceroy of Goa within 50 days. It provided that the English as well as the Dutch<sup>27</sup> were to be expelled first from Surat and later from the dominions of the Great Mughal. In return they offered compensation for the Mughal vessel (named *The Rahimi*) they had seized, and agreed to present a ship to the Queen Mother in lieu of one they had destroyed and the Viceroy was to grant free passes for two ships to go from Surat to the Red Sea for two years in addition to the usual annual free pass for one vessel.<sup>28</sup>

Though the Viceroy of Goa signified his approval, Jahangir and his advisers refused to ratify it.<sup>29</sup> The latter might have thought the expulsion of the English and the Dutch, to be an impossible task. The 'expected peace with the Portuguese', as Edwards exultingly relates from the court, 'is confidently broken of.'<sup>30</sup>

However, once it was circulated that the local authorities of Surat had entered into an agreement with the Portuguese, an impression was created among the English at Surat that the treaty had actually been concluded. This belief was further strengthened by an order (*nishan*) issued just then by Prince Khurram who was then viceroy of Gujarat, to the effect that one English ship might anchor at a time at the port, stay for a month for trade purposes but that the factors would not be permitted to stay in the town.<sup>31</sup>

Thirdly, Khurram was not disposed to brook any interference in his sphere of influence. Induced no doubt by Mukarrab Khan, Khurram realised that the Mughal interests would be better preserved by the Portuguese and not by the new-comer English.<sup>32</sup>

Fourthly, like the English, the Dutch had considerable commercial

transactions in India. When the Dutch felt that there was a move to exclude them from Indian commerce, they naturally leant towards the English.

Fifthly, in 1614 the king of Spain ordered the viceroy of Goa to drive the English out of India by force.<sup>88</sup>

#### IV. Zulfiqar's struggle with Roe<sup>84</sup> :

Sir Thomas Roe came with General Keeling's fleet which arrived at Surat on September 19, 1615. Next day Roe despatched a letter to Edwards, then in the royal court at Ajmer, directing him to acquaint the emperor of his arrival. Keeling also sent Biddulph<sup>85</sup> with a letter to the *mutasaddi* of Surat, Zulfiqar Khan. The letter announced that, in consequence of the agreement (with Captain Best in 1612), 'for the better establishment and confirmation of the said happy amity and love, the king of England had sent a nobleman of his court and chamber with letter of credence and rich presents..... authorised with full commission under the great seal of England'.<sup>86</sup> Biddulph informed the *mutasaddi* of Roe's arrival and sought his permission to disembark. On September 22, a Mughal messenger brought it to Roe. If Roe wanted to disembark, the governor's letter ran, he would sent 30 horses for Roe and his train and arrange for a meeting with his commanders. Zulfiqar also assured Roe of a house in the town for his residence, if available. However, as Zulfiqar did not allot any, Roe sought 'to take one' on September 23.

A hitch arose over the question of search by the customs officials. It was the prevailing practice that nothing could pass through the customs house unchecked. Roe protested vehemently against 'the custom of the king's officers to search everything that came ashore even to the pockets of mens.....for custom'. Claiming that the dignity of his status put him above ordinary usage, he refused to allow the local administration to check him and his retinue. He threatened that he would return to the ship and would not disembark until he 'had order from the king his (i.e. Zulfiqar's) master'.<sup>87</sup> Eventually, Zulfiqar accepted Roe's terms, but on condition that as a matter of courtesy, he would send a customs officer to the 'water side' and

arrange to let Roe's goods, duly listed and sealed, to proceed without any hindrance to his house, where these would be inspected by the customs officer, though this would not be 'in the nature of search', but only to conform to the regulation.

On Roe's agreeing to it the English landed their chests and provisions at Surat on September 25. Roe directed his men to allow the custom officials to seal the goods though these were 'not opened'.

On September 26, 1615 after being assured of a favourable reception, Roe landed in state from the gaily decorated ships at Swally along with the General, the captains and the principal English merchants amidst a guard of honour with 100<sup>88</sup> shots provided by the English themselves possibly to impress upon the Indians the prestige of the English ambassador. He was received courteously by the 'Chief Officers' of Surat besides his 30 companions in a nearby tent, set up temporarily for the purpose.<sup>89</sup> Roe was obviously pleased with the reception and delivered a short speech. He made it clear that by virtue of the agreement concluded between Captain Best and the Great Mughal, he had been deputed by the king of England 'with full commission as his ambassador.....and to propound unto the Great Mughal many other matters of great consequence, both for the maintenance and security of the league...'. Evidently, Roe meant that some sort of league or amity was established by the efforts of Best and Jahangir. At the end the ambassador observed that his arrival 'would prove beneficial and acceptable' to the Indians.<sup>40</sup> But surprisingly enough, an incident, to which Roe does not allude but which is recorded by his chaplain, Edward Terry, led Roe now to retreat from his previous agreement with Zulfiqar. Roe's cook insulted, in a state of intoxication, the brother of Zulfiqar, by unsheathing his sword and calling him as 'you heathen dog'. He was however, disarmed and thrown into prison for a short period.<sup>41</sup> It is a glowing example of the disorderliness of the English subordinates causing friction with the local authorities.

Indignant at the incident and with wounded vanity, Roe stiffened his attitude towards the local officials and rejected the proposal of even the token check-up. Roe threatened them that he would lodge

a complaint against them before the emperor. 'And so after much dispute' the Mughal officers proposed that Roe and another five Englishmen (chosen by Roe himself) would be allowed to go unchecked, but others were to be checked as a routine matter or 'for a ceremony sake', as Roe observes. But Roe did not agree to it.

The thaw in Zulfiqar-Roe relation, however, showed signs of melting. A band of merchants, who had landed with Roe, met Zulfiqar on the morning of September 28. The latter dismissed them after giving a hint of his expectation of gifts: 'your ambassador looks I should visit him; what jewel or diamond will he give?' In the afternoon they again visited him with a small present assuring him of a 'better present' provided Roe was accorded a fitting reception. They added that the ambassador 'came not as a sutor' (suitor) and he expected what was due to him. After consulting his officers, Zulfiqar allowed the Englishmen on that day to carry away their chests to Roe's residence as well as their return to their own ships. The chief customs officer, his brother and his staff<sup>42</sup> were deputed by Zulfiqar to Roe's residence to inspect his 'provisions'. They opened two or three chests which were urgently needed by him and then left. That night Roe exultingly communicated his triumph to Gen. Keeling aboard his ship: 'I was resolved to bring these people to a better understanding.....' His language echoes the tone of an imperialist.

On the evening of September 29 Zulfiqar sent to Roe his brother and the 'Principal of the town' i.e. the *Kotwal*<sup>43</sup> of Surat to inspect the rest of the goods. After the inspection they conveyed to Roe the governor's message that the English were 'not to be afraid, nor sad for anything past', as Roe observes, 'there was no harm intended me: that I should command anything in the town', i.e. he was told to be given complete liberty in the town. They requested Roe to forget the past, stating that what was done was but for the maintenance of their 'ancient privileges' (i.e. customs procedure) of the country.<sup>44</sup> Roe thanked them for their good gesture, but objected against the said procedure, saying that this was to be exercised on ordinary person and not upon a person of his status.

The Mughal representatives 'made many excuses' and tried to please Roe so that the English might not leave Surat, as they learnt that the governor of Cambay, had sent a frigate 'to entreat trade' with the English. They said that they stopped trade with the Portuguese (since 1613) for the sake of the English.<sup>45</sup> They also pointed out that the Cambayans were a 'friend to the Portugal and laboured a peace' with them. So they requested Roe not to shift their trade from Surat to Cambay as this would be a direct affront to Prince Khurram, the master of Surat.

The tussle between two governors, i.e. the Governor of Surat and the governor of Cambay to win over the sympathy of the English is an interesting episode in the history of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. Both the governors were under the same imperial authorities. Yet they were maligning each other before a foreigner.

On the morning of September 30, Zulfiqar's brother and the *Kotwal* again came to inform Roe that Zulfiqar, the Governor, would meet him at night after dinner and would thereafter consult Gen. Keeling to solve all outstanding problems. He also withdrew the prohibition against English trade at Surat. The governor requested Roe to inform Keeling that he had 'received content', i.e. was satisfied with the conduct of the Surat authorities. The governor also urged Roe to persuade Keeling 'to land all his goods at this port'. Thus Zulfiqar gave way.

Foster rightly holds that the incident meant the victory of Roe and the 'utter discomfiture' of Zulfiqar.<sup>46</sup> He, however, does not explain the reasons of Zulfiqar's somersault. This may perhaps be due to the following considerations :

- (i) Zulfiqar apprehended that Roe's complaints to the emperor against him would enrage Jahangir ;
- (ii) English assurance of valuable presents to Zulfiqar ;
- (iii) The governor of Cambay's attempts to win over the English and thereby shift English trade from Surat to Cambay.

Surat lived on its foreign trade. Its trade with the Portuguese had almost ceased since 1613. Surat vessels were threatened by the Portuguese pirates. In these circumstances, the Mughal authorities

at Surat could not afford to displease the English as this might hit its commerce hard.

On the evening of September 30, Zulfiqar came to meet Roe, clothed in very rich linen and Persian cloth. He referred to the 'loss they (the people of Surat) sustained by the barring up of their (Portuguese) trade' for the sake of the English. Roe assured Zulfiqar of English friendship as well as protection of Surat port by the English fleet while at Surat. Roe also contemplated that when they would meet again 'in more private manner' he would 'open to him (Zulfiqar) some propositions concerning that business which would give him content'. Like his messengers Zulfiqar also solicited Roe's assurance that the English would not transfer their seat of trade from Surat to Cambay as this would be a 'dishonour of the Prince's port'. Zulfiqar promised to Roe that he would write to the Prince 'to countenance (to support) the English'.

Zulfiqar now stated that he had received a letter from the governor of Cambay, who accused Zulfiqar for allowing the English to trade at Surat particularly when he (Zulfiqar) had concluded a treaty with the Portuguese. But Zulfiqar stressed that he 'knew not of any' such treaty with the Portuguese. Roe answered that he 'cared for neither', whether Zulfiqar was the friend of the Portuguese or the latter were their (English) enemy: the 'country was large enough for both' and if the Portuguese and their friends tried to banish the English from Mughal India's commerce, despite this, the English would carry on trade in this country and even at Goa.<sup>47</sup>

On October 1,<sup>48</sup> General Keeling received a letter from Thomas Kerridge at Ahmedabad informing Roe that the 'articles'<sup>49</sup> (of treaty of 1612) agreed upon by Captain Best were never signed by the king (Jahangir) 'and thus are of small validity'. Roe had an idea that in terms of the 'league' concluded between Captain Best and the imperial authorities at Surat, the English King was to send a royal ambassador to the Mughal court. Now he came to learn that the draft treaty was never actually signed by the Mughal emperor. Naturally he felt that his ambassadorial status was not valid in the Mughal empire.

There was a gentlemen's agreement between Zulfiqar and Roe :

(i) Zulfiqar would arrange for the implementation of the agreement with Best by securing royal signature. (ii) He would ensure that the English trade did not suffer in any way owing to Roe's departure from Surat to the court. In return Roe promised to give a favourable report about him to the emperor.

On the morning of October 9, however, Zulfiqar along with some officers again came to Roe's residence and expressed his inability to fulfill his promise. Why did Zulfiqar make the promise first and later on withdraw it? Most probably Zulfiqar assured Roe without knowing the actual terms of the draft treaty. Afterwards he might have learnt the same during the course of his discussion with his officers (some among them were cognizant of the actual position of the treaty due to their long tenure in service). He now realised that he could not proceed to act upon his own assurance. Immediately he hurried to Roe with his officers and indicated his inability to do anything in this regard.

To Roe's retort that the governor's promises were unreliable, Zulfiqar perhaps felt very indignant. At night on October 9 he told the English 'factor' that though the presents which the English gave him were rather trifling when compared to those given by the Portuguese, he granted special favour to the English in respect to trade. Zulfiqar now informed Roe of his decision that there should be 'no trade without a better present'. Zulfiqar angrily alleged that though he was ordered (not known by whom) to 'dismiss' the English, he allowed them 'to remain in the town' only because of Roe 'who was an ambassador'.<sup>50</sup>

On October 10, Roe declared that Zulfiqar 'stole' some English goods from customs house ('alfondica'),<sup>51</sup> though he did not specify these. On October 14, Zulfiqar again went to the customs house and whipped an English servant almost to death for behaving with the merchants (evidently Indian) 'like his slaves'. Roe further says that Zulfiqar also 'searched all those chests' belonging to the English and 'took whatsoever pleased him'. There is no means to verify these charges which, if true, would certainly darken the character of



this high ranking Mughal Officer. On October 14, Kharrab Khan, the Deputy Governor of Surat, who had some grievances against his Chief, visited Roe, spoke ill of Zulfiqar and offered him six horses and all facilities for his journey to the royal court. He advised Roe to go to the court without waiting to recover his goods from the customs house and lodge a complaint before the emperor against the governor. This backbiting by one official against another indicates personal animosity and reveals administrative weakness before a foreigner. But as Roe did not know him he declined to accept his offer.

The feud between Zulfiqar and Roe (which lasted till 24th October) soon ended with the first imperial intervention. Immediately on receipt of a letter from the emperor (perhaps reproachful) on October 25, Zulfiqar sent his servant (Abram Khan), 'to appease' Roe and all the English men.<sup>52</sup>

However, on October 30, just before the commencement of his journey to the imperial presence at Ajmer, Roe directly received an imperial order instructing all provincial governors to look after the interests of the English. So when Roe met Zulfiqar with the imperial order the latter offered full co-operation.

The despatch of a *firman* direct to foreigner seems to be quite extraordinary. Roe had not yet presented his credentials as an ambassador to the emperor and reasonably, therefore, had not acquired the status in respect of direct contact with the emperor. The humiliated governor eventually provided only five carts to Roe as against the twelve requested for transporting the goods of the English to Ajmer.<sup>53</sup>

Roe resolved to hasten his journey to the imperial court. His brief stay at Surat for about a month and twenty days (September 9, 1615 to October 30) was eventful but unhappy on account of his relations with Zulfiqar. On his way to the court, he arrived at Burhanpur, the civil and military headquarters of Mughal Deccan. Here on November 14 and on November 18, Roe met the viceroy, Prince Parwiz, and sought his permission to establish an English factory there. The Prince accorded his consent and issued orders to

the *Bakhshi*<sup>54</sup> so that the English could come and settle without any hindrance.

From Burhanpur Roe communicated to the Company's authorities in London (November 24, 1615), the state of affairs in Mughal India and his own ideas on the prospect of Company's trade in India : (i) Surat was not suitable for the establishment of an English factory. (ii) Zulfiqar Khan, the present governor of Surat, was against the English business interests. In this respect the 'former governors' (Mukarrab Khan and Abdulla Khan<sup>55</sup>) were 'some what better'. (iii) The long established practice of the empire was to 'change the governors here' and sometimes of the 'Province' too 'every year'.<sup>56</sup> (iv) As the Tapti river was under the control of the Portuguese frigates, the 'road' was 'unsafe at Swally'. (v) The transport of goods in land for a distance of 12 miles from Swally to Surat would cause 'infinite charge, trouble and decay of many things'. Even then if the Company's authorities wanted to retain their centre of trade at Surat, the Company must send here a *pinnace* of 80 tons with 12 guns to escort its goods. (vi) Besides, the goods were to be kept 'at the water side' for at least 10 to 12 days before permission could be obtained 'for boats to transport' these. Considering all these factors an English fleet was to be maintained 'for four months' for the safety of one English ship. Therefore he held Muzaffarabad,<sup>57</sup> 'an old town' to be a fit place for English trade as it would offer 'better security.....' due to its fort, under whose protection the English ship could anchor. A small garrison of 150 men would be enough to guard the fort and thus it would cost nominal charges.

Regarding other matters, Roe writes that the Portuguese normalised their relations with the Great Mughal<sup>58</sup> by paying him three lakhs of rupees. The emperor, we are told, instructed the Portuguese to drive the English out of his domain as he 'could not put out the English' on account of their powerful navy. So Roe advises that the English 'must work and stand upon' their own strength. Besides, he refers to the high price of Indian goods at the time when the English ships anchored at the port of Surat. He

remarks that every commodity at Surat became 'twice the price' when the English 'ships came in'.<sup>59</sup>

Regarding the practice of giving presents to the emperor and to persons of influence it is recorded by Roe that 'presents are here expected as due as the king customs, and not such as you send, but as they will choose'.<sup>60</sup> In fact, in the Mughal court the offering of presents was a part of 'etiquette', while the nature of the present was determined by the position of the donor. This practice should, however, be distinguished from the 'secret bribery' which was quite rampant among the Mughal officials. Presents were given openly, even ostentatious presents too, and they were a part of 'established system'. No one could approach a superior empty handed. Presents given to secure promotion may almost be regarded as 'akin to investments'. The offering of gifts and its results may be seen in the pages of the Memoirs of Jahangir,<sup>61</sup> where the offerings of each visitor or suitor in succession are described and appreciated from a strictly financial point of view.<sup>62</sup>

At 4 P.M. on January 10 Roe was received in audience by Jahangir.<sup>63</sup> The emperor sat in a gallery overlooking a wide courtyard full of people. Roe was conducted through the crowd to a rail enclosing a space for men of a better class where Jahangir bidding him welcome 'as to the brother', as Roe says, 'of my master'.<sup>64</sup> Roe thereupon handed up a Persian version of his king's letter and some presents.<sup>65</sup> Jahangir seemed very pleased. He talked affably through an interpreter, enquiring after Roe's health, which had not been good, and offering to send Roe his own physician. Jahangir's gracious behaviour on this occasion greatly pleased and encouraged Roe, who exultingly wrote to the home authorities that his reception was more gracious than any accorded to ambassadors from Turkey or Persia.

During Roe's second visit (January 24), Jahangir enquired of his objective. Roe answered 'Justice'. Explaining his stand, Roe referred to the bad treatment which the governor of Ahmedabad showed towards the English.<sup>66</sup> Roe stated that Thomas Kerridge, an English representative at Ahmedabad, was beaten by the

governor of that place. In addition to this he was fined, asked to pay to the imperial treasury 'four per cent duty on English merchandise' as well as to give a bribe of 'one hundred rupees'. He alleged that 'at every town new customs were taken' for English goods 'passing to the port'. In reply Jahangir asserted that should be 'amended' and immediately issued two orders to the governor of Ahmedabad, one for restoring money exacted from the servants of the English Company. This exaction of money by force was practically an offence widely practiced by the Mughal officials and it lowered the standard of Mughal administration. The other order also despatched to the Governor of Ahmedabad instructing him to repay the amount if taken as customs. Jahangir dismissed Roe saying if the orders were not properly carried out by the Mughal officials, he should inform him immediately.<sup>67</sup> Jahangir was probably aware of the fact that imperial officials at distant provinces carried out the royal order only under pressure.

#### V. *Khurram and Roe :*

Jahangir's cordial treatment encouraged Roe to endeavour to secure specific commercial privileges from the emperor. At the same time he thought it advisable as well to court Prince Khurram, then at the capital, for strengthening the interests of the English still further. On January 14, Roe sent word to Khurram that he would like to meet him and was assured of a cordial reception.

At 9 A.M. on January 22, Roe visited the Prince but was disappointed. Instead of receiving him the 'proud' prince first sent a 'principal Officer'. The latter led him to a 'good room' and 'discoursed' with him on affairs of the English for at least half an hour. And then came the prince. Roe delivered him a 'present' with an apology, 'it being too meane'.

Khurram, however, gladly accepted the present. When Roe hinted at his intention of appealing to the emperor if speedy action was not taken against the *mutasaddi* of Surat (as the English 'suffered' heavily at his hands), Khurram expressed his utter

ignorance of the events.<sup>68</sup> However, he promised to ensure 'speedy and effectual justice' to Roe and grant a *nishan*.<sup>69</sup>

In the last week of January 1616, Roe received from Prince Khurram a draft of a grant of commercial privileges, subject to three conditions. Of these Roe accepted two, viz. (i) the English should build no 'house of strength' (i.e. fortified settlement) in Surat, (ii) all presents of the English perhaps meant for distribution among the emperor and nobles, should come from Surat to Roe (at the court) untouched (evidently by the customs officers). But those for sale might be opened by Surat customs officials. But Roe refused to give any undertaking to allow the Portuguese vessels to trade at Surat without hindrance unless the Portuguese promised 'counter security of peace on their parts'. The undertaking, according to Roe, would 'bind our hands and leave loose our enemies'.

For this refusal he was informed that no *nishan* would be issued in favour of the English. It is quite clear that the Prince did not want to sever commercial relations with the Portuguese. The loss of trade caused by the exclusion of the Portuguese might have hit Mughal commerce hard. Immediately after Roe's charges against the Governor of Surat and his threat of further complaint to Jahangir, the Prince issued orders to supersede Zulfiqar, and accordingly 'Hojay Nassan'<sup>69a</sup> (Khwaja Nijam ?) was appointed to succeed him. But as Khwaja did not join at Surat on account of his old age, Ibrahim Khan<sup>70</sup> was appointed to that post in 1616.

Being impatient for the Prince's *nishan*, Roe visited him on February 21 and offering a few toys as presents, demanded it. The Prince, however, declined to issue it unless Roe accepted the draft agreement in *toto*. Then the Prince changed the topic of discussion showing him the letter of the governor of Surat and demanded an explanation from Roe for 'unruliness' and riotous behaviour of the English in the customs house at Surat. Roe refuted the charges saying that the Governor's version was not reliable as he was a liar and given to excessive drinking ('veryer drunckard'). Roe said that the Governor should have punished those evil-doers. Khurram answered that the Governor did not punish them because of Roe's

prestige. Eventually Roe agreed, on Khurram's insistence, to write the very next day (February 22) to the Company's officials at Surat to punish such offenders in future. Here Khurram virtually gave a concession to the English without grasping its full impact. It was obviously a dangerous precedent for the Mughal administration, as the English got the exclusive right of punishing English nationals even if they violated the normal police regulations of the country.

On March 4, 1616, Roe wrote to Khurram that he would be compelled to lodge a complaint before the emperor against the Prince, if the *nishan* was not delivered to him immediately.

The frightened Prince sent his 'Principal Officer' to Roe on March 6 with 'three other articles' for the latter's consideration. Roe found the articles to be generally satisfactory, but in the end, there was 'a conditional clause poisoning all the rest.' It was the same old question of allowing the Portuguese to trade at Surat without any reprisal from the English even if the latter were attacked by the Portuguese. As this was detrimental of English interests, Roe declined to accept this second draft agreement as well. The Prince also declined to budge from his stand.

Roe was now determined to bring the matter to the emperor during the *Nauroz* festival (March 12, 1616 to March 29, 1616). On the night of March 13, Roe, accompanied by his interpreter, Joronimo Veronec,<sup>71</sup> an Italian jeweller, went to the *Ghusal Khana*<sup>72</sup> where he discussed with the emperor about his problems of establishing 'a fair and secure trade and residence' for the English. Roe's reference to the curiosities which the English could bring in future roused Jahangir's cupidity, while his vague references to wrongs which, if unremedied, would force the English to discontinue their trade with Mughal India, evoked his chagrin. The emperor pressed him with a 'show of fury', to disclose 'who had wronged' the English. Roe tried to appease him by saying that he would seek justice from the Prince. But Jahangir, feeling that Roe had a grievance against Khurram, chided the latter soundly in presence of many in the court.

It is really difficult to account for Jahangir's extra-ordinary favour to Roe. We may, however, presume that this was due, in a

large measure, to Jahangir's avidity for foreign toys and curiosities which the English could bring. Khurram explained that he had granted a *nishan* to the English, but that Roe declined to accept it. Roe, in his turn, apprised the emperor of the objectionable clause of the draft. To save time Asaf Khan proposed that Roe should prepare a draft memorandum and, if found reasonable, by the emperor, it would be granted. This was accepted by Roe. In order to gratify Khurram, Roe requested the emperor that the Prince would sanction the memorandum.<sup>78</sup>

#### VI. *Khurram's nishan to the English :*

Khurram wanted to grant Roe commercial privileges, subject to three conditions, of which, we have seen Roe accepted two. So privileges were not given to Roe. When Roe was asked to prepare a memorandum for submission to the emperor, he included the following articles :

- (i) A 'good and perfect' Anglo-Mughal 'league' was to be established.
- (ii) 'The subjects of.....Great Britain' were to be allowed 'to hire a convenient house.'<sup>74</sup> from where they could 'freely', buy and sell and transport their goods into the 'mayne' i.e. on the high seas at their pleasure.<sup>75</sup>
- (iii) On the arrival of an English ship, the Indian traders were to be allowed by the governor of the port, to trade 'freely' with the English and the latter were to be allowed to hire boats and carts at the usual rates.
- (iv) The Mughal officials were neither to search the person of the English merchants nor of their servants going ashore, except at the customs house.<sup>76</sup>
- (v) The 'presents' sent by the king of 'Great Britain' or the authorities of the company in London for the Great Mughal were not to be 'touched, opened, nor meddled' with by the governor or any officer of Surat, but were to be sent after being duly sealed, to the English ambassador at the court without delay, for delivery to the emperor.

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- (vi) The English goods landed at any port of the Mughal dominion were not to be detained, at the customs house more than 'one day and night', but to be despatched after being duly sealed, to the 'house' of English merchants where those could be 'opened and rated' by officers of the customs within six days.
- (vii) The English goods were not to be taken away 'by force' or taken into the 'custody' of governor or any other officer without the consent of the merchants.
- (viii) The English were to have the privilege of free sale and free movement, provided they had a clearance certificate of payment of customs.
- (ix) The goods bought by English merchants in any part of the Mughal empire were to be allowed to pass freely to the port concerned, wherefrom those would be shipped only after clearing the port dues.
- (x) The goods, of which the English merchants obtained certificates regarding 'numbers, qualities, and conditions', from the governor or officer-in-charge of the place of purchase, were not to be reopened at the port.
- (xi) 'Money and Goods' of any deceased factor were not to be escheated<sup>77</sup> but vested in the 'factors surviving', who would be responsible for clearing his debts. In case of death of all of them, 'the officer of the town' was to prepare an inventory of all 'moneys, goods, books, bills and papers' found in the house, which after being duly sealed, were to be delivered to other Englishmen 'at their request'.
- (xii) Food articles, purchased by the English at any port, were to be customs free.
- (xiii) The servants of the Company, English or Indian, were not to be punished while discharging their duties.
- (xiv) Finally, in case of 'breach of any of these articles', the guilty Mughal Officers were to be punished. Several copies of this<sup>78</sup> 'agreement' were to be delivered to the ambassador, who would send one to the 'king of Great Britain for his full assurance'.



Roe undertook the following responsibilities on behalf of the English :

1. That the English were not to molest the ships of other merchants, except those of 'their enemies' or those wanting to 'injure them'. The English factors residing in any city, were to behave 'peaceably and civilly like merchants'.
2. The English were to bring and supply 'rarities' yearly to the Great Mughal, besides any other goods or 'furniture of war' that he would 'reasonably desire' at 'indifferent' (i.e. moderate) prices ; they were not to 'conceal any rarities or goods' even if those, possessed privately by any English merchant. They would sell those to the 'governor of the Ports' at reasonable prices. But if the price seemed too high, these were to be transported to the court for sale.
3. The English were to pay  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$  for goods and 2% for rials of eight,<sup>79</sup> only once at the customs house and not elsewhere.
4. The English were to assist the Great Mughal and 'his subjects' against 'any enemy', posing a danger to the 'common peace', i.e. to the Anglo-Mughal 'league'.
5. Finally, the Portuguese, if willing to 'enter into the said peace and league', would be included within six months, but after the expiry of the period, the English would be free to treat them as their enemy, and make war upon them at sea 'without any offence' to the Mughal emperor.

As all business relating to the English had to pass through Asaf Khan, Jahangir referred the whole scheme of Roe to him. On April 3, 1616, Asaf Khan informed him that his proposals were 'unreasonable' and hence unacceptable. On Roe's seeking clarification, Asaf did not offer any on April 5. But while professing his friendship to Roe, he expressed his helplessness against the obstructive wire-pullings of Mukarrab Khan then at the royal court and others who wanted to 'banish' the English.

On April 7, Roe brought to Asaf Khan's notice in writing three old charges against Zulfiqar :

- (i) that he forcibly took company's goods from the English factors at Surat ;
- (ii) that he harassed the factors and detained their goods ;
- (iii) that he treated the English rudely, even though they offered presents 'voluntarily to procure his favour'.

Asaf Khan read the charges in the presence of Roe's messenger and assured him of enquiry and justice, saying that he would obtain the 'Princes order for justice'. Asaf Khan sent all 'papers' relating to the above charges to the Prince, who in turn, despatched those to Zulfiqar, evidently for his replies. On April 10, Asaf Khan also assured him to complete satisfaction.<sup>80</sup>

Roe visited Khurram on April 14, and presented 'one case of allegant'<sup>81</sup> (i.e. wine) to him in the presence of Asaf Khan, who assured him that all of Roe's demands would be fulfilled.

In his impatience Roe again met Khurram on April 16 and gave him 'powerful wine' and sought justice against Zulfiqar Khan. Khurram said that, on Zulfiqar's acknowledgement, his debts to the English would be paid to them 'out of the custom due' (customs duties). Roe replied that, Zulfiqar was not the man to admit his debts, and suggested the adoption of certain measures :

- (i) 'bribes' taken from the English were to be refunded ;
- (ii) goods 'detained in custom house' were to be returned to the English ;
- (iii) The English would be free to transport their goods at their will ;
- (iv) Zulfiqar would be held responsible for the false declaration that the Prince and the emperor issued orders for banishing the English from the Mughal empire ; and lastly,
- (v) the English would be allowed to 'reside' in the city and be protected from 'personal injuries'.

Roe threatened that the matter would be referred to the emperor if Khurram denied to grant the above terms to Roe. Khurram then sent for his 'secretary' Socorolla<sup>82</sup> i.e. Mulla Shukr Ullah Shirazi and told him to read and 'examine' the above charges and if found correct, enforce payment out of the customs ; in case of any

shortfall, the balance due should be paid here at the court. Roe seems to have been satisfied as he observes that it was the 'best morning that ever we had in India'.

On April 21, the awaited *nishan* of the Prince was delivered to Roe by Shukr Ullah with the following articles which he gladly accepted :

1. the goods of the English were not to be taken without payment ;
2. they were permitted to sell their goods at their pleasure ;
3. they were allowed free passage to their ships ;
4. the English were authorised to reside at Surat ; and lastly,
5. they were to show all 'imported novelties' for sale to the emperor.

Roe now undertook the task of recovering the money which Zulfiqar had exacted from the English at Surat. Asaf Khan, Khwaja Nizam and Shukrullah, on whom Roe depended for this task, assured Roe that the money would be realised from Zulfiqar. Meanwhile on April 25, Roe sent the *nishan*, along with a letter to Ibrahim Khan, the governor of Surat, desiring him to assist the English factors.

During these months when Roe was busy in obtaining concessions from Khurram, he did not meet the emperor. When at last Roe sought to meet Jahangir, Asaf Khan informed Roe (on June 1) that the emperor had forbidden his presence at the court on a complaint of the Prince. To Roe's enquiry he was told that during his previous discussion with the emperor he had dishonoured the Prince. If, however, he accepted 17,000 *mahmudis*<sup>83</sup> (Rs. 6,400) from Zulfiqar and withdraw all demands from the Prince and Zulfiqar, he would be allowed to meet the emperor. Most probably Asaf Khan intended to exert pressure on Roe into coming to terms with Zulfiqar. Soon, however, Mukarrab, hitherto an enemy of the English, told Roe that the report of the emperor's prohibition was untrue and advised him to come to the court. Evidently, Mukarrab wanted to improve his relation with the English.

When on June 25, Roe went to the court, he was received by

the emperor 'after old manner, as in the past'. Two days later Roe visited Mukarrab and thanked him for his 'voluntary kindness'. Mukarrab showed his goodwill to Roe asking him not to rely upon Asaf Khan. Roe, however, judged it unwise to break with Asaf Khan as he was fully aware of Asaf Khan's power and position in the Mughal court. At the same time, he kept up a show of cordiality to Mukarrab Khan. But in reality, Roe 'trusted neither' of them.

On July 2, Roe visited Jahangir in order to secure a *firman* in favour of the East India Company, but the emperor was wholly preoccupied with the Prince's expedition to the Deccan. But negotiations over refund of exactions by Zulfiqar continued for several days. When the matter was referred by the emperor to Asaf Khan on July 28, Roe pressed the Khan for the *firman* as well for finalization of account with Zulfiqar, and the Khan as usual promised him complete satisfaction. At last Roe obtained 10,000 *mahmudis* in two instalments on August 18 and 22 respectively in repayment of Zulfiqar's debt. But Roe's attempt to obtain a royal *firman* proved abortive, when Asaf Khan, on September 8, told him that the *nishan* was sufficient for his purpose. On account of its shortcomings Roe refused to accept the *nishan* on September 11. The same night, however, he gladly accepted a revised and enlarged copy of it brought by Shukr Ullah, as being 'very effectual'.

The articles of the *nishan* contained the following :

- (i) free trade all over the Mughal empire except Bengal and Sind ;
- (ii) friendly reception to the English by all Mughal 'governors and officers', and permission to 'land their goods in peace', to purchase victuals without paying customs thereon ;
- (iii) they could, if they so desired, sell the imported goods after clearing the customs, at prices lower than the actual ;
- (iv) no goods were to be taken from the English 'without payment'.

Roe felt much assured on receiving a letter by Shukr Ullah addressed to the governor of Surat instructing him to apprise the

Prince of any short payment of the old debt of Zulfiqar Khan. So on September 12, Roe despatched the *nishan* to Surat along with Shukr Ullah's letter and another written by himself to the factors.

After the grant of the *nishan* Roe desired to obtain from the Prince, if possible, a permission to establish a fortified factory at Surat. But as he was pretty sure that his scheme would be 'ill musique' i.e. unacceptable to the Prince so when Roe visited Khurram (October 14), broached the subject in a round about manner. He first thanked the Great Mughal for his kindness and conveyed the goodwill of his own master, the king of England.<sup>84</sup> Then he expressed before the Prince his apprehension that the Portuguese might retaliate upon both the English and the Indians for their disaster at the hands of the English in 1612.<sup>85</sup> But if the English were allowed to fortify their factory of Surat, Roe observes that the English would undertake the responsibility of naval defence of the coast and of the Red Sea traffic of the Mughals. As expected his proposal was instantly rejected by Khurram. Regarding the fortification of the factory, Khurram said with scorn that neither his father nor he needed their assistance. Roe observed that Khurram declined to quarrel with the Portuguese for the sake of the English. At night on that day when Roe along with Asaf Khan visited the emperor the latter merely repeated the past assurances. Khurram who was also present there, however, promised 'before his father and all the court' to satisfy Roe's all 'reasonable' desires.<sup>86</sup>

Failing to obtain the *firman* from Jahangir, Roe finally tried to conclude an agreement with Prince Khurram for the East India Company's uninterrupted trade in Mughal India. A formal draft of the agreement was submitted by Roe to Khurram on August 15, 1618. The time was opportune, as a dispute had there recently developed between the Mughals and the Portuguese<sup>87</sup> over the use of *cartazes* for mughal junks. The articles proposed were as follows :

- (i) All governors in the Mughal empire were to be informed of agreement which brought the English under the 'protection and favour' of the Prince. Khurram agreed to this.
- (ii) The Mughal governor of Surat was to provide the English

with as many frigates as needed by the latter. Khurram also accepted this. But the request for permission to land with arms by the English to defend themselves against the Portuguese was rejected on the ground of the unruliness of the former. On Roe's insistence Khurram first excluded the ambassador and his servant from the prohibition. But as Roe still pressed the point, Khurram relented, allowing ten merchants including the ambassador, provided that when going ashore they would leave their arms at the customs house, to be given back on their return to the ship. Roe consented to this, but requested the Prince to arrange proper security for them in the town.

- (iii) The third clause regarding purchase or renting of a house particularly very near the castle or on the bank of the river was wholly disallowed. The English were, however, permitted to rent a house in the city and the Mughal governors were to help them in procuring a safe and quite 'habitant'.
- (iv) The English 'ambassadors' were to be received by the governor of Surat and other officers with due honour and would be provided with suitable accommodation. Khurram agreed to this.
- (v) In case of a dispute between the English and the house-owner regarding their present accommodation for which they had advanced money the governor of Surat would undertake to repay the balance due to the English. But the English were debarred from renting the house of Khwaja Arab<sup>88</sup> as it was very close to the great mosque and also because it was formerly a mint. Perhaps, the Mughal authorities did not want to brook the presence of Europeans near the mosque and partly because the machinery of mint probably still remained there.
- (vi) Complete freedom of trade was to be granted to the English throughout the empire. Jewels, Pearls etc. would be free of duty. Customs were to be demanded on other goods only at the

port according to the previous agreement (i.e.  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$  *ad valorem*) and thereafter no exactions were to be made during transit. These were neither to be detained by the 'judges and officers' of the customs house, nor taken forcibly by the Mughal officers. Khurram accepted this clause.

- (vii) The English were to enjoy full religious freedom. Khurram accepted this.
- (viii) All internal quarrels and disputes of the English were to be left to be decided by the President of the Company. Any English deserter was to be surrendered by the Mughal governor to the Company's authorities. Khurram at first, declined to surrender those who were converted to Islam, eventually yielded to Roe's pressure. It was then decided that in case of dispute between the English and 'Moore or Banyan', legal action would be taken by the Mughal governor or other officers against them after hearing both sides. To this Khurram agreed.
- (ix) The 'linguist (i.e. interpreter) and brokers' serving the company were to be given complete freedom for bargaining, buying, selling and transporting of goods. Khurram agreed to this.
- (x) All presents for the emperor, shown and stamped at the customs house, were to be delivered to the English for despatch to the court. Khurram accepted it, provided those were to be given to the emperor. But Khurram demanded that in case, the presents were not given to the emperor, either the English would be denied the exemption from customs on these or these would be forfeited, to which Roe agreed.
- (xi) The 'governor and Kazis' (Qazis) were to afford 'speedy justice' and due protection to the English from 'injuries or oppressions' and treat them with due honour. Khurram agreed to this.

But when the Prince's *nishan* came, Roe found certain restrictions had been imposed :

- (i) no Englishman would be allowed to land with arms ;
- (ii) no Englishman except Roe and his servants (nine in number) could carry arms at Surat, not even sword or dagger, but knife only ;
- (iii) the *nishan* was also silent as regards free trade and liberty of movement without exaction.

Roe refused to take the *nishan*<sup>89</sup> on the following grounds :

That, the Prince wanted to disarm the English which was not an act of friendship. He held that the English must carry arms and use these against their enemies, if needed, in view specially of the hostility with the Portuguese. If this was not granted, Roe would not arrange to defend Mughal shipping at sea. The English, he pointed out, were not like the Dutch who had built forts at Masulipatam, Pulicat, Moluccas and other places without rendering any assistance to the rulers 'of those places'.<sup>90</sup> The English never desired nor needed any such project but came here as merchants and exclusively for commercial purposes.<sup>91</sup> As such, they were to visit different parts of the empire with adequate funds as well valuable goods, and as the roads were infested with thieves and robbers, so the knife alone would not be sufficient for their defence. Finally, he added that it was really shameful for the Prince to be afraid of a few Englishmen. But further events showed that a few armed Englishmen proved to be dangerous.

At the same time Roe despatched an order to the forthcoming fleet at Surat, 'to disarm'<sup>92</sup> all the ships and frigates belonging to Surat and the copy of its translation into Persian along with the above mentioned reasons were sent to the Prince's officers. Evidently Roe threatened Khurram giving him the ultimatum that either he was to grant privileges as desired by Roe or the Mughal seaborne trade with the Red sea ports would be threatened.

Next night<sup>93</sup> Khurram's Secretary, Afzal Khan, reached an agreement with Roe and the latter received the revised *nishan* from the Prince<sup>94</sup> through Afzal Khan, granting all his demands except some minor restrictions. The grant of this *nishan*<sup>95</sup> was a landmark in the history of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. From



Jahangir, however, Roe obtained only a gracious letter containing assurances of good treatment.<sup>96</sup>

VII. *Critical estimate of Roe's mission :*

During his mission of two years and nine months, Roe sought diligently to realise his objects as given in his journal :

1. to negotiate a formal treaty of commerce between his sovereign and Jahangir which would place the position of the English in India 'on a firm and lasting basis' ;
2. to set up factories in Mughal India ;
3. to secure concessions for trade in Bengal and Sind ; and
4. to take over the Red Sea trade from Indian merchants.

But his efforts to conclude a commercial treaty with Jahangir, granting the Company the virtual monopoly right in Euro-India trade did not appear to be successful. He could not secure a royal *firman* from Jahangir, though the reasons of Jahangir's reluctance cannot be stated precisely in the absence of evidence. The Great Mughal, however, instructed and even chided Khurram for the latter's delay in granting Roe 'reasonable' privileges. Roe could only obtain a *nishan* from Prince Khurram, then viceroy of Gujarat, granting the English economic privileges.

Foster observes, that Jahangir's exalted position prevented him from signing a treaty with the representative of a distant and unknown country, particularly when such an action would restrict his future 'freedom of action'. As the supreme law giver, the emperor must have complete liberty of will.<sup>97</sup> Surat was under the direct administration of Khurram, and Jahangir, therefore, did not want to interfere with his son's affairs, expecting at the same time that he would not grant any privilege to the English particularly for Bengal and Sind which lay outside his own jurisdiction. Most probably Khurram, chided by Jahangir, did not want to irritate Roe further and granted whatever Roe desired without adequately considering the sequel to this grant.

From the very start, the pioneers of the English Company<sup>98</sup> designed to establish English factories in Mughal India. At last Roe

obtained permission from Prince Khurram (September, 1618) to rent houses in the port of Surat. These houses soon turned into 'factories'. There is, however, some confusion about the date of establishment of the first English factory in Mughal India. Although as early as 1611 the English had followed the example of the Dutch in starting a factory at Masulipatam, the then chief port of the kingdom of Golconda,<sup>99</sup> their first factory in Mughal India was not established before 1624.<sup>100</sup> Foster says that the first 'permanent factory' was established at Surat early in 1613.<sup>101</sup> But Moreland is correct in saying that the 'supposed *firman*' given to Best in 1613 allowing the English to establish factory 'proved to be a document of little value'.<sup>102</sup> Some other historians<sup>103</sup> also have been probably misled by the agreement concluded between Captain Best and the local authorities of Surat<sup>104</sup> and also by the above remarks of Foster. Roe also had been attracted by the idea of a fortress on the coast of Gujarat, but could not obtain permission from Khurram.<sup>105</sup> It is thus not true that Roe gave up the 'idea on the ground of expense'.<sup>106</sup>

Commercial concession for Bengal and Sind was not granted to the Company because the Portuguese had trading posts in both provinces. If the English were allowed to extend their trading operations in those provinces, the result would have been bickerings, if not actual hostilities between the two nations, which would be detrimental to Indian interests. Secondly, Khurram felt, that the English access to the ports of Bengal and Sind would 'diminish the revenue from the Surat customs'.<sup>107</sup>

Khurram resisted Roe's design to take over the Red Sea trade from the Indian merchants. But after the latter's departure the English secured that trade following Roe's *modus operandi* which will be discussed at the proper place.<sup>108</sup>

As regards the commercial agreement, there were gross defects.

Roe could not obtain a royal *firman* from Jahangir.<sup>109</sup> Prince Khurram granted a *nishan* allowing the English to enjoy the above mentioned privileges. By virtue of his power and position, Khurram had no authority to grant such wide privileges to a foreigner.

trading company. Though Roe says that Jahangir 'grows dull and suffers him (Khurram) to write all commands and to govern all his kingdoms',<sup>110</sup> there is no proof in contemporary Persian sources (like the *Tuzuk*) that Jahangir delegated royal power to Khurram. It would be no exaggeration to say that Roe made that observation because he had an axe to grind, i.e. to demonstrate that the Prince's grant was equivalent to the *firman*.

Therefore, it would not be justifiable to record that the English got the right to live and trade in Mughal India by virtue of Khurram's grant while the emperor himself was alive.

### FOOT NOTES

- 1 Embassy, xiii.
- 2 There were only twelve voyages made by the Company to India in the first decade (between 1600 and 1612) which obtained an average profit of 138 percent on the total capital employed in all the voyages. Balkrishna, 55.
- 3 See Chapter III ante.
- 4 Whiteway (2nd ed.), 21; CHI, V, 76. The Papal bulls of 1493, and the subsequent agreement with Spain and Tordessillas, prevented any attempt to infringe the monopoly claimed by Lisbon.
- 5 Embassy, XV.
- 6 e.g. Hansa factories in London in 1157 and Bergen in Norway and also English factories in the Levant. Williamson, 5-6.
- 7 See Chapter III ante.
- 8 *Ibid.* V ante.
- 9 Although the English company could not establish any factory as yet, they began sending trading agents in the name of 'factor' as it is evident in the 'Letters Received' and other contemporary English sources. Moreland, Foster and others used the word 'Factor' but did not explain the actual background.
- 10 *Ibid.*, II ante
- 11 *Ibid.*, III ante
- 12 Aldworth suggested the appointment of 'a sufficient man whose person may breede regard'. Embassy, xvii. Edwards wrote 'necessity of residence with the King.....is so much as cannot be avoided'. LR, i, 307.
- 13 EQ, 282.
- 14 Embassy, xvii
- 15 *Ibid.* xvi-xvii.

- 16 *Ibid.*, xv-111
- 17 Ency. Brit. 349.
- 18 Embassy, xviii.
- 19 *Ibid.*, xviii.
- 20 'Subha' is really Subah. EFI, 1618-21. vii.
- 21 Zulfiqar's original name was Muhammad Beg and he was the personal attendant of Khurram. He received the title of Zulfiqar Khan along with a handsome present from emperor Jahangir for having carried to the court the news of the submission of Amar Singh in 1613, the Rana of Udaipur. Tuzuk, i, 273-274 ; ii, 123.
- 22 Hist. Frag. 360.
- 23 Embassy, xxvii.
- 24 The Portuguese seized the Surat vessel in order to bring pressure to bear upon the Mughals to exclude the English. Therefore, the war broke out between the Mughals and the Portuguese. For details see Ch. V ante.
- 25 Jeronimo de Ezpeletay Coni, popularly known as Jerome Xavier, a Jesuit, came to Akbar's court from Goa. His father was a nephew of Francis Xavier. Born in 1549 at Beire, near Olite in the Spanish province of Navarra came to Goa at the end of September 1581. At this time of Treaty he was probably at Surat. Campos, 2-3.
- 26 Roe names Mukarrab Khan as the officer, but actually Zulfiqar was the *mutasuddi* in 1615.
- 27 The Dutch have played an important role in the commercial history of India since 1601. When Roe was in India, Pieter Vanden Broecke, their chief factor, landed at Surat (1616).
- 28 Faria, iii, 221.
- 29 Eq. 281
- 30 Embassy, 75n.
- 31 *Ibid.*, xxviii
- 32 EQ. 281.
- 33 FAA, 22.
- 34 This episode finds no place in Beni Prasad's *Jahangir* and only a bare mention in Foster, EQ.
- 35 William Biddulph came in Best's fleet, was with Roe almost throughout the latter's stay in India, and returned to England in 1623. Embassy, 27n.
- 36 Embassy, 28n.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 38 In the MS of Roe (f. 280) only '48 pieces of great ordnance' are mentioned. Embassy, 31n.
- 39 'They (Mughal Officers) by an interpreter bade me welcome with a long compliment...'. Embassy, 29-31.
- 40 Embassy, 31. Obviously Roe did not know about the failure of Captain Best in concluding an agreement with Jahangir.

- 41 Terry, 173.
- 42 Roe mentions 'some others' with the officer, who must have been his staff.
- 43 The *Koival* had extensive powers. See Glossary.
- 44 Really it was an ancient custom. Della Valle, 6.
- 45 In 1615 the Portuguese plundered a Mughal ship the *Rahimi* on her voyage to Surat from the Red Sea. Since then Mughal-Portuguese trade relations was put to an end. For details see Chapter V ante.
- 46 EQ, 282.
- 47 Embassy, 40-44.
- 48 *Ibid.* On that very day, Zulfiqar met General Keeling aboard his ship. The General concluded an agreement with Zulfiqar concerning the landing of English goods. The details of the agreement were not known to Roe.
- 49 Scholars have not yet tried to remove the shroud of darkness that covered this treaty. Most of them have accepted the treaty as valid and taken as granted that the treaty had been signed by the emperor. But this is wrong. See Chap. V ante.
- 50 Embassy, 44, 47-50, 52-53.
- 51 A custom house and resort for foreign merchants in an oriental port. The word comes through the Portuguese *findigo*, Italian, *fondaco*, Arabic, *atfunduk*. Hobson-Jobson, 12.
- 52 Perhaps Ibrahim Khan, as held by Foster. Embassy, 52-53, 62-63.
- 53 Embassy, 64-65.
- 54 Pay master (Pers. *Bakhshi*), Saran, 176, 196. See Glossary.
- 55 See Ch. V for their activities.
- 56 This is wrong information. In the Mughal administration the tenure of imperial officials depended on the pleasure of the emperor in the ultimate analysis.
- 57 Jafarabad, on the Kathiwar coast, about 30 miles, N. E. of Diu.
- 58 The attempt of the Portuguese to normalise the relation was baffled by Jahangir, who was not satisfied with the activities of the Portuguese. See for details Ch. V ante.
- 59 Embassy, 73 ; The observation regarding price is not wholly true. Owing to the paucity of sufficient data it is difficult to measure the purchasing power of the coins brought by the English merchants. Contemporary travellers like Della Valle note that prices were low in Surat and the neighbourhood (Della Valle, 42). Ibn Hasan (27) refuses to accept any of Terry's versions which are not corroborated by any other contemporary writer. But Moreland (IDA, 54) accepts Terry as reliable. It must be remembered, as Moreland observes, that Europe was at this time, experiencing the 'effects of the continued inflow of silver from America' ; prices were rising in Europe, and it was exceedingly difficult for individual travellers to judge the price position in India (IDA, 54). Thus it is not advisable to rely on Roe's remarks.

- 60 Embassy, 73.
- 61 Tuzuk, i, 103, 134 ; Embassy, 110 ; Manrique, IXIV ;
- 62 IDA, 244.
- 63 Roe reached the outskirts of Ajmer on December 22, 1615. He met Mr. Edwards there. Next day he reached Ajmer but his illness delayed his official reception till January 10, 1616. Embassy, 86.
- 64 Embassy, 87.
- 65 A clock and two other trifles. Embassy, 94n.
- 66 The bad treatment complained of are detailed in Kerridge's letter to Roe then at Surat dated September 26, 1615. Kerridge alleged that a dispute with a native merchant over some indigo led to their broker being beaten and imprisoned by the local authorities. Embassy, 94n.
- 67 Embassy, 87-95.
- 68 Embassy, 92-94.
- 69 Roe was unaware of the distinction between a *firman* and *nishan*, and termed every grant whether issued by the Emperor or prince as *firman*.
- 69a Without giving any authority, Foster equates him with Khwaja Nizam, Embassy, 106n. A more likely suggestion would be Haji Nashim.
- 70 MU, i, 657-59 ; Embassy, 107n.
- 71 Father Hosten identified him with Jeronimo Veroneo, the reputed designer of the Taj. Embassy 124n. The theory of Italian origin of the Taj is now an exploded theory.
- 72 Between the *Divan Khana* and the female residences there was an apartment in which Akbar used to take bath, after which a few trusted persons were admitted to see him. Gradually the *Diwan*, *Bakhshi* and other nobles were also admitted for state business. This private chamber by its proximity to the bath room, came to be known as the *Ghusal Khana*. Lahori, i, 148 ; Salih, i, 247 ; Ibn Hasan, 77-79.
- 73 Roe expressed his desire to Jahangir 'to stand up' by the throne for observing the festival (*Nauroz*), Jahangir graciously ordered Asaf Khan to let Roe 'choose' his 'own place'. Embassy, 131.
- 74 This shows that the English were unable to establish a factory in the Mughal empire upto now (March 1616). See Ch. V.
- 75 Evidently Roe wanted to have liberty to take action against the Portuguese at least on the high seas, if they were opposed by the latter. On the high seas, practically the Mughal authorities had nothing to do. But as Roe learnt, the Prince was supporting Portuguese cause, so the English action against the Portuguese on the high seas could enrage him against the English. Considering this factor, probably Roe sought the above permission.
- 76 Goods or money not exceeding 10 rials of eight were free of customs. See Appendix A for rials.

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- 77 In Mughal India, an officer '*Bayutat*' by name, had to perform this duty in the centre. *Bayutat*, serving under *Khan Saman*, registered the property of deceased person for obtaining the dues of the state as well to protect the property for the heirs of the deceased. Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 44-46.
- 78 Other copies perhaps were to be sent to Surat, to the Directors of the Company in London.
- 79 Foreigners had to pay this rate for both imports and exports. Embassy, 137n.
- 80 Embassy, 136-141.
- 81 The word, probably comes from 'ale', i.e. liquor made from malt.
- 82 Allami Mulla Shukrulla Shirazi was given the title of Afzal Khan by Jahangir when he accompanied to court the emissaries of the Rana of Udaipur. In the succeeding reign he rose to high office and died at Lahore in January, 1639. MU, i, 149-153, 259, 413.
- 83 See Appendix A for *Mahmudis*.
- 84 Embassy, 214, 216, 218, 221, 226, 228-232.
- 85 In 1612 Captain Best, in 1614 Nicholas Downton, inflicted crushing defeat on the Portuguese and the latter found their commercial interests suffered from the war. See Ch. V ante for more information.
- 86 From the beginning of November 1616 to February 1618, Roe roamed with Jahangir from Ajmer to Mandu and from Mandu to Ahmedabad. Roe lost all hopes and realised that his continued presence at the imperial court would 'do not good'. So he set himself to start for Agra in February 1618. Jahangir remained at Ahmedabad, till September 1618 and then started for Agra. In the same month, on 26, Roe took his departure for Surat on his way to England. Embassy, 282, 432-57, 479, 482.
- 87 The occasion of the breach with the Portuguese is not clear, but possibly it arose from the dispute of *cartazes*. The Indians for a time resisted the payment claimed by the Portuguese. Embassy, 485.
- 88 The renting of the house referred to had been hired for three years from Khwaja Arab in the middle of 1616. Apparently he had now died, and the house escheated to the Prince, who had decided to turn out of the house the English factors, LR, V, 74.
- 89 Embassy, 474-479; EFI, 1618-21, 40.
- 90 Embassy, 479-480.
- 91 Roe's letter, revealing English intentions in India are not true. We have seen that Roe desired to build a fort. Roe's observation about the Dutch is also not true. The Dutch secured permission from the raja of Vellore to build a fort at Pulicat in March 1613. The fortress, called Geldria soon played a part of growing importance. But at Masulipatam, however, no such development took place. There was only a Dutch trading factory at Masulipatam. CHI, V, 34-35.

- 92 Disarming of ships, perhaps meant, to take away all arms and ammunition from the Mughal ships going to the Red Sea ports, so that the above ships became helpless on the way.
- 93 From February 11, 1617, the journal was posted to another book which unfortunately has been lost and hence-forward we are to depend on Purchas' meagre extracts, where some time date was not mentioned. However, the negotiations were prolonged well into September, 1618, so we can assume that the event took place in September 1618.
- 94 No contemporary copy of this *nishan* is extant. At the India office, there is a transcript of it made in 1789, endorsed by Kkurrum and signed by Roe, which runs as follows :
- Thomas Roe undertook the following obligations : The English must not build any house in or about Surat without obtaining permission from Jahangir ; they could only rent a convenient house for the residence of their merchants and custody of their merchandise ; all English goods were to be displayed, when the governor of Surat desired to buy for presenting to the emperor, in case of dispute arose over the price, the goods were to be sent to the ambassador at the court, after being duly scaled ; they would live at Surat peacefully abiding by the laws and regulations of the empire. Embassy, 481n.
- 95 Date is not mentioned. But most probably the *nishan* was granted in September, 1618.
- 96 EQ. 283. Towards the close of September 1618, Roe started for Surat. After his arrival there, he spent four months awaiting the completion of the lading of the *Anne* which sailed out on February 17, 1619.
- 97 EQ. 283.
- 98 William Hawkins in 1609 and Capt Best in 1613.
- 99 CHI, V, 88.
- 100 See Ch. VII.
- 101 *Ibid.* 79.
- 102 FAA, 36 ; for details see Chapter V ante.
- 103 HCIP (Bharatiya Vidya-Bhavan) VII, 512, CHI, V, 79 ; Williamson, 162 ; all of them accepts that the English factory was established at Surat in 1613.
- 104 See Chapter V ante.
- 105 Embassy, 250n.
- 106 FAA, 230n
- 107 LR, V, 303
- 108 See Chapter VII.
- 109 It is strange that Della Valle, the contemporary traveller in Mughal India affirms that Roe 'concluded...treaty with the Mughal Emperor', though Roe himself denies it. Della Valle, XXV.
- 110 EQ. 285.





**PART 3**

**ENGLISH POLICY OF FORCE AND CHANGE IN  
MUGHAL COMMERCIAL POLICY**



## CHAPTER VII

### DECAY OF INDIA'S RED SEA TRADE MONOPOLY

( 1619-1624 )

1. *The Red Sea Trade and English designs thereon : Sir Thomas Roe's Views :*

Towards the end of his stay in Mughal India, Roe 'viewed with concern' the commercial position of the English East India Company and its 'effects upon the interests of the nation as a whole'.<sup>1</sup> He noted that the English goods were not in much demand in India 'to return cargoes'<sup>2</sup> without importation of a considerable amount of silver from home, which he considered, in the contemporary mercantilist tradition, to be a drain of treasure and highly detrimental to his country.<sup>3</sup> Roe's epigram, Europe 'bleedeth to enrich Asia'<sup>4</sup> has become classic. Therefore Roe told the Directors in London that the cargoes they were then sending out would 'never drive this trade' ; so they must succour it by change'.<sup>5</sup> The ambassador wrote a letter from Ajmer on November 24, 1616 to the Directors of the East India Company urging that the trade to the Red Sea would be sufficient to finance the whole of the Company's trade in Mughal India. He suggested the despatch of a small ship with the 'fittest English Goods' and some others which the Red Sea region would 'yield'. His letter also drew a bright picture of the Red Sea traffic. The profit of the Red Sea trade, he writes, exceeded that of all the

'trades of Indya' (India) and would 'drive this alone'.<sup>6</sup> In fact it has been calculated that it ranged from 30 to 110 percent.<sup>7</sup> Roe urged that the assortments of the English and Indian goods might be sold at the Red Sea ports at high profit to the merchants from Syria and Egypt, who were the 'real carriers of Indian commodities to the Mediterranean ports'.<sup>8</sup> They, and particularly the Egyptians, usually bought goods from Indian merchants in specie.<sup>9</sup>

The economy of Mocha,<sup>10</sup> the chief town of trade for shipping in all Arabia Felix<sup>11</sup> largely depended on Indian commodities like textiles of different varieties, spices, beads, etc.<sup>12</sup> In the absence of Gujarati ships in Mocha in 1611 due to Henry Middleton's piratical activities its economy was disrupted and the prices of Indian commodities rose abnormally high.<sup>13</sup> By the end of the second decade of seventeenth century Mughal India's maritime trade with Achin, Bantam and other places in South-East Asia suffered so heavily on account of the encroachment of the English and the Dutch that, in the eloquent phraseology of Roe, the Indian merchants were 'undone' and their trade was 'overthrown' by the English and the Dutch. This trade had slipped out of their hands just like 'meate out of their mouths'.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the Red Sea trade, Foster remarks, was the 'only commerce of importance' now left to Indian merchants.<sup>15</sup> They naturally depended almost exclusively upon the Red Sea trade.

## *II. India's trade-link with the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf :*

In fact, India's trade link with the Red Sea region began from first millennium B. C. and under the Arabs the tie became still close.<sup>16</sup> Before the advent of Europeans in India, Gujarat's economic prosperity rested mainly on its sea-borne trade. This prosperity was further augmented when Gujarat became an 'Independent principality'.<sup>17</sup> Surat and Cambay were two main entrepots of Gujarat. The merchants of both the ports had close commercial links with East Africa, Red Sea, Persian Gulf and South East Asia. Cloth, silks, all kinds of beads, crystal, bales of dates, opium of Cambay were 'most prized in Abyssinia'.<sup>18</sup> Cambay merchants used to come to trade in the ports of Arabia Felix.<sup>19</sup> Aden then 'one of

the four great trading cities in the world',<sup>20</sup> had a 'great trade' with the 'people in India'.

The merchants, who resided in Gujarat and carried on overseas trade of the time, were of different nationalities. Different writers termed them differently, e. g. Gujarati merchants, Cambay traders, Indian merchants, Surat traders etc. In fact, there were Hindus, Jains,<sup>21</sup> Armenians,<sup>22</sup> Arabs,<sup>23</sup> Persians,<sup>24</sup> Tartars,<sup>25</sup> Turks,<sup>26</sup> Jews<sup>27</sup> who had settled in Gujarat and carried on trading activities and by this time became Indians by naturalisation.<sup>27a</sup> Therefore, it would be better to term them as Indian merchants to signify the actual position.

Grasping that the Red Sea trade was indispensable for English trade in India, Roe persisted, in his efforts for capturing Red Sea trade from the hands of Indian merchants. Anticipating the opposition that would be forthcoming from the Indian merchants and the Mughal officials, he wrote to the Directors of the Company in London on November 24, 1616, that if the English participation in Red Sea traffic was opposed by the Indian merchants or the Mughal officials it would not be difficult to overcome their opposition by preventing their ships from sailing to the Red Sea or seizing them on their return and holding them as hostages until all their 'grievances were redressed'.<sup>28</sup>

### III. Gunboat Diplomacy of Roe :

Roe also expressed his apprehension in his above mentioned letter to the Court of Directors in London that his efforts for obtaining a share of the Red Sea trade might be opposed by the Turks, the overlords of Mocha : the English being 'strangers in that sea', could be identified as pirates. So Roe very shrewdly devised a plan of escorting Mughal junks to the Red Sea so that they would also be admitted with the Mughals.<sup>29</sup>

Before writing this letter, Roe met Khurram on October 14, 1616 with his project and offered him the 'assistance' of English fleet 'either for the chastising of the common enemy (the Portuguese) or for the sake of conducting the ships' of the Mughals. But the

Prince rejected his formula saying that as 'he had no warr' with the Portuguese it 'was needlesse to wette' (convoy) Mughal ships to the Red Sea.<sup>30</sup> However, Roe was of the view that the Red Sea trade was too tempting a prize to be given up without further effort.<sup>31</sup> On August 30, 1617 Roe wrote to Martin Pring, the commander of the English fleet (which was on the way to Surat), advising him to blockade Mocha if the 'Mochans' did not allow the English to trade there.<sup>32</sup> Roe wanted to put an embargo on the foreign ships. On September 29, 1617, he again wrote from Mandu to Pring at Surat stating that the emperor was sending his sister<sup>33</sup> to 'Mecha (Mocca) which would be the fittest opportunity' to seize that vessel as it would be the 'best prize that ever was taken in India' by the English.<sup>34</sup>

Such preparation for taking over the Red Sea trade by means of piratical activities did not escape the notice of Indian merchants particularly when an English ship plundered a Mughal vessel belonging to the Begum.<sup>35</sup> Roe informed President Kerridge at Surat on October 4, 1617 from Mandu about the reactions of the Indian merchants. The latter complained to the Prince 'against the English' for the piracy.<sup>36</sup> Evidently there was an widespread resentment amongst the Indians against such a piracy. So when Roe went to the court, he found the Indian merchants and the 'Captain Malum<sup>37</sup> sitting in the amkass'<sup>38</sup> with Itimad-ud-daula,<sup>39</sup> the *Wazir* and Asaf Khan preparing a draft<sup>40</sup> to be submitted to the emperor to debar the English from taking any part in the Red Sea trade. The merchants seeing Roe accused him for such piratical activities and 'took occasion to renew their fears' of the English design for obtaining a share of Red Sea trade. Roe assured them saying that the Indian merchants surely had experience that the English always 'defended them'. This act must have been done by the 'Dutch, French or piratts' and not by the English. Claiming to be an ambassador Roe behaved as a shameless liar. His conduct was wholly unbecoming of his high rank.

Roe proposed to them that the English fleet at Surat was ready under Captain Martin Pring to 'freight in their goods' in the English

ships or to escort their vessels to Mocha. Itimad-ud-daula, though the Prime minister, failed to grasp Roe's actual motive, and replied that he had never heard of 'so noble an offer' and wanted to inform the emperor of it. But the Indian merchants showed surprising practical acumen. Comprehending the inner motivation of the offer, they rejected Roe's proposal declaring that they would never agree to freighting in English ships, because in that case their own ships would be destroyed and the English by this way 'would enter into their trade'.

Roe even agreed to convoy Indian ships free of cost to Red Sea ports only to show, as he remarks, that this service 'was for love and not for profit'. But the Indian merchants, as it appears, apprehended that this proposal too, smacked of the same evil designs and rejected this also saying that they would better sit at home and 'would not venture their goods' by which the English would be the gainer.

The merchants, thereafter, requested Roe to 'give a pass' which might save their ships (sailing to the Red Sea ports) being plundered, which Roe could not very well deny as the English were in peace with the Mughals.

But Roe was obviously dissatisfied, because he was convinced that the future of English trade in Mughal India depended on their trade link with Red Sea ports. Summing up the outcome of his endeavours, he impressed on President Kerridge early in February 1618, that his attempts bore no fruit and 'all were blanck'.<sup>41</sup>

Roe was also opposed by the President Kerridge and his colleagues at Surat. The latter 'resented the ambassador's interference' because they considered the matter to be outside Roe's sphere.<sup>42</sup> Most probably, they thought that Roe's principal duty was to secure commercial privileges for Company's trade in India from the Great Mughal and not to capture the Red Sea trade.

Ignoring all these Roe now resolved to secure Red Sea trade by force. The factors at Surat 'had no option but to acquiesce'.<sup>43</sup> Roe might have been influenced by the successful application of the policy of force by Henry Middleton in 1612 to compell the Mughal authorities of Surat to come to terms.<sup>44</sup> Roe thought, as Foster



observes, that by this course, Jahangir and his advisers would realise that the English were, indeed as they claimed to be 'Lords of the Seas and would then listen with due respect to the claim of the despise (sic) foreigners to a free market and fair treatment for themselves and their goods'.<sup>45</sup>

It is also clear that Roe was convinced that the use of force would cow down the Indian merchants. As he remarked that the Indians were 'best treated with the sword in one hand and caducean<sup>46</sup> in the other'<sup>47</sup> i.e. applying force and persuasion at the same time.

Meanwhile Roe obtained permission from the Directors of the Company to push his project through.<sup>48</sup> The *Royal Anne* accordingly left Surat for Mocha in the middle of March 1618 with Edward Heynes, Secretary of Roe, and Joseph Salbank, a merchant of the Company to negotiate with the ruler of Mocha. The *Anne* reached the port after a month. They procured a *firman* from the Pasha of Yemen for peaceful trade 'both for present and future times, as intending to visit their ports yearly with plenty of English and Indian goods'.<sup>49</sup> Therefore Roe's apprehension about the possible opposition of the Mochans proved to be wrong.

Armed with this *firman*, Roe was determined to carry on with the experiment. On February 17, 1619, when he himself started for home in the *Royal Anne*, the *Lion* sailed for Mocha carrying a reply from Roe to the Governor of Mocha pressing him to obtain both from the Pasha of Yemen and from the Turkish emperor at Constantinople, such privileges as would encourage the English to continue their commercial operations regularly. The *Lion* returned to Surat in October 1619 and made nearly 100 per cent profit selling the imported cargoes. Finding this incredible profit, Kerridge resolved to prosecute this trade.<sup>50</sup> The English began purchasing Indian goods from Surat to sell those at Red Sea ports without having any permission from the Prince, the viceroy of Gujarat.

The Indian merchants at Surat, finding the English exporting Indian goods to the Red Sea ports 'in competition with themselves' and being afraid of the loss of Red Sea trade, instantly hit back and, on their own initiative, took three steps :

- (i) They stopped selling goods to the English and organised a 'general boycott' against the English at Surat. The English were told that unless they abandoned the Red Sea traffic, not a single 'yard of calico' would be sold to them.<sup>51</sup>
- (ii) The merchants petitioned to Prince Khurram for disallowing the English to share that trade, as otherwise the Indian merchants would be 'all undon(e) and the citty begered'<sup>52</sup> (i.e. reduced to poverty). In fact, they merely wanted the Prince's support in their actions taken against the English.
- (iii) On their insistence the *Mutasaddi* of Surat prohibited the sale of corals at Surat by the English brought from the Red Sea ports.<sup>53</sup>

This was not all. At their instigation, the *Mutasaddi* arrested 'a couple of merchants' who, in spite of the prohibition, had supplied 'commodities suitable for the Red Sea trade'.<sup>54</sup>

These proceedings of the local officials against the English were reported by the factors of Surat to Biddulph then in the court. The latter met Asaf Khan and the Prince's chief nobleman (Afzal Khan) and lodged complaint against the Surat officials. Summing up the outcome of his endeavours he wrote from the Mughal camp at Sirbind to the Directors of the Company on December 25, 1619 that both the noblemen impressed on him that the Prince, overlord of Surat, could solve this problem of the English.<sup>55</sup> After a long delay Biddulph obtained an interview with the Prince and complained that the Surat officials refused to allow his fellow countrymen to carry on their trade with Red Sea.

Meanwhile, the 'Governor and Chiefs' of Surat had written to Khurram for preventing the English from buying Indian Goods for Red Sea trade. So the Prince 'absolutely rejected' Biddulph's prayer. They were, however, allowed to buy and sell within the Mughal empire. If they were not contented with this, Khurram told them that, they could leave this country but 'must not begger' the subjects of the empire.<sup>56</sup>

The role of the *Mutasaddi* and Khurram in this connection is interesting and praiseworthy. The *Mutasaddi*, who was well aware

of local conditions and well experienced in Mughal India's sea-borne trade, continuously resisted the English. The Prince also sought to defend the interests of Indian traders by his strong attitude. Unfortunately owing to scanty available materials it is difficult to have a full view of the Prince as an administrator of Gujarat. The Persian sources are as usual silent. No modern writer has ever thrown light on this unknown side of Shahjahan.

On the other hand, after his conversation with the Prince, Biddulph was convinced that 'seizure and taking' of Mughal shipping would be the best course to alter the decision of the Prince and informed the Surat factors accordingly.<sup>57</sup>

This led Thomas Kerridge, the President of the Company at Surat, to enquire (August 16, 1619) from the factors at Ahmedabad the advisability of seizing Khurram's junk on her return from the Red Sea.<sup>58</sup>

#### *IV. Piracy and Trade*<sup>59</sup>

The sapling of Roe's Gunboat diplomacy or policy of force began now to sprout. The first act of English piracy on Mughal shipping, after Roe's departure, occurred in November 1619 when the English fleet<sup>60</sup> under the command of Bickley, plundered a 'small boat' belonging to Sind merchants of Lahari Bandar<sup>61</sup> bound for Muskat with having 'sundry letters and passes' of the Portuguese and laded with 'Portingalls goods'.<sup>62</sup> It was a definite act of open hostility against the Mughal empire. The cargo was grabbed but the vessel was released. In reporting the incident from the court at Agra to the President Kerridge at Surat (on Jan. 22, and Feb. 18, 1620) Biddulph apprehended that the English would have to make 'double restitution' i.e. to the Mughals and the Portuguese.<sup>63</sup>

Claiming restitution, very soon the Sind merchants came to the Court. Asaf Khan impressed on the English factors at Agra (Biddulph and Young) the necessity of giving the Sind merchants 'content', as otherwise 'they would complain to the kings' (i.e. emperor) which would be much to their 'nations dishonour'.<sup>64</sup> The factors denied any such act done by them. The Sind merchants

## PIRACY AND TRADE

showed Asaf Khan an inventory of all their goods that were shipped and sealed by the customs officer of Lahari bandar and which the English plundered. Biddulph and Young replied that they could do nothing until they received instruction from the President at Surat. Asaf Khan then urged them to seek 'speedy instructions' because the complainants were 'pressing for justice'.<sup>65</sup>

But as no reply came from Surat till November 23, 1621, the Sind merchants came to Agra to lodge a complaint to Asaf Khan, but as the latter had then left Agra with the emperor to go to Ahmedabad, the merchants appealed to the Chief of the town.<sup>66</sup> But knowing Asaf Khan's good relations with the English, the chief 'ordered them to seek justice of the Nabobs' i.e. from Asaf Khan. It is really difficult for a junior officer to take any action against an offender who enjoyed the support of a superior officer.

Informing the President at Surat about the happenings in the court and the demand of the Sind merchants for '10,000 rupp(ee)s' from the English,<sup>67</sup> Biddulph sought immediate instruction to tackle the situation.

Knowing, on his return to the capital, that the Sind merchants had not yet been given reparation Khurram lost his patience. At his order Robert Hughes and John Parker,<sup>68</sup> then at Agra, were imprisoned on January 5, 1622 and their goods and money seized.<sup>69</sup> Though they were released shortly after, their property was not restored even though they prayed for it.<sup>70</sup> In April 1622, the latter ordered the imperial officers to pay Rs. 10,200 (two hundred rupees more than the original demand) to the Sind merchants from the effects of the English and it was done accordingly.<sup>71</sup>

### *V. Piracy on Mughal Shipping :*

However, this was only the first act of the drama. From future events it appears that the English realised that it would be dangerous for a few Englishmen on land to quarrel with the mighty Mughal empire. Again it would be foolishness to remain in the country, stocked with valuable goods and to play rough with the Mughals. Retaliation on the sea would be considerably easier. So the English

decided at this stage to dissolve their establishments, close their commercial operations and to get down to Surat for embarkation in emergency. The English might have thought that by this contraction of their arena of activities and drawing their men and resources to Surat, and detaining the Mughal shipping on the high seas they would be able to exert pressure on the Mughal authorities, though the latter would not be able to retaliate.

Acting on President Kerridge's instructions Burhanpur and Agra establishments were dissolved respectively in May 1622<sup>72</sup> and April 1623.<sup>73</sup> But before leaving Ahmedabad its chief factor Nathaniel Halstead had died owing to illness on September (18 or 19) and the local authorities at once escheated everything of the English on the ground that it was the estate of an alien.<sup>74</sup>

When such proceedings were going on against the English in the Mughal empire, four English ships (the *Dolphin*, the *Blessing*, the *Reformation* and the *Whale*) arrived at the bar of Surat, in October 1622, under the command of Captain Hall.<sup>75</sup> Realising that the English property in India was comparatively small and their establishments could be withdrawn any time, the President and Council at Surat decided to seize Indian ships coming back from Mocha and accordingly ordered Captain Hall (February, 22) to proceed immediately to Mocha<sup>76</sup> to seize all junks.<sup>77</sup> He was also ordered to bear in mind the following instructions :

- (i) No vessel was to be seized 'out ward bound for Mocha (i.e. Mocha), nor homeward to the northward of Aden' i.e. no seizure was to be made on outward journey from Surat to Mocha and on return journey between Mocha and Aden.
- (ii) The English fleet was to return with its prize to Surat not before the 'end of October' i.e. before the close of monsoon.
- (iii) Only the important persons aboard the captured ships but not their crew were to be removed to the English ships and treated well.
- (iv) Immediately after the seizure, the *Reformation*<sup>78</sup> (if present) was to be sent in advance 'if possible by the middle of September' i., e. when the monsoon would be weakened, to

notify the factors at Surat of the seizure so that they could be prepared to meet an emergency.<sup>70</sup>

On March 15, 1623, the President and his Council instructed Captain Hall to proceed to the Red Sea and (i) seize all Indian junks returning from Jiddah and Mocha ; (ii) but not to allow any Englishman 'to go on board' the captured junks which were to be kept at his command 'only by the awful power of ordnance' (i. e. artillery) ; (iii) to shift 'Principal' Officers, important merchants and passengers from the Indian junks to the English ships ; (iv) to punish 'any pillager' of the junk (evidently referring to the English looters) to death ; (v) finally, the *Reformation* (as decided by the Council earlier), was to be sent to Surat to apprise the servants of the Company, so that the latter could board the *Reformation* with as much goods as they could collect 'to avoid the fury and insolency (insolence) of these people' (the Mughals).<sup>71</sup>

The second act of the drama then began. The *Dolphin* under Edward Heynes<sup>81</sup> and William Hoare informed President Rastell at Surat on September 27, 1623 that they captured (i) the *Toklie* (? Tawakkul Ali)<sup>82</sup> under *Nakhuda*<sup>83</sup> (skipper) Maqsud Ali, (ii) the *Tawrie* under *Nakhuda* Shivaji Bania.<sup>84</sup> The *Blessing* commanded by Captain Hall himself captured (iii) Khurram's junk from Gogha, (iv) a vessel of the merchants of Diu ; (v) a small junk belonging to Phalwan (Pahalwan ?) Safid.<sup>85</sup> The captor ship of the English anchored near Daman with captured junks under their command. (vi) On October 1, 1623, it was further learnt that another Mughal vessel the *Ganjawar*<sup>86</sup> was captured by Captain Hall with one hundred merchants 'of quality' aboard the vessel and he was expecting to seize the (vii) *Shahi*<sup>87</sup> in a few days. As soon as the information of seizure was received by the English at Surat, President Rastell escaped to Swally and embarked on the *William* (which had just arrived from England) together with majority of factors before the Indians came to know of their exploits on the high seas. Only Hopkinson and a few others remained in spite of the risks they ran in so doing.

For better regulation of the dealing of the English with the

*Nakhudas* of the captured junks a consultation was held on board the *Blessing* near Daman on October 6 by President Rastell and members of his Council, Bangham, Young, Heynes, etc. The following directions were, therefore, issued to them; (i) Each *Nakhuda* must bring and surrender to the English captain his property duly sealed, which would be returned only after settlement. (ii) As the captured men were large in number and as most of them were 'pilgrims and very poor people', they were to be released after due search so that they would not be able to 'smuggle anything on shore'. For this purpose oversers<sup>88</sup> were appointed under the superintendence of William Hoare. As the *Shahi* was overcrowded the latter 'would be dealt first'. (iii) Beasts and birds brought for the emperor were to be 'landed at once without hindrance'. (iv) Oversers might allow at their discretion, any passenger needing relief to go with four rials of eight.<sup>89</sup>

The method of English seizure of Mughal vessels and its application for the redress of grievances were so carefully devised and so thorough-going as to leave no loophole.

#### VI. Reaction on the Mughals

It is surprising to note that this act of utter piracy of a foreign mercantile Company undertaken against the Mughal junks not only failed to rouse the indignation of the Great Mughal but also revealed his helplessness before a few foreigners with superior firing capacity of their vessels. At the same time Khurram's rebellion (1623-25) against his father Jahangir created further confusion throughout the empire. The imperial government, therefore, miserably failed to protect its subjects and their sea-borne trade. Only forty English-men then at Surat were taken prisoners by the *Mutasaddi* of Surat.<sup>90</sup>

On October 18, Rastell and his council at Surat aboard the *Blessing*, prepared a statement of claims for previous 'losses, hindrances, and exactions' suffered by the English, and delivered it to the Hakim<sup>91</sup> and other commissioners' (i.e. officers) of Surat demanding from the latter 16,24,069 *mahmudis*<sup>92</sup> and stated that unless this demand was fulfilled immediately and an agreement was reached for

the future regulation of trade at Surat, the Mughal junks and their contents would be confiscated.<sup>93</sup>

Saif Khan,<sup>94</sup> the new *mutasaddi* of Surat, sought from the Dutch then having four ships at Swally, armed assistance. On October 31, 1623, Saif Khan pressed Broecke, the President of Dutch East India Company at Surat, to recover the Mughal junks and men and render protection to Mughal sea-borne commerce in future 'against such piracies'<sup>95</sup> by offering them the 'monopoly' of Surat trade. But Broecke declined to take any action without obtaining prior permission from the 'Governor General' at Batavia.<sup>96</sup> Though he did not dislike the idea of seeing his commercial rivals in trouble, it was really difficult for him to be involved in a conflict for the sake of the Mughals in return for commercial advantages. To safeguard this proposed privilege the Dutch not only would have to enter into constant conflict with both the English and the Portuguese but also have to undertake extra responsibility for convoying the Mughal junks into the Red Sea.

Thereupon Saif Khan in a rage declared that they (i.e. the English and the Dutch) 'were all one people' and forced Broecke, as the latter himself wrote, to issue a letter to the English to set free the junks. However, this did not satisfy Saif Khan. He had the Englishmen at Surat (Nov. 3) and at Broach placed under guard and then the Dutch 'ware houses, chests and cases' at Broach were 'broken open' and Adrianssen, a Dutch factor, coming to Surat from cambay with goods was arrested.<sup>97</sup>

Thus the Mughal attempt to court the Dutch as a prospective ally against the English failed. Consequently the Dutch hope for establishing their commercial position in Mughal India, too, was shattered. The Dutch failed to exploit the situation in their favour.<sup>98</sup>

Finding no other alternative, Saif Khan then sent some Surat merchants along with Ishaq Beg, as a chief mediator (who enjoyed perhaps confidence of both the sides), to Hopkinson, then at Surat, for settlement. Hopkinson at once sought the President's permission (in a letter dated November 7, 1623), for making peace with the



Mughals. With forty Englishmen in their hands as hostages the Surat authorities cared 'little for the threat' of the seizure of the junks. The Indian merchants at the same time adopted a stiff attitude vowing on the '*mussawff*' (i.e. the *Quran*) on November 6, 'not to give' the English any 'more privilege'.<sup>99</sup> In spite of these successive stringent measures taken by both sides, Saif Khan had sent on November 7 'a *memaunee*<sup>100</sup> of at least 30 great dishes of divers sorts of meat' to the English at Surat factory (who were not imprisoned). According to Hopkinson, Saif Khan hinted by his activities that he wanted peace.

The above details reveal the following weaknesses as regards Anglo-Mughal commercial relations : (i) the Mughals had no guideline in pursuance of their commercial policy, (ii) the imperial authorities failed to give proper directions to the port authorities to deal effectively with the situation ; and (iii) the policy, if any, entirely depended on the initiative of the local officials. The conciliatory gesture of Saif Khan was a stab on the back of the struggling Indian merchants and helpless surrender of the economic interests of the country to the foreign mercantile Company.

#### *VII. Agreement of 1623 : Concluded between the Surat authorities and the English :*

As a result of this negotiation for peace by Saif Khan the English released the junks on November 19. Saif Khan in his turn lifted the blockade of Surat factory and freed the English prisoners.<sup>101</sup>

Meanwhile in order to turn the corner, Mirza Mahmood, a prominent merchant of Surat, also met President Rastell with a letter of 'introduction' from Joseph Hopkinson. Thereafter accord was reached on November 10, 1623 and an agreement was formally signed on November 14 by the English President, Saif Khan, the *Qazi* and the other chief men of Surat. Prince Dawar Bakhsh approved the agreement<sup>102</sup> but it was subject to confirmation by the emperor.<sup>103</sup> Saif Khan's activities for the conclusion of the treaty reveals the impotency of Mughal administration. Perhaps

the emperor was not alive to the situation of the port town and the port authorities did not inform him of the development.

The conclusion of the agreement reveals the power and position of the *mutasaddi*. The latter could conclude an agreement with the foreign power without obtaining prior permission from the emperor, although the implementation of the agreement required emperor's confirmation. However, the agreement was not confirmed by the emperor.<sup>103</sup>

After the conclusion of the agreement at Surat the English President and his Council landed again at Surat and resumed their trade. But soon the hostilities were resumed. Moreland has accused the Mughal authorities for re-starting the hostilities with the Company, even though the Indian vessels were 'restored to their owners'. But this is far from the truth, because neither the junks nor its cargoes were actually restored to the Indian merchants. Moreover, the English began to hold the Indian ships at their pleasure,<sup>104</sup> for by this time the English learnt that the application of force in the sea was the best method to secure privileges from the Great Mughal.

Finding no other alternative Saif Khan pressed Broecke once more to attack the English. As Broecke still refused, Saif Khan requested him to provide a few Dutchmen with the Dutch flag on each Mughal ship in Company with the Indians, so as to secure its immunity from attack by the English.<sup>105</sup> When Broecke sent Dutch flags 'with two men to each vessel'<sup>106</sup> belonging to the Mughals, the English protested to him expressing dissatisfaction, against the 'action of the Dutch at Surat in protecting the junks against the English'.<sup>107</sup>

At this stage on March 1, 1624, a *firman* as Broecke informs us, came to Surat from Jahangir to the effect that all the 'English, great and small, should be put in fetters until they restored all the goods' belonging to the Indians and then they would be 'chased out of the country'.<sup>108</sup> It indicates that Jahangir was informed by the Surat authorities about the piracy of the English and Jahangir reacted sharply. Immediately after receiving the imperial order, on the

afternoon of March 1, the English houses were 'surrounded, the inhabitants (including the President and some members of his Council<sup>109</sup>) arrested, the goods inventioned (inventoried) and confiscated also in Ahmedabad, Broach and everywhere'.<sup>110</sup>

Meanwhile, on March 22, the *William* and the *Blessing* commanded by Brown and Hall respectively arrived at the bar of Surat from Persia and hearing that their people were prisoners, 'surrounded' three Indian vessels which were ready to sail for the Red Sea. But seeing the Dutch flag hoisted on their masts and a few Dutchmen aboard each ship by way of 'protection' the English set them free, sending a protest to the Dutch against the aid thus afforded by Broecke.<sup>111</sup>

#### VIII. Discontent of the English and renewal of piracy

Meanwhile another drama was staged in the prison of the Mughal at Surat. An urgent consultation was held in prison at Surat by President Rastell with the members of his Council on April 3, 1624, during which the question of seizure of the 'Gujarati ships' by the *Blessing* and the *William* was discussed as a means to secure their release. At the same time the following drawbacks of this course were also debated ; first, the seizure of Mughal junks would endanger the safety of the imprisoned factors ; second, the Dutch, being incited by the Mughals, could 'retaliate' on the English ; third, whether the Indian junks containing cargoes would be 'rich enough to countervail i.e. compensate the estates of the English on shore'.<sup>112</sup>

Notwithstanding these possibilities, eventually the President and his Council decided to hold Mughal junks on the high seas because they thought that this was the last and only means of effecting their release. So they prepared a blue print for the action in which the following measures were decided to be taken :

- (i) the English ships were to keep watch on Chaul and Dabul as well as Surat for capturing Mughal junks anchoring at the ports ;
- (ii) after the seizure of the junks 'prize crews' might be put

- aboard the English ships, if needed, but 'any pilfering' by them would be made good by a levy on the offender ;
- (iii) Officers like Heynes and Lancaster in the English 'ships' were removed from their posts because they opined otherwise (they opposed such action against Mughal shipping).<sup>113</sup>

These decisions were sent secretly by messenger to Hall and Brown aboard the ships at the bar of Surat. They were instructed that they should 'endeavour to affect the release' of the factors by 'seizing the Gujarat ships'.<sup>114</sup>

But Saif Khan and other Mughal officials at this juncture proposed 'reconciliation'. Therefore a new chapter of conciliatory move ensued in Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. The action against the Mughal shipping was postponed till April 10.<sup>115</sup>

#### IX. Agreement of 1624 concluded between the Emperor and the English : Growth of English Commercial Influence :

The negotiations by both the Mughals and the English for reconciliation at last bore fruit and an agreement had been concluded between the English President and the *Mutasaddi* of Surat on Sept. 7, 1624.<sup>116</sup> This provided the following stipulations :

- (i) The English were to be permitted 'free trade'<sup>116a</sup> all over the Mughal empire and liberty to import and export silver and gold of any quantity, except coral for one year.
- (ii) The 'governor, the officers or *Daroga* of the custom house' (i.e. customs officer) were not to import any English goods for their own trade (except those really needed for the 'king's use).
- (iii) The English would be allowed to reside in the house of Khwaja Hasan Ali in payment of 'rent'.<sup>117</sup>
- (iv) Carts were to be provided to the English for transporting their goods from Swally Marine from the river 'Tapee' (i.e. Tapti) and other places, 'as also water and provisions' on payment ; they were not to be molested or prohibited by present or future Governors of 'Woorpar' (i.e. Olpad).<sup>118</sup>

- (v) The English were to be held responsible for crime committed by themselves only and not for others.
- (vi) They were to be exempted from payment of land customs at Broach, Baroda, Unclaswar (Anklesvar), Kurkeh<sup>119</sup> and not to be molested for 'Jagat'<sup>120</sup> (i.e. *Zakat*), but they would pay sea customs at the usual rates at Broach, 'being a port town' although they would not lade cargo on board a ship there but brought those 'thence by land'.
- (vii) Nobody was to be authorised to enter forcibly into the English factory, but if the English were involved in any 'accident of consequence' the English President and the *mutasaddi* jointly would administer justice. This sharing of judicial procedure with a foreign Company was a new aspect in the Anglo-Mughal commercial relations.
- (viii) Their 'cafilas' (i.e. caravans) were not to be detained but be allowed to 'pass through the country without molestation', but any allegation against the men of the caravans would be settled by the English President and the *mutasaddi* jointly.
- (ix) Goods of all 'varieties' after unloading from the English ships were not to be held up at the customs house by the *mutasaddi* of Surat or the *Darogah*<sup>121</sup> of the customs office or enforced customs arbitrarily, but would be released and handed over immediately to the English; Indian merchants could buy from them.
- (x) Complete religious freedom was to be granted to the English. Any 'quarrel or difference' between themselves would be tried by the English President, but quarrel between 'Englishman and a Mussalman' would be tried jointly by the English President and the *mutasaddi*; the English culprit would be punished by the President and the Muhammadan by the *mutasaddi*.<sup>122</sup>
- (xi) In case of death of an Englishman within the Mughal territory, the law of escheat was not to be applied; 'money, jewels and other goods belonging to the deceased would be kept in the 'charge of any other English' who would be

present there, but if 'all the English in the country' died, the 'Governor and the Qazi of the place' preparing an exact account, would keep those in their custody until some other Englishmen appeared to receive those.

- (xii) The English were to render 'all friendly assistance' to the Indian junks ; they would have no 'right or claim' to 'any goods on board' of the 'ships appertaining' to the Mughal ports, likewise, if the English seized any ship belonging to the 'Portugalls, Deccanes,<sup>123</sup> or any other their enemies', the Mughals would not 'claim' for booty.
- (xiii) Restrictions were imposed on the movements of the English (perhaps to safeguard Indian interests at sea) and they were forbidden to go aboard the ships without the *mutasaddi's* licence ;
- (xiv) Before leaving they were to settle all accounts with the Indians within the province of Gujarat and for other provinces, the English agent ('Wakil') at the court, would try to secure emperor's order (*firman*) for the settlement of accounts. 17 (seventeen) prominent merchants<sup>124</sup> (of which 16 were Muslims and one Hindu) were the signatories ; (1) Nazmuddin (Nazimuddin), (2) Ali Quli Sadr, (3) Ali Quli Mahmud, (4) Mahmud Sufi, (5) Razal, (6) Jalaluddin Mahmud, (7) Mahmud Salih Tabrizi, (8) Naziruddin, (9) Mahmud Ali Ispahani, (10) Ali Hasan, (11) Ali Mashadi, (12) Saadat Yar, (13) Matawalli Mahmud, (14) Mahmud Ibrahim, (15) Hazi (Haji) Abdul Nabi, (16) Is-haq (Beg) and Hari Vaisya.<sup>125</sup> Besides, the commander of the Surat castle, Jan Quli Beg and the Qazi Mahmud Kasim were also among the signatories.

The agreement was sent to the emperor for confirmation. It is not known when the emperor received the agreement and when he issued a *firman* granting all the privileges asked for. We only come to know that a certain Willoughby, a factor of the Company, procured that *firman* from the court at Lahore brought down to Surat on September 7, 1624.

X. *Critical Analysis of the Grant :*

The year 1624 was a landmark in the history of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. The year also can be traced as phenomenal in the economic history of medieval India as the agreement contained the seeds of India's commercial decline.

The indiscriminate piracy on Mughal junks by the English navy must have constituted an act of open hostility against the Mughal empire. The imperial *firman* in 1624 legalised the trade of the English for the first time in Mughal India. The Mughal authorities capitulated to the English policy of force and granted the English extensive privileges which were even not altogether commercial. The might of the English navy was firmly established and the 'Great Mughal' was outwitted and out-manouvred. The so-called English 'factory' previously established in 1619 by virtue of the *nishan* was now legalised. In cases affecting Englishmen themselves the East India Company got the exclusive right of deciding them, independent of native judicial machinery, and the Mughal Government surrendered the right of trying and punishing offending Englishmen. In cases in which both Englishmen and Muslims (Hindus not mentioned, curiously enough) were involved, the East India Company became co-sharers with the Mughal judicial authorities. This led to future trouble in matters of law and order and, therefore, virtually created an *imperium in imperio*, a state within a state.

Though contemporary indigenous sources are silent about Jahangir's objectives regarding this grant of extra-territorial concessions to the English East India Company, a foreign mercantile body, a survey of the English records since 1608 with a bearing on Jahangir's commercial relations with the English suggests two probable reasons behind this grant :

- (i) Nurjahan played an important part in inducing Jahangir to adopt a pro-English attitude, because of her commercial relation with the English ;<sup>126</sup>
- (ii) Jahangir might have believed, that the grant of political and economical privileges to the English would be economically profitable for his empire, but he was sadly mistaken in this.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GRANT

It was not possible for Jahangir then to foresee the possibilities of such a grant. In this sense the 'Great Mughal' not only showed lack of wisdom in a field that was vital for the economic interests and prosperous development of the country but also endangered the country's future security.

## FOOT NOTES

- 1 EQ. 288.
- 2 Embassy, 348.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 147n, 243 ; IR, iv, xxxiii.
- 4 See Roe's letter to King James on 15 February, 1617 (—18) Embassy, 464.
- 5 Embassy, 346, 348.
- 6 Embassy, 308.
- 7 Balkrishna, 392-93.
- 8 S. Gopal, 23.
- 9 EFI, 1618-21, xi.
- 10 Mocha is situated about 15 leagues within the Straits of Bab el Mandeb in or near Latitude of 13°23', BYNM, 31.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Pires, i, 16.
- 13 LR, i, 106.
- 14 Embassy, 166.
- 15 *Ibid.* Broecke in 1615 notes that Indian merchants at Surat had to pay 16 per cent in customs dues. Ovington in 1694 records that Indian merchants paid only 3 per cent at Mocha, Ovington, 132.
- 16 Ency. Brit. Vol. 19, 34.
- 17 S. C. Misra, 155.
- 18 Pires, i, 8.
- 19 BYNM, 31.
- 20 Pires, i, 43. Other three ports were (i) Amsterdam (after the fall of Antwerp in 1585 ; FAA, 12 CHI, V, 2) ; (ii) Constantinople and (iii) Alexandria, Pires, i, 12.
- 21 S. C. Misra, 155.
- 22 Linschoten, i, 58-59 ; Seth, 225-26.
- 23 Della Valle, i, 25.
- 24 Ogilby, v, 218.
- 25 *Ibid.*, v, 211.
- 26 Della Valle, i, 25.
- 27 Ogilby, v, 218-19.



- 27a In fact, early travellers e.g. Pires, Linschoten, Della Valle etc. make mention of the merchants of different nationalities living and trading in Surat, Cambay, etc. But later on these merchants were described in English Factory records as Indian merchants or Gujarati merchants.
- 28 Embassy, 308.
- 29 *Ibid.*,
- 30 *Ibid.*, 250.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 338 ; LR, V, 330-33. Roe expressed his view in a letter to Sir Thomas Smythe, the Governor of E. I. Co. in London on January 16, 1617.
- 32 Embassy, 376.
- 33 Jahangir had three sisters. Shukunun-nisa (Srivastava. Akbar the Great, 454) ; Khanam (b. 21. H. 1569, AN, ii, 509 ; Smith, 452) and Aram Bano Begum (b. 22. 12. 1584, AN, iii, 661 ; Smith, 456). But it is difficult to say who actually was the owner of the ship.
- 34 Embassy, 384.
- 35 The Begum (Amber Princess) was Jahangir's mother, who carried on an extensive trading activities with Red Sea ports. For details see Satish Chandra's 'Commercial activities of the Mughal Emperors during the seventeenth century' in the Proc. IHC, 1959.
- 36 Embassy, 387.
- 37 Arabic mu'allim (instructor), a pilot or sailing master or captain. Ain, i, 290.
- 38 Bernier (p. 261) refers to *Am-o-Khas*. This evidently means *diwan-i-khas-o-am* or State hall where the Emperor used to appear in public. In fact there were two adjacent buildings, *diwan-i-am* and *dewan-i-Khas*.
- 39 Itimad-ud-daula (Mirza Ghiyath Beg Tehrani) father of Nurjahan and Asaf Khan came to the Mughal court from Ispahan where his father was minister. Jahangir married his daughter Nurjahan and as a result he was appointed as *Wazir* or Prime Minister. MU, ii, 1072-75.
- 40 EFI, 1618-21, 4.
- 41 EFI, 1618-21, 4-6.
- 42 EQ, 290.
- 43 EFI, 1618-21, xiii.
- 44 See SELMI, (271-283) for further details about Middleton.
- 45 EFI, 1618-21, xii.
- 46 The wand or a slender rod or a staff of supposedly magic power carried by Hermes as the messenger of the Gods. Embassy, 457n.
- 47 Embassy, 457.
- 48 EFI, 1618-21, 18 , Embassy, 457.
- 49 EQ, 290.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 250.
- 51 EFI, 1618-21, xiv. In fact, Indian merchants had no other alternative than

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to stop selling Indian goods, as goods other than Indian had no market in the Red Sea ports, and the English ships could not be prevented from sailing there.

52 EFI, 1618-21, 174 ; EQ, 293.

53 EFI, 1618-21, 54.

54 *Ibid.*, 56.

55 *Ibid.*, 175.

56 *Ibid.*, 174-76.

57 *Ibid.*, 177.

58 EFI, 1618-21, 113.

59 For further details see V. C. Joshi's 'East India Company, and the Mughal authorities during Jahangir's reign' in JIH, 1942, 2-21.

60 The fleet consisted of the *Charles*, the *Ruby* and the *Diamond*.

61 Lari Bandar or Lahari Bandar (Diul-Sind) at the mouth of the Indus.

62 EFI, 1618-21, 181.

63 *Ibid.*, 186.

64 *Ibid.*, 267-268.

65 Biddulph and Young informed this to the President and his Council on September 8, 1621.

66 *Kotwal* or Chief Officer of the city. For details see Ch. VI, ante and Glossary.

67 EFI, 1618-21, 335-36.

68 Biddulph left for Surat on November 28 leaving them at Agra.

69 EFI, 1622-23, 11-12.

70 *Ibid.*, 13.

71 *Ibid.*, 90.

72 *Ibid.*, 87, 221-22. The English Factory Records generously used the words 'Factory' and 'Factors' which we have carefully avoided for no factory was established as yet. See Ch. V and VI. Though there did not establish any factory upto now, the Co. began sending its trading agents in the name of 'factory'. The first reference to English factors was made in 1608 by Hawkins in his account to denote those who came with his fleet.

73 *Ibid.*, 258.

74 *Ibid.*

75 *Ibid.*, 166.

76 *Ibid.*, 207.

77 *Ibid.*, 203.

78 Perhaps the *Reformation* was better armed and bigger than other ships.

79 EFI, 1622-23, 204-205.

80 *Ibid.*, 207

81 He was the Secretary of Roe.

82 The identification of the '*Toklie*' is doubtful. Foster hesitates to equate the *Toklie* with the *Towakkul Ali*. The term seems to be the *Tukli*. A ship

*Mubarak Tukli* referred to in Dr. J. N. Sarkar's 'The life of Mir Jumla (p. 84), 2nd ed.

- 83 The *Nakhudas*, Skippers or Masters of Indian vessels played an important role in the history of Anglo-Mughal Commercial relations. Often they took part of mediators or intermediaries between the Mughal Officials and the English. For further details see SELMI, 258-270.
- 84 The post of *nakhuda* was not the monopoly of the Muslims only.
- 85 Governor of Olpad, situated to the north-west of Surat.
- 86 EFI, 1622-23, 264.
- 87 The name of the ship suggests that it belonged to certain member of the royal family.
- 88 Probably meant for Supervisors, supervising the affairs of the enemy ships.
- 89 EFI, 1622-23, 267, 271; For trials see Appendix A. It is a strange irony that the Indian traders or citizens would be searched for smuggling by the English, who themselves were guilty of piracy and who under Roe had protested against being searched by regular Mughal officials.
- 90 EFI, 1622-23, 304.
- 91 Probably the word 'Hakim' meant here the *Mutasaddi*, and Mirza Shadman, son of Khan-i-Azam, held the post—He superseded Bahadur Khan on October 12, 1623, MU, ii, 326, 729.
- 92 For *Mahmudi* see Appendix A.
- 93 EFI, 1622-23, 283, 286.
- 94 His original name was Mirza Saif, son of Amanat Khan. He was honoured with the title of Saif Khan Jahangir Shahi in 1623 due to his victory over Abdulla Khan and promoted from the rank of 700 with 300 horse to that of 3,000 with 2,000 horse, and he was exalted by appointment as the *mutassaddi* of Surat and took over the reins of administration from Mirza Shadman. MU, ii, 689-692; Tuzuk, ii, 262-267.
- 95 EFI, 1622-23, xxxi.
- 96 JIH, x, 1931, 241; EFI, 1622-23, 276-77.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 1932.
- 98 Boxer does not refer anything to the Mughal-Dutch relations in his 'Dutch Seabrone Empire'.
- 99 EFI, 1622-23, 304-305.
- 100 EFI, 1622-23, 304-305; *Memaunee*, in Hindi *Mihmani*, a banquet. Here the word means dishes of food.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 304-05.
- 102 *Ibid.*, 321-23. Dawar Bakhsh was the Governor of Gujarat in 1623. Beni Prasad, 98.
- 103 *Ibid.*, 305, 322.
- 103a The terms of the agreement of 1623 and 1624 are given in Appendix E.
- 104 EFI, 1624-29, 56; FAA, 227.

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- 105 EFI, 1622-23, 341.
- 106 JIH, XI, 1932, 6.
- 107 *Ibid.*
- 108 EFI 1624-29, 8.
- 109 JIH, XI, 1932, 7.
- 110 The members of the Council were Messers James, Martin, Bangham, etc.
- 111 EFI, 1624-29, 8.
- 112 EFI, 1624-29, 6-7, 20, 57.
- 113 *Ibid.*, 19-20.
- 114 EFI, 1624-29, 20-21. All this shows laxity of supervision in Surat prison.
- 115 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 116 *Ibid.*, 21. Comparison of the terms of draft of 1623 (Unconfirmed) and the Agreement of 1624 and given in Appendix E.
- 116a Free trade does not necessarily mean free from customs duty but trade without any obstruction.
- 117 Rent was Rs. 560.00 per annum. EFI, 1622-23, 321. In 1623 the English sought this house on lease for the term of 7 years. EFI, 1622-23, 310.
- 118 Swally was within jurisdiction of the Governor of Olpad.
- 119 Curka of Finch, Corka of Jourdain, and Karkoa of Tavernier, who places it 15 COS West of Navapur. It is not found on modern maps.
- 120 *Jakat* (Hindi), *Zakar* (Arabic). Charitable contribution paid by the faithful, i.e. the Muhammadans, who were to pay 2 and half percent tax. EFI 1624-29, 28n ; E & D, vi, 284.
- 121 *Darogah* of the customs office was the Customs Officer.
- 122 In the text, both no. 10 and no. 11 are together.
- 123 The Deccan was at this time out of the Mughal empire, comprising of Vijaynagar Kingdom and Bahamani Kingdom.
- 124 Most of the names have evidently been misread by the copyist. Dr. Surendra Gopal in his 'Commerce and Crafts in Gujarat' has mentioned only eleven names. pp. 31-32.
- 125 EFI, 1624-29, 29-30 ; Hedges Diary, iii, 174.
- 126 For Nurjahan's commercial relations with the English see Appendix F.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CHANGING FACADE OF ANGLO-MUGHAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

( 1628-1657 )

#### *I. Commercial position in the beginning of Shahjahan's reign :*

During the viceroyalty of Prince Khurram at Gujarat,<sup>1</sup> he left no stone unturned to check the growing commercial activities of the English in Mughal India. But a drastic change took place in his attitude towards the English during his candidacy for the throne and even after his accession to the throne.

Upto 1623 the Indian merchants also resisted the commercial activities of the English East India Company, but with Jahangir's *firman* in 1624, a period of peaceful Anglo-Mughal commercial relations ensued. It placed the English in an advantageous position. The Indian merchants found the English enjoying extra-ordinary commercial privileges, and had no other alternative than to accept the present 'development'<sup>1 a</sup> and live in peaceful co-existence with the English. President Kerridge at Surat informed the Directors of the Company in London (January 4, 1628) that their relation 'with the country people' i.e. Indians was fair stating that the English lived in 'greater peace and amity'<sup>2</sup> with them than before. This relation was further strengthened by the convoying of Mughal junks to the Red Sea ports by the English navy.<sup>3</sup>

While India's Red Sea trade was guarded by the English navy, her

overseas trade with Persian Gulf began to be guarded by the Dutch.<sup>4</sup> Finding Anglo-Mughal relations cordial, the Directors of the East India Company in London pressed (in 1627) the President and Council at Surat to select a suitable place for a fortified settlement in Mughal India.<sup>5</sup>

On October 29, 1627 Jahangir died<sup>6</sup> and a contest for the throne at once commenced.<sup>7</sup> Shahjahan was then at Junnar<sup>8</sup> in the Deccan. On Asaf Khan's advice he immediately marched to the north *via* Gujarat.<sup>9</sup> A rumour of Jahangir's death reached Surat on November 19 and two days after the Surat administration publicly announced the news.<sup>10</sup> Learning of Shahjahan's advance towards Surat from its factors, Kerridge,<sup>11</sup> the President of the Company then at Swally, hurried back to Surat, where the principal merchants advised him to meet the Prince. Meanwhile reaching its outskirts Shahjahan had pitched his camp seven miles away from the town,<sup>12</sup> and ordered his officials 'to take' some money 'by way of loan of the townsmen'.<sup>13</sup> Kerridge proceeded to the Prince's camp along with a deputation of the principal Indian merchants of Surat. Shahjahan gave his visitors a gracious reception. Kerridge had given him on behalf of the company '5000 rials of eight'<sup>14</sup> (Rs. 10,000) in partial payment of arrears of customs.<sup>15</sup> The Indian merchants also gave him '7000 rials of eight' (Rs. 14,000) borrowing the sum from Kerridge 'thereby pretending their want',<sup>16</sup> i.e. the merchants thought it expedient to conceal their wealth to avoid further exactions of forced loans by Shahjahan's officials.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile Shahjahan was informed by Nahar Khan (Shir Khan)<sup>18</sup> regarding the doubtful attitude<sup>19</sup> of the then *mutasaddi* Saif Khan.<sup>20</sup> All servants and friends of Saif Khan took refuge in the fort resolving to defend it and not to surrender<sup>21</sup> to Shahjahan. The latter appointed Nahar Khan as the *mutasaddi* of Surat and ordered him to bring Saif Khan a prisoner to Agra.<sup>22</sup> The Europeans, too, welcomed Shahjahan but both the English and the Dutch claimed initiative in this respect. According to Kerridge, the English were the first to do so, while the Dutch at Surat offered him a belated welcome with presents and were favourably received.<sup>23</sup> On the

other hand Broecke, the Dutch Chief at Surat, claims that he was the first European from Surat to visit Shahjahan.<sup>24</sup> In the absence of date and time (which neither Kerridge nor Broecke mentioned) it is extremely difficult to find out the truth who first visited Shahjahan. Kerridge's presents to Shahjahan during a second interview procured him further interviews. Shahjahan issued a *nishan* to the English for the redress of their grievances.<sup>25</sup> Broecke was also given a *nishan*.<sup>26</sup> This *nishan* to Kerridge gave a further fillip to peaceful and uninterrupted Anglo-Mughal commercial relations which began already in 1624.

Kerridge impressed Shahjahan so much that he was permitted to see the 'strength and manner' of the Prince's army and even to 'touch him'<sup>27</sup> i.e. touch his body. Finally Shahjahan assured Kerridge of his 'favour and relief' before dismissing him.<sup>28</sup> Most probably Shahjahan did not want English to create any trouble during his candidacy for the throne as he had already learnt (during his vice-royalty in Gujarat) the strength of the English navy.<sup>29</sup> This good relation which developed then continued, as the sequel will show, throughout Shahjahan's reign.

While this was the position of the Company in Mughal India, the Directors in London thought it desirable to recognise the President at Surat as chief of the English in India.<sup>30</sup> This practically brought about a remarkable change in power and position of the President of the Company at Surat. The fleet of the Company in the Indian seas was placed at his command. A strong naval force would be available for the use of the Company in India.

At this stage, the company received a rude shock. On account of the terrible famine of 1630-31 which dislocated the economic life of Gujarat, the *mutasaddi* of Surat banned the export of agricultural commodities, rice, tobacco and cotton from Surat.<sup>31</sup> This must have an immediate effect on English trade from Gujarat with the Red Sea ports. The factors of the Company were forced to look for fresh sources of supply to make up the deficiency in goods and their attention was turned to Bengal, an area, 'most lavishly favoured by nature'.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, the English had long ago endeavoured to penetrate into Bengal commerce. Sir Thomas Roe had secured trading privileges in Bengal in 1618 from Khurram.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless the English did not try to establish themselves in Bengal because the cost of land transport from Surat to Agra and thence to Bengal *via* Patna was 'prohibitive'.<sup>34</sup>

## II. English Penetration into Bengal Commerce :

The Portuguese were the only Europeans who were exploiting Bengal commerce about this time. They carried on commercial dealings in Bengal establishing their stronghold at Hugli since 1537.<sup>35</sup> Shahjahan's anti-Portuguese attitude was not unknown to the Portuguese on the west coast of India. In Bengal too they had incurred the displeasure of Shahjahan for various reasons :

- (a) The Portuguese refused to help Shahjahan when the latter went as a rebel to Bengal. On the contrary they joined Prince Parviz another rival of his for the royal throne.<sup>36</sup>
- (b) The Portuguese at Hugli 'did not think it fit to send an embassy' to Shahjahan on his accession.<sup>37</sup>

These insults must have rankled deep in Shahjahan's heart. But the inherent naval weakness of Mughal empire prevented Shahjahan from taking any positive measure against the Portuguese on the west coast. But his fighting power on the Bengal rivers was of course better. In 1631 Kasim Khan, the *Subahdar* of Bengal, offered the emperor an opportunity to crush these 'idolators'.<sup>38</sup> Kasim Khan sought permission from the emperor to expel the Portuguese because the latter 'committed many acts of violence upon the subjects of the empire'.<sup>39</sup> The consent of the emperor came in a laconic manner : 'Expel these idolators from my dominions'.<sup>40</sup> In July 1631 the Mughal army drove the Portuguese and captured their stronghold at Hugli.<sup>41</sup>

This was the first successful assault by any Mughal ruler on an European force both on land and on water. The expulsion of Portuguese and its commerce from Bengal in 1632 created a vacuum which came to be filled up by the English.



The entry of the English into Bengal commerce marked a turning point in the history of Bengal, which was considered to be the nature's store-house of India, where a resourceful trader could easily amass great fortune. The 'valuable commodities', as remarked by Bernier, of Bengal attracted 'foreign merchants' and 'no country' except Bengal 'where so great a variety' of commodities was found.<sup>42</sup> Dow says that Bengal, 'from the mildness of its climate, the fertility of its soil...was all the times remarkable for its commerce'.<sup>43</sup> Bengal supplied rich cargoes for 50 or 60 ships annually.<sup>44</sup> Again the working of the Mughal administration in different provinces differed according to personal equation and geographical factors. Bengal enjoyed, in practice, comparative autonomy, as the imperial authority could not be fully enforced here on account of distance from the capital. The English might have thought that they could exploit the situation in their favour.

At this stage Gabriel Boughton, an English Surgeon obtained the concession of duty-free trade in Bengal from Prince Shuja in 1651 for himself only and not for the English in general, in the trail of which the Company began to carry on duty-free trade in Bengal, propagating a myth that the *firman* was granted to the Company by Shahjahan.<sup>45</sup> Quantitatively, Company's trade in Bengal during the reign of Shahjahan was small and the question of duty-free trade did not arise. But as trade grew rapidly particularly during the reign of Aurangzeb, the English trade was virtually stopped by the emperor in 1663 because he did not confirm the *nishan*.<sup>46</sup> The Company then decided to approach Aurangzeb from whom it secured a vague *firman* in 1680, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Meanwhile the adverse effects of the famine in Gujarat began to pass away. The attention of the English was, therefore, drawn to Surat from Bengal. The local Mughal officials at Surat welcomed the English.

### III. Mughal-Portuguese Tussle in Gujarat :

The improved Anglo-Mughal commercial relations disturbed the Portuguese at Goa. The latter's trade-link with Mughal India was

broken in 1614 due to their naval discomfiture at the hands of the English at the river of Surat.<sup>47</sup> Now in 1633 in order to restore their trading opportunities at Surat, Cond De Linhares, the viceroy of Goa, sent a representative<sup>48</sup> to Muizzul Mulk, the *mutasaddi* of Surat (1629-34)<sup>49</sup> with the request to expel their old rival, the English and the Dutch from Mughal India. But the negotiations proved abortive. For even when these were continuing the Portuguese fleet under Francisco Cutinho seized the *Musai* a Surat junk returning from the Red Sea 'laden with goods and passengers' demanding payment for Portuguese passes 'as in former times'.<sup>50</sup> They also expected that the *Shahi*, another junk, would likewise fall into their trap.<sup>51</sup> Though there is no direct reference, the above event would suggest that the English had grown slack in convoying Mughal junks to the Red Sea ports,<sup>52</sup> and did not convoy the above ships.

However, when the news of capture of the *Musai* reached Surat, its *mutasaddi* asked President Rastell<sup>53</sup> for help. The President at once 'despatched the ships to meet and escort the *Shahi* into harbour'.<sup>54</sup> According to the President and Council at Surat, it "added more to our nation's fame than had all our sea fights formerly acquired here in India".<sup>55</sup> Shahjahan, who was then staying in the Deccan, was offended at the conduct of the Portuguese and blockaded Goa.<sup>56</sup> This, together with the losses which they sustained in Ceylon,<sup>57</sup> brought the Portuguese to their senses and they made peace with the Surat authorities. They surrendered the *Musai*, waived their demands for the expulsion of the Dutch and the English and in return the claims of the Portuguese for issuing passes (*Cartazes*) for Mughal junks as in earlier years were again recognised.<sup>58</sup> Shahjahan might have thought that it would be better to pay *Cartazes* to the Portuguese than depending excessively on the English navy for convoying the Mughal junks.

#### IV. Imperial intervention in Commerce (1633-35)

Shahjahan's anti-Portuguese attitude must have knit his relations with the English closely. But this did not continue for long.

Shahjahan at this time (1633) took indigo trade into his own hands, 'with the idea of forcing all merchants to buy from him at his own price...'.<sup>59</sup>

This state trading affected the English and the Dutch adversely. Apprehending that this would affect the price of indigo and would definitely cut down their profit, both the nations entered into an agreement on November 19, 1633 for not buying it further except at their own price.<sup>60</sup> Since the European traders were the principal buyers of indigo, the agreement may be regarded as a sort of pressure exerted to thwart Shahjahan's economic policy.

#### V. *Anglo-Portuguese Agreement, 1635 :*

This Anglo-Dutch agreement was, however, upset by some unfortunate proceedings on the part of the Dutch factors at Agra, who bought a large quantity of indigo (2000 maunds)<sup>61</sup> from there. On receipt of this information, the Dutch Chief at Surat 'with some show of sorrow' informed the English factors at Surat and at the same time proposing to share the bargain.<sup>62</sup> As the English declined the offer, their agreement fell through.

This failure compelled the English to come to terms with the Portuguese in January 1635 which later on developed into a commercial agreement. Hard pressed by the Dutch and involved also with various Asiatic powers with ever increasing apprehension of expulsion from Mughal India, the Portuguese thought it wise to remove at least one source of difficulty and danger by making a truce with the English. The negotiations extended over a considerable period (from early 1634) and at last in January 1635, William Methwold,<sup>63</sup> the English President at Surat, signed at Goa (on his way home) an accord with the viceroy,<sup>64</sup> which concluded a truce with the Portuguese at Goa for an indefinite period.

#### VI. *Attempt at Mughal-Dutch coalition :*

Getting news of Anglo-Portuguese truce from the *mutasaddi* of Surat, the emperor apprehended that this *entente* would pose a danger to the empire's sea-borne trade with Red Sea ports. With a

view to allying with the Dutch, Shahjahan instructed the *mutasaddi* of Surat to enquire from the Dutch at Surat whether they would agree to enter into coalition with the Mughals for driving the English and the Portuguese out of Mughal India, in return for the grant of equal commercial privileges with the English. But the Dutch authorities, at Batavia, unwilling to allow themselves to be drawn into any entanglements of the kind, rejected the offer. This brought Shahjahan's scheme to an end.<sup>65</sup>

Shahjahan must have been incensed at the refusal of the Dutch. But before he took any action against them, they dissolved all their factories except at Surat where in place of the Director-General, they kept a chief merchant together with 7 or 8 persons. They also diverted their trade from Surat to Persia.<sup>66</sup> The embargo on indigo trade made the situation unfavourable for the English at Surat, too, and they decided to proceed to Goa (because the Anglo-Portuguese truce in 1635 or Goa convention made their relation cordial) without taking leave from the *mutasaddi* with as many members of the council as possible.<sup>67</sup> The President also contemplated shifting his trade from Surat to Cambay.<sup>68</sup>

The *mutasaddi* of Surat informed the emperor that the commercial situation of Surat would be seriously affected, in case of the departure of both the English and the Dutch therefrom. This possibility led the emperor to issue a *firman* on April 14, 1635 to the English, withdrawing the embargo on the indigo trade after about a year of restriction. Its sale became once again open to all subjects including the English and the Dutch.<sup>69</sup>

#### VII. Courteen's Association :

Meanwhile a rival English Company under the leadership of Sir William Courteen and Sir Paul Pinder, a wealthy merchant, was formed on December 12, 1635 by the charter of the English King, Charles I, to trade with China, Japan, Goa and the Malabar Coast.<sup>70</sup> Although the new Company was prohibited from intruding into places where the old Company was already established, the former's ship *Roebuk*, arriving at the Red Sea in April 1635 under the

command of Capt. John Weddell,<sup>71</sup> fell in with the *Taufiqi*, a Surat junk. The crew of the junk found that the assaulted ship hoisted flag of the English with whom the Mughals were at peace. The vessel was not released even on producing the pass given them by the English factory at Surat. On the contrary, its passengers even including babies and women were slaughtered by the English and merchandize of the passengers were looted by them.<sup>72</sup>

The Mughals were not aware of the emergence of a new English Company. So when the news of this outrage reached Surat in April 1636 (after six months), the wrath of the local officials knew no bounds. The factors at Surat were imprisoned and the Company's property was confiscated to compensate the owners of the junk.<sup>74</sup> Eventually after two months<sup>75</sup> they were released after paying an indemnity of £ 17,000<sup>76</sup> to the local administration,<sup>77</sup> but a strong guard was placed upon the factory.<sup>78</sup> Methwold, the President of the factory at Surat, was told that according to the Anglo-Mughal agreement (of 1624), the English must satisfy the owner of the junk as the latter had undertaken by virtue of that agreement 'full responsibility for any offences' committed by any Englishman.<sup>79</sup>

On being informed by the *mutasaddi* of the incident Shahjahan ordered the *mutasaddi* in 1636 to prohibit the English and the Dutch for coming 'into the town of Surat' carrying 'any arms, yea, so far as a knife'.<sup>80</sup>

#### VIII. Negotiations between Shahjahan and Charles I of England :

This act of piracy by the ships of Courteen's association must have adversely affected the Anglo-Mughal relations to some extent. Finding this situation very unpalatable, the factors of the Company at Surat at once communicated (Dec. 1636) to the Directors in London about the developments at Surat. The Court of Directors, submitted a petition to the 'Privy Council' praying for redress.<sup>81</sup> Charles I, thereupon, wrote in January 1637 to the Great Mughal earnestly requesting him not to discourage so great and hopeful a trade, whereby 'much profit and advantage' could be obtained.

There, he added, the English merchants were to have 'recompense' for what they 'suffered in future', they were to be 'secured in their person and estates, as by compact (i.e. agreement of 1624) they ought to be'.<sup>82</sup>

Charles, however, revoked his grant to Courteen's Association in 1639 due to its ill-judged enterprises.<sup>83</sup> Thereafter Anglo-Mughal commercial relations again began to flow uninterrupted.

Establishing its hold firmly on Mughal India, the old Company henceforth sought to extend its commercial activities in regions lying outside the Mughal empire. Obtaining an order on July 22, 1639<sup>84</sup> from the *Naik*<sup>85</sup> (i.e. *Nayak* who possessed the coastline between Pulicat and St. Thome), Mr. Francis Day, an agent of the Company quickly built a fort at Madraspatam in 1640, strong enough to defy a native force, where the English factors would be in security.<sup>86</sup> This was the first fortified factory possessed by the English in India. Most probably, the motive behind this fortification was to bring English ships under its shelter.

This must have encouraged the Company's factors at Surat to think of establishing a fort in Mughal India and for which they selected Rajapur.<sup>87</sup> Soon their opportunity to request the emperor to grant permission for building a fort came. In Europe the Anglo-Dutch war began (1652)<sup>88</sup> and the Dutch fleet appearing on the Indian seas began to seize English cargo vessels on their way from Surat to London.<sup>89</sup> This must have unnerved the Indian merchants as they hesitated to lade their goods on the English vessels, lest they might be 'captured by the Dutch fleet'.<sup>90</sup> This not only inflicted heavy financial loss upon the Company but English prestige must have suffered greatly in the Mughal court.

#### IX. *Shahjahan's Firman (1653)* :

Therefore, the English President and Council at Surat, sent an agent<sup>91</sup> to the imperial court, praying for protection from Shahjahan, against any violence which the Dutch might attempt on the English factory. The agent reached the imperial court and sought from the emperor permission to establish a fortified position at Surat.

Shahjahan rejected the prayer but gave him a *firman* in 1653 granting the English the following commercial privileges :

- (i) The Company was to be allowed to trade freely i.e. without any hindrance all over the Mughal empire.
- (ii) The English were not to be held responsible for any depre-dations which the other European nations might commit on the Indian seas.
- (iii) The English were to pay only the usual rates of carriage at the places of transshipment.
- (iv) If the English once paid the usual customs at Surat, Broach or Lahari Bandar, they were not to be troubled with any further demands anywhere else in the empire.
- (v) They were given right to recover their debts from the subjects of the Mughal empire.
- (vi) Their properties were not to be confiscated, but handed over to their representatives.
- (vii) Finally, the Company were to pay a fixed rent for their houses and factories for a period of seven years.<sup>92</sup>

Shahjahan's reign enabled the English almost a free hand in matters of trade in Mughal India. Naturally there was considerable increase in English trade. Their influence in the Mughal court also grew. The failure of Shahjahan's indigo monopoly, due largely to the coalition organised by the English against it, was an index to this. Even then Shahjahan granted a number of privileges to the English.

These privileges brought about a sudden transition in the structure of Indian economy. These also enabled the English to take a big leap towards the capturing of trade and commerce of Mughal India. The penetration of the English in the economy of Mughal India under Shahjahan had several aspects :

- (i) The export and import business of Mughal India from the third decade of the seventeenth century came to be dominated by the English East India Company.
- (ii) The English were placed in an advantageous position in comparison to Indian merchants.

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- (iii) The English introduced new techniques of dyeing and silk-winding and set up large-scale factories for the first time in India.<sup>93</sup>
- (iv) The English commercial activities increased the productivity of the Indian economy.<sup>94</sup>

## FOOT NOTES

- 1 See Chapter VI ante.
- 1a S. Gopal, 32.
- 2 EFI, 1624-29, 192.
- 3 In 1633 the Portuguese claim for re-issuing *cartazes* for Mughal junks were again recognised by the Mughal authorities. This incident leads us to believe that the *cartaz* system which was previously imposed by the Portuguese on the Indians must have ended with the convoying of Mughal junks by the English fleet in 1624. EFI, 1630-33, 36.
- 4 In 1622 Shah Abbas I the Safavid monarch of Persia captured Kandahar and land trade between India and Persia was stopped and began to be carried through Gujarat ports. As the influence of the Dutch in the Persian Gulf was supreme so the Indian merchants preferred Dutch ships to the English for carrying their goods.
- 5 EFI, 1622-23, 159. President Kerridge replied on November 29, 1626 to the Directors of the Company in London expressing the 'difficulties' to fulfil this project. Some years earlier Roe had been attracted by the idea of a fortress on the coast of Gujarat, but he gave it up on the ground of expense. Embassy, 344 ; See also Ch. VI ante.
- 6 Saksena, 56.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Iqbalnama, 298 ; Mirat, f, 81b ; Saksena, 60.
- 9 Saksena, 61.
- 10 EFI, 1624-29, 202.
- 11 Kerridge was reappointed as President and arrived in India on march 8, 1628 and sailed for England in April 1628.
- 12 Saksena notes that Shahjahan was at Broach (p. 306).
- 13 EFI, 1624-29, 205.
- 14 For rials of eight see Appendix A.
- 15 EFI, 1624-29, 205.
- 16 EFI, 1624-29, 205.
- 17 The attitude of Indian merchants to the Great Mughal's officials reveals that the Mughal administration often coerced the country men to pay more than the payable amount.



- 18 Nahar Khan was known as Shir Khan. He took arms against Prince Khurram when the latter revolted against his father and showed his bravery. Jahangir granted him the title of Shir Khan. After the death of Jahangir he joined Shahjahan. MU, ii, 839.
- 19 Iqbalnama, 300 ; Saksena, 61 ; Saif Khan took arms against the rebellion of Prince Khurram and showed his bravery. Jahangir gave him the title of Saif Khan Mirza Saif.
- 20 Khurram and Saif Khan both married daughters of Asaf Khan. Saif Khan's father was Amanat Khan. He was the governor of Gujarat (MU, ii, 689, 690) and at the same time performed the function of *mutasaddi* of Surat as well. (JIH April, 1966, 56).
- 21 EFI, 1624-29, 205.
- 22 Saksena, 61.
- 23 EFI, 1624-29 xxv, xxx.
- 24 Voyage, 107 (extracted from EFI, 1624-29, 205n).
- 25 EFI, 1624-29, 206.
- 26 Voyage, 107 (extracted from EFI 1624-29, 205n).
- 27 EFI, 1624-29, 205-206.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 See Ch. VI, and VII ante.
- 30 Bruce, i, 309 ; CHI, v, 85 ; FAA, 210.
- 31 EFI, 1630-33, 280.
- 32 Aurangzib, v, 292.
- 33 See Ch. VI ante.
- 34 Aurangzib, v, 252. In 1620 Robert Hughes and John Parker had reached Patna in order to procure the local piece goods and Bengal raw silk. But the experiment proved a failure. Peter Mundy spent part of the year 1632 in a commercial expedition to Patna. He made several references to the previous commercial mission of Hughes and Parker to that place in 1620-21. Mundy, 11, App. D, 361 ; CHI, v, 92 ; C. J. Hamilton, 29-30 ; SELMI, 1-2 ; IA, 1914, 69-70 ; EFI, 1618-21, 212.
- 35 Danvers, i, 422 ;
- 36 Campos, 129 ; Dow, iii, 144-145 (Reprint 1973).
- 37 Campos, 62, 128. The Portuguese at Hugli were under the authorities in Ceylon and not directly under the Portuguese viceroy at Goa.
- 38 Dow, iii, 144 ; Campos, 130.
- 39 Dow, *Ibid.*
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Padshanamah in E & D, vii, 35 ; Mundy, 90.
- 42 Bernier, 439.
- 43 Dow, vi, p. viii.
- 44 Grose, ii, 238.

## FOOT NOTES

- 45 The privilege of duty-free trade sought by the English actually meant on the one hand, exemption from paying any customs on merchandise imported into Mughal India, as well as free transport of goods without any duties within the country. The theory of customs-free trading privileges of the Company by virtue of Shahjahan's *firman* obtained by Gabriel Boughton has already been exploded by Wilson (Annals, i, 12), Yule (ed. The Diary of William Hedges, iii, 167); and, also Foster (IA, 1911, xi). Dr. Susil Chaudhury claims to have discovered new evidence on the basis of which he declares that Boughton's *firman* is a 'myth' (BPP, July-Dec. 1970, 287-291).
- 46 See Ch. IX, 9n.
- 47 For details see Chapter V ante.
- 48 Identity is not known.
- 49 Nahar Khan could not retain his post for long. He was superseded by Muizzul Mulk alias Mir Musa in April, 1629.
- 50 EFI, 1630-33, 37; Bruce, i, 301.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 1630-33, 37.
- 52 The undertaking of convoying Indian junks to the Red Sea ports by English ships was taken in the agreement of 1624, concluded between Jahangir and the E. I. Co. see for details Chapter VII.
- 53 Aldworth joined on Sept. 26, 1630 as President of the English Factory at Surat.
- 54 EFI, 1630-33, 122.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 Allying with the king of Kandi, the Dutch captured about this time several of the Portuguese strongholds in Ceylon. CHI, v, 85.
- 58 EFI, 1630-33, 36.
- 59 *Ibid.* 1634-36, 7. Dr. J. N. Sarkar has already discussed this topic. SELMI, 186-203.
- 60 EFI, 1630-33, 324-25.
- 61 SELMI, 196.
- 62 EFI, 1634-36, 70-71.
- 63 Arrived at Surat as President of the company on November 7, 1633.
- 64 EFI 1634-36, 88; CHI, v, 85.
- 65 Hague Transcripts Series I, Vol. x, No. 324 (quoted in EFI 1634-36, xii-xiii)
- 66 Surat to Co. (Dec. 29, 1634), EFI, 1634-36, 71-73.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 89
- 68 *Ibid.*, xv
- 69 The English and the Dutch received two separate *firman*s. The *mutasaddi* of Surat summoned them on Feb. 22, 1636 to make them known the contents of two imperial *firman*s. Dr. J. N. Sarkar has discussed elaborately about the different aspects of the *firman*s. SELMI, 201-203.

- 70 The old Company (due to famine in 1630-31 in Gujarat) earned a small amount of profit in comparison to the Dutch East India Company which evoked much criticism of the Company's general policy. This dissatisfaction gave birth to the new company. CHI, v, 90.
- 71 He was an old employee of the old company but became a deserter. EFI, 1634-36, 198.
- 72 EFI, 1634-36, 198.
- 73 Nakhuda Nuruddin, the skipper of the *Taufiqi* wrote a long account of the piracies to Mirza Mahmud, the principal of the merchants concerned at Surat. EFI, 1634-36, 198-200.
- 74 EFI, 1634-36, 200.
- 75 Bruce i, 341.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 Macpherson, 112-113. Another Diu junk was also plundered by the English pirates. Bruce, i, 337.
- 78 EFI, 1634-36, 233.
- 79 *Ibid.* 256. Granting the charter to 'make prize of all such the treasures, merchandize, goods, and commodities of infidels or, of any other Prince; Potentate or State Charles I himself allowed the new Company to carry on piratical activities. Milburn, i, xxiii.
- 80 EFI, 1634-36, 256.
- 81 Bruce, i, 337-38.
- 82 CM, 1635-39, 217-18. For the letter of Charles I in full see Appendix D.
- 83 Williamson, 229.
- 84 RFSG, 8.
- 85 Naik was a district ruler under the Raja of Chandragiri, Sri Ranga Rayal, paid but a nominal obedience to their sovereign and was practically independent. RFSG, 2. Naik, *naigue* from Sans. *nayaka*, a Chief. Vestiges of Old Madras, 1640-1800, Vol. 1, 11n.
- 86 Bruce, i, 377. Masulipatam was the headquarters of the English before they shifted to Madras. The principal motive of the *Nayak* in allowing the English to build factory and fort in Madraspatam was to get share in the profitable trade of the English in piece goods. RFSG, i, 6.
- 87 Bruce, i, 366 ; Rajapur lies about 44 miles south of Bombay.
- 88 Williamson, 247. The news of this war reached Surat in March 1653.
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 Bruce, i, 471.
- 91 EFI, 1561-54, 8-9.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 T. Ray Choudhury, 'European Commercial Activity and the Organisation of India's Commerce and Industrial Production 1500-1750 ; in B. N. Ganguli (ed.) *Readings in Indian Economic History*, London, 1964, pp. 75-76 'To sum up, the impact of European commerce with India on a competitive basis was in many ways beneficent. New markets were opened for Indian exports and the existing one further deepened. For the limited areas supplying the staples of export, this meant an increase in production and probably also in productivity'.
- 94 *Ibid.*

**PART 4**

**CHANGING FORTUNES OF THE EAST  
INDIA COMPANY : AURANGZEB TO  
FARRUKHSIYAR**



## CHAPTER IX

### AURANGZEB AND PROGRESS OF ENGLISH COMMERCE

( 1658-1701 )

Emerging victorious out of the fratricidal struggle among the sons of Shahjahan, Aurangzeb ascended the throne of the Mughal empire in 1658 making his father prisoner in Agra fort. It is unfortunate that Persian sources do not throw any light on his relations with foreign mercantile companies. However, the factory records yield valuable data. From these we learn that Aurangzeb sought to secure the friendship of the English factors trading and living in India. Andrews, the President of the Company at Surat, informed the Directors of the Company in London, (January 10, 1660) that the 'new king Aurangzeb' expected 'a *mebarak*' or a congratulatory present from them. The President sent Foster, a member of the Council at Surat, to congratulate Aurangzeb with a 'fitting present', and also instructed him to obtain the imperial *firman* confirming 'former agreements' concluded with and the 'privileges' granted to the English by Shahjahan.<sup>1</sup>

About this time, the East India Company had trade settlements in Bengal, Western India and Madras. Under Shahjahan, the English had been carrying on trading activities in all those areas peacefully without interruption. But all these settlements now passed through troublous times and eventually came into collision with the imperial

A. M. C. R.—10

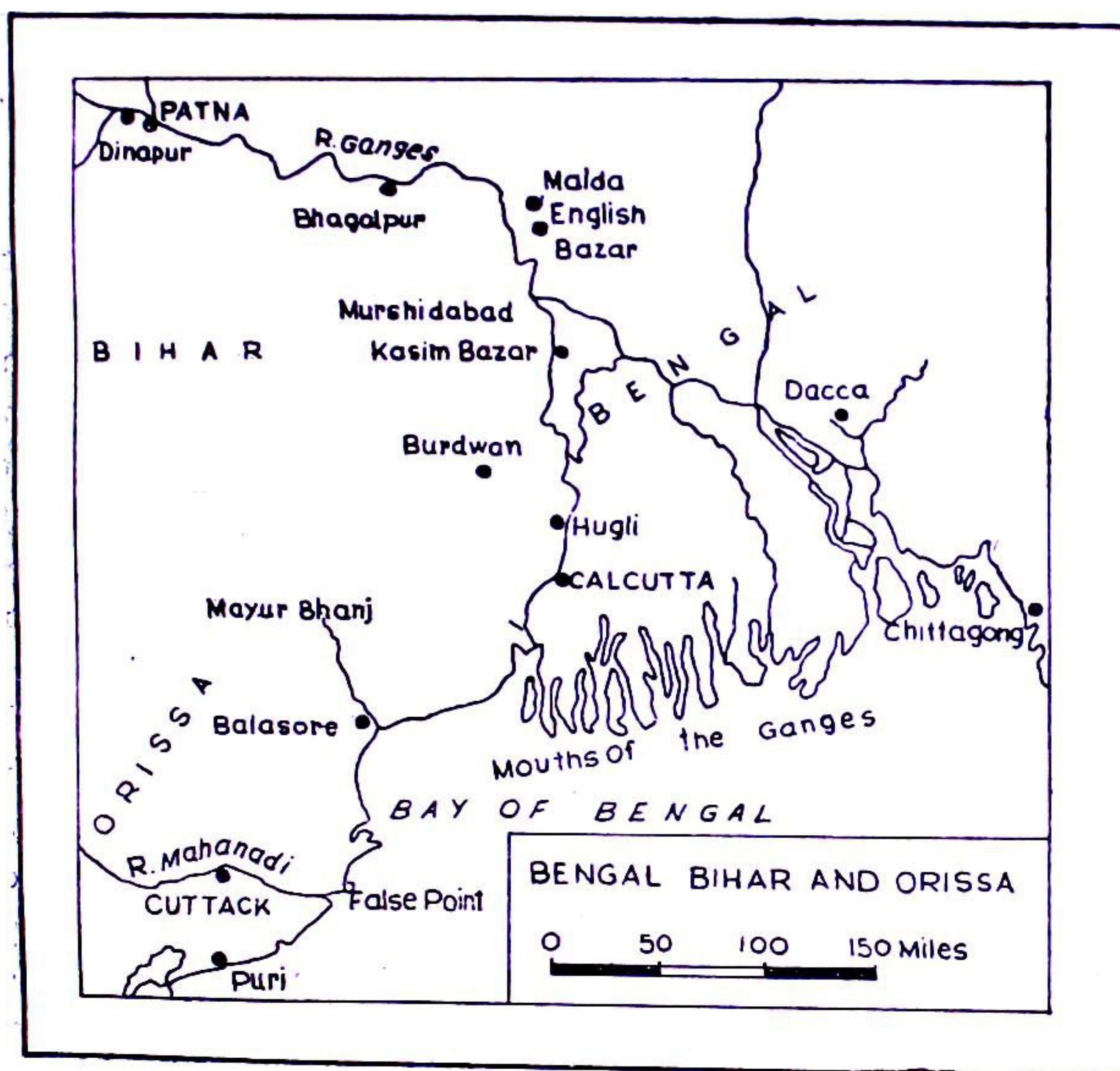
government. In tracing the impact of the collision on Anglo-Mughal commercial relations, it is necessary to state that the signs of the rupture were traceable as early as 1657 in Bengal and that it extended afterwards to Western India and the Eastern Coast.

### I. Bengal :

The principal reason of the conflict in Bengal, as gathered from the English factory records, was undue exactions by the officers of the *Nawab* of Bengal. Here the Company carried on duty-free trade, not by virtue of any imperial *firman* but by that of the *nishan* granted in 1651<sup>2</sup> by Prince Shuja.<sup>3</sup> Placing the sub-factories of Patna, Kasimbazar and Balasore, under the superintendence of Agent Trevisa the Company carried on duty-free trade during the reign of Shahjahan.<sup>4</sup> Under Aurangzeb, Mir Jumla, the *Nawab* of Bengal (9th May 1660—31st March 1663),<sup>5</sup> did not, however, challenge or question the trading rights of the Company in Bengal.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, he issued a *parwana* to the English which protected the latter against all claims for the customs duty.<sup>7</sup> But the death of Mir Jumla (on March 31, 1663) led to some disputes regarding this exemption, because they based their exemption upon an old *nishan* from Prince Shuja,<sup>8</sup> which had not been 'confirmed' by Aurangzeb,<sup>9</sup> because perhaps the latter might have wanted a new settlement with the English making all previous settlements invalid.

This unsettled problem of English commerce in Bengal soon caused trouble when in 1664 Shaista Khan became *Nawab* of Bengal (1664-1678 first term).<sup>10</sup> Mir Jumla's '*parwana*' which protected the English commerce in Bengal became invalid on his death. As the '*parwana*' ceased to operate, naturally the question was raised as to the legality of the exemption enjoyed so long by the English in matters of customs. Therefore, considering it advisable to take the earliest opportunity of securing Shaista Khan's *parwana*, the Bengal factors sent Mr. Blake (the chief of the factories in the three provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa from 1661-64)<sup>11</sup> from Hugli to meet him on his arrival at Rajmahal.<sup>12</sup> After a month's attendance at court, Blake obtained his *parwana*,<sup>13</sup> confirming the

privileges already enjoyed by the English in Bengal during the time of Prince Shuja and his predecessor.<sup>14</sup> Most probably Shaista Khan did not want to be involved in any dispute with the English because he needed the help of English navy for the consolidation of his administration and security of Bengal against the pirates of Arrakan. When, however, he actually sought help in 1665 from the English and the Dutch, the former refused, though the Dutch helped him with ships, men and ammunitions.<sup>15</sup> Hearing Shaista Khan's victory



over the Arrakanese in 1666, the English might have anticipated the forthcoming difficulties which might put them in trouble in continuing their business in Bengal.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile in 1665 Aurangzeb had sent instructions to Shaista Khan to exact  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  customs duty (*ad valorem*, which was fixed



as the customs of the empire) from all merchants including the foreigners.<sup>17</sup> The order of Aurangzeb supplied a favourable opportunity to Shaista Khan, to feed fat his grudge against the English for not providing him help against the Arrakan pirates.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, the Nawab's officers in demanding customs began to stop saltpetre boats of the English coming down from Patna to Hugli.<sup>19</sup> The English realised that Shaista Khan's own *parwana* issued to them earlier would not prevent him from creating trouble for the English. Blake wrote to the President at Surat (October 1664) that the *Nawab's* own *parwana* 'would not alter him, but he would persist in his exactions'.<sup>20</sup> Job Charnock, the chief factor at Patna in his letter to Agent Trevisa at Hugli, accused Shaista Khan of 'giving trouble' to the English trade particularly in saltpetre.<sup>21</sup>

Walter Clavell, the Company's chief in Bengal, now came to negotiate with Shaista Khan (1672) for obtaining freedom from customs or other dues which were exacted from the English. The negotiations proved successful when Shaista Khan issued a *parwana* to the English in the same year confirming company's trade privileges including its exemption from all customs on their goods.<sup>22</sup> Though the English refused to help him in his war against the Arrakan pirates, Shaista Khan, most probably, due to his old age did not want to create any further trouble with the English. Thus Shaista Khan's *parwana* ran counter to the terms of Aurangzeb's *firman* issued in 1665 ordering levy of 2½% customs from all merchants including the English.<sup>23</sup> This appears as a dangerous example in the Mughal administration when an inferior officer went against the order of supreme authority.

However, the Nawab's officers were in a fix, whether to follow the *parwana* or the *firman*. On many occasions the officers did not stop collecting customs as per emperor's *firman*. These difficulties led Clavell and his Council to propose to Fort St. George that a *Vakil* be sent from Patna to the emperor's court to obtain a *firman* granting them duty-free trade in Bengal.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly Job Charnock from Patna sent a *vakil* to the imperial court in 1672 to obtain a *firman* from Aurangzeb,<sup>25</sup> but the *vakil's* death and other difficul-

ties prevented success.<sup>26</sup> On December 6, 1676 the Hugli factory was infomed by the Dacca factory that Aurangzeb ordered a levy of customs at 2% on all the Company's goods<sup>27</sup> and accordingly Shaista Khan sent orders towards the end of that year for this levy to Malik Zindi, the Governor of Hugli.<sup>28</sup>

At this stage, Shaista Khan was recalled by Aurangzeb and he left Dacca on December 8, 1677.<sup>29</sup> The new *Nawab* Fidai Khan reached Dacca on January 19, 1678.<sup>30</sup> On June 8, 1678, Hervey, one of the factors of Hugli, went to Dacca to visit the new *Nawab*.<sup>31</sup> When Hervey met the *Nawab*, the latter declined to issue any *parwana* for free trade to the English unless the English could obtain a *firman* from the emperor granting them free trade in Bengal. Meanwhile, news arrived at Hugli from Dacca on April 30, 1678 that Fidai Khan had given an order that if the English could not procure 'king's *parwana*' (i.e. Aurangzeb's *firman*) for their free trade, within seven months, the English would have to 'pay customs'.<sup>32</sup>

Fidai Khan died on May 24, 1678,<sup>33</sup> and Prince Azam<sup>34</sup> succeeded him.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile Streynsham Master<sup>36</sup> came to Bengal in 1676 for the development of Company's affairs in a satisfactory manner. At this stage he might not have considered it politic to apply to the emperor at Delhi for a *firman* because at Surat the Company paid customs whereas in Bengal the English did not want to pay any.<sup>37</sup> Streynsham Master, therefore, sent Mathias Vincent, Company's agent at Hugli to Dacca in 1678. Vincent was able to secure a *nishan* from Prince Azam removing obstructions to the Company's business.<sup>38</sup>

But a serious trouble soon developed. The Arrakan pirates had been committing depredations on Chittagong and its suburbs, and Prince Azam sought to wage war against them. On March 19, 1679 he wrote to Vincent and the Dutch Chief Director, Jacob Vorburg, seeking their assistance in the form of 'ten sloop', fitted for war with men and munitions at the Prince's cost. Vincent replied that he could give no such aid without orders for which he was writing to the Company. Such a 'speedy denial' greatly irritated the Prince.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile the latter was recalled from Bengal to aid his father in the war against the Rajputs.<sup>40</sup>

At last the Bengal factors realised that an imperial *firman* was essential for carrying on unhindered trade in Bengal. In February 1679 Job Charnock at Patna, as advised by the Bay Council, instructed the *vakil* of the English at Ajmere (where the emperor then was) to make arrangements for obtaining an imperial *firman*. The *vakil* had been in touch with Inayat Khan, the acting *Wazir* during the absence of Asad Khan in the Deccan. After long and continued negotiations the English secured the imperial *firman*<sup>41</sup> in 1680 after an expenditure of 50,730 rupees.<sup>42</sup> The emperor ordered the present and future Governors at Surat, to levy of 3½% customs from the English. The *firman* further required that at all other places neither should 'hinder or molest them for customs, other specified dues, presents and other matters nor should any one, make any demands in these particulars'. It was accompanied by directions from the *wazir* to the three governments of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, requiring compliance with its terms.<sup>43</sup> The *firman* was, however, interpreted differently by the Company and the local Mughal officials, and created new difficulties rather than solved them. The Company's servants demanded that the duty for Surat was fixed at 3½% and at other places there would be no duty at all, whereas the local Mughal officials in Bengal maintained that the same duty was fixed for Bengal as well.

Meanwhile, Shaista Khan on his re-appointment as the *Nawab* of Bengal, had arrived at Dacca on February 5, 1680 and demanded 3½% customs duty as at Surat.<sup>44</sup> The Bengal agency at once opened negotiations with the *Nawab*. Richard Trenchfield and John Pawnsett, the two factors of Bengal Agency, visited him (February 1680) and presented him with the usual gold mohurs and rupees<sup>45</sup> (amount is not known). As a result of this negotiations Shaista Khan again issued a *parwana* granting the privileges of duty-free trade in Bengal.<sup>46</sup> Shaista Khan perhaps failed to realise the actual significance of such a grant.

But Rai Balchand, Shaista Khan's deputy at Murshidabad, made

the *Nawab* realise the dangerous effect of this privilege on the revenue of the province. The *Nawab*, now realising the gravity of the situation, made a complaint to Aurangzeb in December 1681 for issuing such a *firman*.<sup>47</sup> In his report to Aurangzeb, Shaista Khan accused the English of 'filling the country with their vast trade and getting the whole profit for themselves, the English dealing in goods<sup>48</sup> they had never dealt in before, and employing and giving their names and *dastaks* to an infinite number of *gumashtas* (agents),...by which means the emperor was defrauded of his due customs and the people had grown so poor that they were unable to pay the poll-tax'.<sup>49</sup> It is interesting to note Shaista Khan's great concern for the ordinary people of Bengal.

Arriving at Hugli in 1681, William Hedges<sup>50</sup> therefore found the general trade almost at a stand still.<sup>51</sup> The situation was further aggravated when in response to Shaista Khan's call Aurangzeb, repudiating his former disputed *firman* of 1680, instructed Shaista Khan (April 1682) to collect 3½% customs on all imports and exports of the English in Bengal.<sup>52</sup> The English as a result were naturally displeased. Hedges himself came to Dacca to appeal to the *Nawab* but his mission achieved nothing. Shaista Khan merely promised that he would request the emperor to give the English a *firman*.<sup>53</sup> Hedges' disillusionment made him realise that it was useless to depend on the protection of the Mughal. Hedges urged upon the Directors of the Company in London that 'trade in Bengal would never prosper till they came to a quarrel with the native authorities...and were established in a defensive settlement with ready access to the sea'.<sup>54</sup>

Trouble soon ensued. In March 1682 Rai Balchand was appointed superintendent of customs at Hugli and his deputy, Parameswar Das, demanding customs, started prohibiting all trade with the Hugli factory, thus stopping the business of the English.<sup>55</sup> The Company had dismissed Hedges in September 1684 for his misconduct.<sup>56</sup> Gyfford, under his new title of President, then arrived from Madras to take over administrative charge of the Bay factories.<sup>57</sup> Gyfford was indignant and ordered Pawnsett, the chief

at the factory of Dacca to see the *Nawab* and the *diwan*, and try to get rid of this 'intolerable bondage', saying the Company had positively ordered that they should not yield to the demand for payment of customs. But Pawnsett towards the end of October 1684 arranged with the *diwan*, that the Company would give an undertaking to pay them at 3½%. Therefore, the *diwan* promised his *parwana* to clear the Company's business at Hugli.<sup>58</sup>

But at this stage a dispute between Charnock and the silk merchants and weavers ( which originally had started in 1683 ) developed over the former's 'dishonestly taking a portion of the silk they brought to the warehouse' for sale and the non-payment of the price of those goods by Charnock.<sup>59</sup> Now the aggrieved merchants had brought a suit against Charnock in the court of the *Qazi* of Murshidabad who asked Charnock to appear personally before him. Charnock declined to appear before the *Qazi* and on the contrary, Charnock wrote direct to Pawnsett to get a *parwana* from Shaista Khan removing the dispute from the *Qazi's* court for arbitration. This was procured from Shaista Khan in January 1684. But the plaintiffs petitioned the *Nawab* against this order.<sup>60</sup>

Backed by the *Nawab*, Charnock refused to appear before the *Qazi* which should be considered not only an open defiance to obey the law of the land but also he put up a precedent of such misconduct. On the other hand, Shaista Khan's conflicting orders obviously lowered the standard of Mughal administration in Bengal.

Shaista Khan, therefore, ordered Charnock to appear before him without delay. But Charnock refused to do so and abandoning the Qasimbazar factory escaped to Hugli in April 1686 where he came to learn that the court of Directors in London obtained permission from King James II to retaliate their injuries by hostilities against Shaista Khan and Aurangzeb.<sup>67</sup> At the same time the authorities in England assured their servants in Bengal that though they had determined to go on war with the Mughal, their ultimate end was peace. They regretted they had 'no remedy left but either to desert our trade or we must draw the sord ( sword ) his majesty hath entrusted with to vindicate the right and honour of the English

## WESTERN INDIA

nation in India.<sup>62</sup> The entire episode was due to the obstinacy of Charnock.

## II. Western India :

If the relations of the English with the Mughal government were strained in Bengal these were equally so in Western India. Trouble soon arose over the question of sale of arms and ammunitions by the English to the Mughals in Gujarat.

During the fratricidal struggle among the four sons of Shahjahan the English sold munitions to rival claimants. The first reference of such a transaction is found in 1657, when a consignment of 'a number of guns for the reduction of Surat Castle'<sup>63</sup> was delivered by one Mr. Ravington, a member of the Council at Surat to Mirza Amin,<sup>64</sup> the then *mutasaddi* of Surat, in the war between Murad and Dara, the two sons of Shahjahan. The price agreed upon was merely 24,000 rials of eight,<sup>65</sup> of which 5,000 were paid at once and the remainder was to be paid in 'instalments out' of the customs dues of the English.<sup>66</sup> The bargain led to difficulties in 1661, as will be narrated hereafter.

Subsequently 2,000 mds. of shells were sold at 38 rupees per maund in 1658 to Aurangzeb by Col. Rainsford, one of the members of the Council at Surat.<sup>67</sup> The Directors of the Company in London expressed their 'displeasure' to the President and Council at Surat ( May 31, 1658 ) for selling arms and ammunitions to the local rulers. Even then the consignment was duly delivered to Aurangzeb.<sup>68</sup> The English might have thought that this supply of arms to Aurangzeb in his need would create a lasting impression on the latter and the English would enjoy its fruit if Aurangzeb could sit on the throne. But actually after the accession of Aurangzeb, a dispute arose over the payment of the arms in 1661. Mustafa Khan,<sup>69</sup> the present *mutasaddi*, strongly remonstrated against the high price of the guns (  $21\frac{1}{2}$  rials of eight per piece ) and therefore resolved to give the guns back and sought the sums that had been deducted on that account.<sup>70</sup>

However, Andrews, the President of the Company at Surat,

refused to comply with the demands of the *mutasaddi* to take back the arms. The English factory was strictly blockaded until July 27, 1661, when an agreement was reached between Mustafa Khan and Andrews by the mediation of Indian merchants.<sup>71</sup> Its terms were as follows :

- (i) The English were to accept the reduced rate of customs and the excess money already paid to them was to be given back within four months.
- (ii) The English President at Surat was not to leave the city without the prior permission, of the *mutasaddi*.
- (iii) Two English vessels were to remain at the Mughal port of Surat until the next English ship arrived there.
- (iv) Goods unloaded from the English ships at Swally were to be kept under guard by the Mughal troops to prevent illicit disposal by the English.

The blockade of the factory was withdrawn on July 27, 1661 after the conclusion of the agreement.<sup>72</sup>

### III. Decline of Surat and growth of Bombay :

The settlement with the Mughal authorities at Surat in 1661 enabled the English to carry on their trading operations unhindered and undisturbed for some time. But in 1664, Shivaji's raid on Surat disrupted the commercial activities of the Indians and Europeans alike. Inayat Khan<sup>73</sup> then the *mutasaddi* of Surat, failed to resist Shivaji and fled to the Surat castle. Most of the inhabitants also left the town for safety across the river Tapti. But the English and other Europeans did not flee away. On the contrary, Henry, Oxinden, the President of the Company at Surat (1662-1669), 'resolved to fortify' the factory 'to hazard the last life in defence, of their 'honourable master's estate.'<sup>74</sup>

Shivaji plundered the town<sup>75</sup> but did not touch the European factories because he had no mind to withstand the resistance of the English and the Dutch. When the Mughal army arrived at Surat a fortnight after the departure of Shivaji, Oxinden was thanked by Mahabat Khan,<sup>76</sup> the Mughal commander. On hearing the news,<sup>77</sup>

Aurangzeb granted 'all merchants, including the English and the Dutch, a remission of customs duties for one year.'<sup>78</sup> Bruce remarks that in reward for the brave defence of their factories against Shivaji, Aurangzeb granted them remission.<sup>79</sup> But this was actually not the case. The remission was not only granted to the English, but also the Indian merchants and other European merchants e.g. the Dutch also obtained the privilege. The Indian merchants got exemption because Aurangzeb might have thought that the Indian merchants of Surat should be compensated as the latter paid Shivaji huge amount of money as ransom. But the English were exempted because they did not flee from Surat.

#### IV. *Dwindling Importance of Surat :*

Armed with this economic privileges and left unscathed by Shivaji's raid, the English tried to carry on their trade at Surat with renewed vigour. But the constant warfare between Aurangzeb and the Rajputs and the Marathas, continued in the regions from which goods were obtained by the English,<sup>80</sup> spoiled the possibilities of revival of their trade at Surat. Barred by these difficulties, the possibilities of Surat as an important trading centre was also on the verge of decline.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, the position of Bombay as a trading centre in the eyes of the English became important, wherefrom they could command the respect of both the Marathas and the Mughals. But the English sought to utilise Bombay not only for the security of their commerce in Mughal India but also for establishing 'English colony' and for which a number of English women were sent out with a view to their marrying the English soldiers of the garrison. Orders were also given the 'free burghers' were to be encouraged to settle there.<sup>82</sup>

#### V. *Aurangzeb and Bombay :*

It is interesting to note that in spite of this incessant struggle with the Marathas, Aurangzeb kept a strict vigilance on the activities of the English in Bombay. In fact, Aurangzeb was alarmed by two things :



Firstly, the endeavours of Humphrey Cooke,<sup>83</sup> the Lt. Governor of Bombay, to draw settlers from Mughal India, particularly from Surat to Bombay did not escape the notice of Aurangzeb. The emperor was informed about the state of affairs by his 'intelligencer' of Surat. Aurangzeb, therefore, wrote to the President of Surat accusing him for his attempt to 'inveigle and draw, away the subjects' of Mughal empire 'to go and inhabit' in Bombay 'which was designed to destroy and draw all trade from hence'<sup>84</sup> i.e. from Surat. Though Cooke was alarmed by the letter of President of Surat about this,<sup>85</sup> the endless stream of immigrants into Bombay could not be stopped. Indian merchants with their families from divers places were reported to 'daily flock to Bombay'.<sup>86</sup> In fact, the immigration was partly due to war between Shambhaji and the Portuguese and partly for better administration of Bombay. The occupation of Henery and Kenery, two islands by Shambhaji, the frequent interference by Shambhaji and Sidi's galivates with trading vessels of Indian merchants seriously hampered Surat's foreign trade.<sup>87</sup> As a result in January 1684 the population of Bombay was estimated at 100,000<sup>88</sup> a considerable advance of 60,000 in 1675.<sup>89</sup>

Secondly, Aurangzeb was greatly concerned at the English attempt for the erection of the fort in Bombay<sup>91</sup> since their 'taking possession of the island' in 1668.<sup>91</sup> Oxinden from Surat wrote to Cooke (December 13, 1668) informing him of Aurangzeb's displeasure at the conduct of the English in Bombay. Aurangzeb apprehended, as Oxinden wrote to Cooke, that it was Oxinden who encouraged the English in Bombay to erect fortifications and also threatened to turn him out of his country if the latter did not ask the English in Bombay 'to desist from further fortifying'.<sup>92</sup>

The Mughal authorities, as it is clear from Oxinden's letter to Cooke, would not allow foreigners to raise their own garrison and fortification ; while they failed to ensure effective protection to the foreigners on land, as it has been seen in Shivaji's raid on Surat. But the English realised that security for their position in Mughal India could only be found under the guns of their fortified settlement.

## INTERLOPERS

VI. *Interlopers* :

At this stage another event foreshadowed trouble company's commercial activities in Mughal India and embittered the Company's economic relations with the Mughals. The appearance of the English 'interlopers',<sup>93</sup> who challenged the Company's monopoly of trade in India caused a new source of worry to the Council of Surat. In 1679 the first ship belonging to the 'interlopers' arrived at Surat laded with coral, lead, anchors, guns, etc.' and disposed of these 'at very means price' i.e. at cheap prices to Indian merchants which prejudiced Company's business at Surat.<sup>94</sup> By encouraging the interlopers Aurangzeb might have wanted to teach the Company's officials some lessons so that the latter carried on their commercial activities without creating trouble for the emperor.

John Petit and George Bowcher, two of the Company's employees (discharged for misconduct), though ordered by the Council at Surat to go home,<sup>95</sup> determined to remain at Surat and began to carry on trade on their own account. The Council declared them 'abettors of interloping'. The Company's officials at Surat tried to seize them but they fled away.<sup>96</sup> Being requested by the President of the Company, Kartalab Khan,<sup>97</sup> the *mutasaddi* of Surat, arrested them in January 1683. At this stage, Aurangzeb himself interfered and the drama took a new turn. Sending an invitation to Petit and Bowcher to visit him, Aurangzeb instructed Kartalab Khan to send them to the imperial court. Aurangzeb's attitude towards the interlopers ushers in a new dimension in the Anglo-Mughal Commercial relations. The *vakil* employed by the Council at the imperial court managed to get an order for their remaining at Surat and so stopped their departure at the last moment. But Bowcher managed to leave Surat secretly and reached Aurangabad where the emperor was, and obtained in November 1684, the royal *firman* from Aurangzeb for trading at Surat on the same terms as other Europeans.<sup>98</sup> The grant of *firman* to Bowcher clearly shows that Aurangzeb wanted to extend a fair measure of protection to interlopers, i.e. it can be said, he pursued a policy of encouragement to the interlopers. They were allowed to 'carry on trade without

hindrance'<sup>99</sup> which hampered seriously the old Company's trade because they had to compete with their own countrymen, who in particular knew the secrets of Company's commercial policy pursued in Mughal India very well.

All these developments in the Western coast of India embittered Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. But no light has yet been focussed by any scholar on these developments showing the peculiar trend which was growing slowly but steadily and giving a definite shape of Mughal India's foreign commerce. On October 9, 1688, Sir John Child appeared with a fleet before Swally and sent to the *mutasaddi* of Surat a list of grievances of the English demanding immediate compensation for past injuries and a new charter confirming and extending their privileges.<sup>100</sup> In fact, the Company underestimated the strength of the empire it was assailing and failed to provide adequate forces for the campaign it had planned. Aurangzeb retaliated fiercely upon the factories at Surat and Masulipatam, cutting off the trade, and imprisoning the English merchants. In 1690 the Company hastened to patch up a peace on somewhat degrading terms, and arrangement facilitated by the death of Sir John Child upon whom the emperor's resentment chiefly concentrated itself.<sup>101</sup>

This was, in fact, the first and last war between the Mughal and Britain which went in favour of the former. But Aurangzeb did not try to drive the English out of Mughal India for ever. On the contrary, the last Great Mughal reinstated (April 4, 1690) the defeated and dangerous enemy with all their former privileges.<sup>102</sup> After this victory, what Aurangzeb required was the setting up of a fleet of battle ships, capable of accepting the challenge of English navy, which necessity he failed to realise. If Manucci is to be believed, Aurangzeb resolved to do so, particularly after the plunder of his own ship the *Ganj-i-Sawai*<sup>103</sup> (1695). Aurangzeb instructed Ortencio Bronzoni, a fellow countryman of Manucci, to build a battle ship in Surat. The latter made a small ship with its 'salis, rigging, guns, and flags'. European artillery men who examined it, gave a certificate of praise.<sup>104</sup> But, says Manucci, Aurangzeb thought

that the people of Hindustan were not fit to fight on the high seas and thereby abandoned the project.<sup>105</sup> This does not offer any adequate explanation. In all probability, Aurangzeb's pre-occupation with the Marathas prevented him from realising the growing danger of the activities of the Company in Mughal India.

However, this war was pre-planned by the English with the dream, as Hunter says, that Sir Josiah Child,<sup>106</sup> the Governor of the Company in London and a 'dominant figure in the Company's administration', had dreamt of founding an empire in India. Child wanted 'political sovereignty' to be established in India<sup>107</sup> But Dr. S. A. Khan argued that the word 'political sovereignty' used by Child, should be regarded as 'commercial sovereignty' and not 'territorial sovereignty'.<sup>108</sup> Dr. Khan has not, however, given his interpretation of 'commercial sovereignty'. Perhaps he wanted to mean that the English sought to carry on their commerce without any imperial intervention keeping their factories out of the reach of the Mughal judicature by virtue of the imperial *firman* obtained from the emperor. But this argument seems to be inexplicable, because no independent state authority can stand such a demand.

Gerald Aungier, the President of the Company at Surat (1669-1677) wrote to the Director of the Company in London that the trade in Mughal India could only be carried on sword in hand,<sup>109</sup> i.e. Aungier suggested to apply force in order to obtain imperial *firman* granting extra-territorial commercial privileges from the emperor. The English in India were actually prepared to come to a trial of strength in 1685, and the Directors therefore declared (October 28, 1685) that the war with Aurangzeb was the 'surest way to preserve peace'.<sup>110</sup> A clearer picture of English design may be obtained from a letter written by Sir Josiah Child from London (December 1687) to the Governor of Madras in which the objects of the Company in India were defined. The aims were 'to establish such a politic of civill and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue to maintain both.....as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come'.<sup>111</sup> Sir Josiah realised that 'events are forming us into a condition of a

sovereign state in India'.<sup>112</sup> This clearly supports that the principal reason of Anglo-Mughal war (1688-1689) was not the need of security for English commerce in Mughal India but it was the design of the English to establish territorial sovereignty in India.

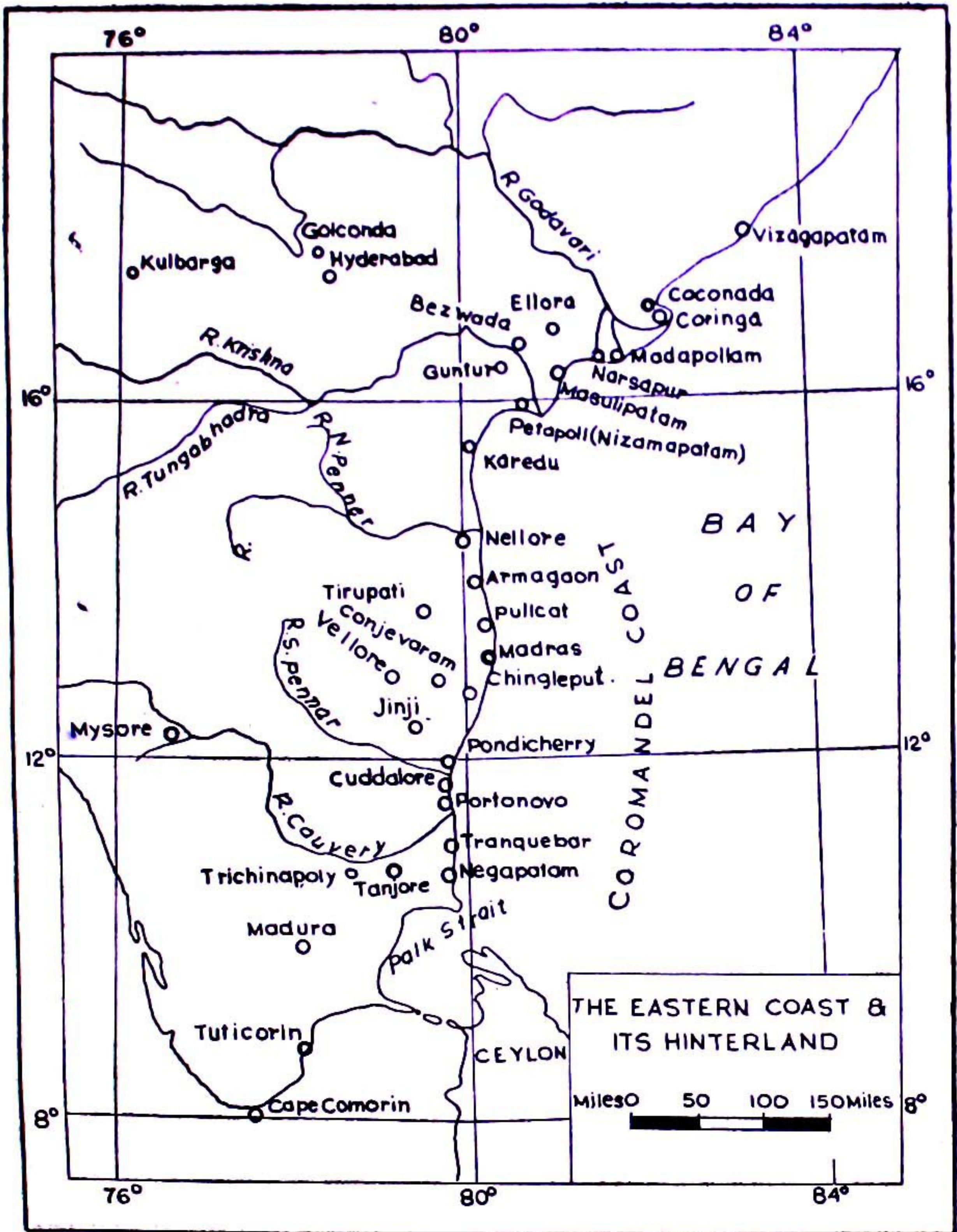
Sir John Child, who in 1682 became President of Surat and Governor of Bombay was an willing agent of Sir Josiah Child. He implemented the policy of force which was planned on paper by Sir Josiah Child and the Directors of the Company in London encouraged him by declaring (September 28, 1687) that they were 'resolved to prosecute the war with the Mughal'.<sup>113</sup> Seizing the Mughal vessels towards the end of 1688,<sup>114</sup> the English hastened the show down with Aurangzeb.

#### VII. Madras :

Let us now turn our attention to Madras and study the Anglo-Mughal commercial relations there.

With the conquest of Golconda by Aurangzeb in 1688, the English settlement at Madras<sup>115</sup> was brought under the paramount power of the Great Mughal.<sup>116</sup> Towards the end of 1687 Mughal authority was firmly established over the districts of Chingleput, Poonamallee and Conjee varam.<sup>117</sup> Armed with a *Qaul* ('Cowle' in English records) or 'Undertaking' by Nekhnam Khan (Raza Quli Beg, astute successor of Mir Jumla after the latter's defection in 1656 to Abdullah Qutb Shah) in 1672 the English got the town of Madras wholly rented for ever for 1200 Pagodas<sup>118</sup> *per annum* 'so long that the sun and the moon endureth'. The English were allowed to exercise their powers of 'administration including justice and (military) command of the town'.<sup>119</sup> But the extension of Mughal authorities endangered English settlements of Porto Novo,<sup>120</sup> Cuddalore,<sup>121</sup> Konimedu and Vizagapatam which were established by the permission obtained in 1681 from Harji Mahadik,<sup>122</sup> the Maratha ruler at Jinji. Unfortunately, at that time, the Company had determined to wage war against the Mughal power and had begun hostility in Bengal, as a result of which the English factories in that province was over run by the Mughals. Fleeing

from the factory at Hugli, Charnock took refuge at Madras.<sup>124</sup> In 1689 the Mughal seized English factories in Vizagapatam,



Masulipatam and Maddapollam. The Council at Madras was apprehensive that their town of Madras would be next threatened, they sought to obtain an imperial *firman* from Aurangzeb for their

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security and safety. In 1698 Zulfiqar Khan, the Commander of the Mughal force at Madras issued a *parwana* to the English taking 'ten thousand pagodas' from them.<sup>125</sup>

But the *parwana* could not ensure peace to the English because of the depredations of the English pirates who swarmed in the Indian Ocean at that time and began capturing Indian vessels.<sup>126</sup> Aurangzeb demanded compensation from the different European companies<sup>127</sup> and accordingly Daud Khan,<sup>128</sup> the Deputy of Zulfiqar Khan, who was also then *Faujdar* of Arcot<sup>129</sup> demanded from Thomas Pitt,<sup>130</sup> the President of the English factory at Madras, 200,000 Pagodas but Pitt refused to pay the compensation. So Daud Khan besieged Madras on February 6, 1702 and created consternation there.<sup>131</sup> Soon negotiations were opened by the mediation of Kisonjee (Kishanji) Dodojee, a local merchant,<sup>132</sup> and the English offered Daud Khan 18,000 rupees.<sup>133</sup> In absence of adequate materials, it is difficult to assume whether the money (Rs. 18,000) given to Daud Khan for the latter's own purse or as compensation demanded by Aurangzeb. However, Daud Khan raised the siege on Tuesday, May 5, 1702.<sup>134</sup> Thereafter no more trouble arose in Madras.

From the above discussion, it is evident that occasional half-hearted measures taken by Aurangzeb, in connection with the English in Madras proved futile in improving Mughal commercial relations with the English or in resisting the growth of the English commerce there.

#### VIII. Embassy of Sir William Norris to the Court of Aurangzeb

##### (a) Background of the Embassy :

Even after the Anglo-Mughal war, and re-establishment of the English at Surat, Anglo-Mughal commercial relations did not improve. The piracy on the Mughal junks by the Europeans<sup>135</sup> worsened the situation. In fact, exasperated by frequent acts of such piracy, Aurangzeb ordered a complete stop to all European trade. But when the English, French and Dutch agreed to act in concert to suppress piracy, Aurangzeb changed his mind and ordered

the *mutasaddi* of Surat to settle the matter with the European traders.<sup>136</sup>

The Company's commercial position was also threatened by the English interlopers. This hampered the Company's commercial progress in Mughal India. Again Aurangzeb's encouragement to interlopers and grant of *firman* to them (mentioned earlier) embittered commercial relations between the Mughals and the English East India Company. The interlopers agreed to pay a higher rate than what the old Company paid as import duty upto 5%.<sup>137</sup> Aurangzeb found no reason to exempt other European merchants from this increased rate of customs duty. He demanded from the servants of the East India Company 3½% customs in place of 2½%. But the Company refused to pay the increased rate.<sup>138</sup>

In this background a new general society or English Company was established in London by an Act of British Parliament and letters patent from the Crown for the purpose of trading to the East Indies.<sup>139</sup> In order to obtain the necessary commercial privileges from Aurangzeb, Sir William Norris (1657-1702) was sent to the court of Aurangzeb as a royal 'Ambassador and as the representative of the new Company'.<sup>140</sup> He sailed for India in December 1698 in a ship of war, on a salary of 2,000/- a year, paid by the new Company.<sup>141</sup>

(b) *Norris at the Imperial Court :*

Reaching Panhala (where Aurangzeb then was) in April, 1701,<sup>142</sup> Norris exchanged courtesies with the high Mughal officials of the court. Aurangzeb granted him audience on Monday April 28, 1701<sup>143</sup> in his 'siege camp' and was honoured by the emperor with a 'saropa' or dress of honour. The emperor then accepted the English King's letter and presents.<sup>144</sup> The latter requested Aurangzeb to grant a *firman* allowing the new Company, whom Norris represented, to carry on trade on the same footing as the Old Company.<sup>145</sup> The *firman* was drafted. But before its delivery, the emperor demanded from Norris an undertaking as the price of the *firman*, to clear the pirates from the sea. Considering this to be an impossible task for



him, Norris declined to give such an undertaking. As a sequel to this, Norris had to return only with Aurangzeb's reply<sup>146</sup> to king William's letter and some presents.

The only importance of his mission was that he was the last royal ambassador to the Mughal court. But his mission was futile.<sup>147</sup> He could neither secure any commercial privilege from the Mughal emperor nor could he leave any lasting impression on Anglo-Mughal commercial relations.

What was actually the policy that Aurangzeb pursued in connection with the English commercial activities? As it is found from the above discussion, Aurangzeb did not want to discourage the English to carry on their commercial activities in Mughal India as the customs earned from the English were not at all insignificant and the English navy was of immense help for Mughal sea-borne trade. But at the same time Aurangzeb was the last man to stand their audacity. Again it is quite obvious that the last Great Mughal painfully realised that it was impossible for him to drive the Europeans out of Mughal India. Therefore the emperor practically wanted to make a lasting settlement with the English.

### FOOT NOTES

- 1 EFI, 1655-60, 214. It is interesting to find that when Andrews was trying to maintain friendly relations with Aurangzeb (January, 1660); at the end of February, 1660, the Bengal factors received instructions from Surat factors to 'pursue a policy of force, of playing the fox and the lion'. Bengal factors were also asked to be prepared to leave Bengal and seize Mughal shipping. EFI, 1660-64, 392-93; Mir Jumla, 267n, JIH, xxiv, 38-40.
- 2 Regarding actual date of the grant of the *nishan* there are differences in opinion. For details see Ch. VIII ante.
- 3 SM, ii, 21-22.
- 4 EFI, 1661-64, 60. Shahjahan did not issue any *firman* for carrying on duty-free trade. For discussion see Ch. VIII. ante.
- 5 He was in Bengal for a year and a half, for he engaged himself in the campaigns in Kuch Bihar and Assam. Mir Jumla, 210.

- 6 BFI, 1661-64, 60.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 For details see Ch. VIII ante.
- 9 BFI, 1661-64, 393-94 ; Mir Jumla (2nd ed.), 281-82.
- 10 HB, ii, 386. Aurangzeb appointed Shaista Khan in December, 1663.
- 11 BFI, 1661-64, 392.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 394 ; Shaista Khan entered Rajmahal on March 8, 1664, HB, ii, 371 ; Dagh Register, 1664, 257.
- 13 Blake's letter to the President on June 21, 1664. BFI, 1661-64, 394-95.
- 14 BFI, 1661-64, 395 ; Wilson, i, 48.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 1665-67, 191.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 195.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 191.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 1670-77, ii, 330.
- 21 EF, 1670-77, ii, 375.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*, 410. But S. Master states in his diary (i, 491-92) that the *Vakil* was sent by him.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 417.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 417.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 409-10.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Ibid.*, 419.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 1678-84, IV, 152.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 MU, i, 247-52.
- 34 Muhammad Azam Shah second surviving son of emperor Aurangzeb, MU, i, 665, 688 ; ii, 116, 231.
- 35 EF, 1678-84, iv, 157 ; Aurangzib, v, 300.
- 36 Streyntsham Master, an agent of the Company in Madras was in Bengal from August 1679 to December 1679 on a visit of inspection. EF, 1678-84, iv, 188.
- 37 Bruce, ii, 431.
- 38 EF, 1678-84, iv, 160, 165.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 189.
- 40 EF, 1678-84, iv, 256.
- 41 The *firman* was 'ceremoniously received' by the factory at Hugli at the Company's garden with a salute of 300 guns. Wilson, i, 78 ; Stewart, 194-95.

- 42 Out of 50,730, 22,000 were to be paid to the emperor (EF, 1678-84, iv, 194) and the rest might have been paid to the high officials.'
- 43 EF, 1678-84, iv, 230-231; Wilson, i, 78; Aurangzib, v, 322; Anjali Chatterjee, 131-133; Stewart, Appendix V.
- 44 EF, 1678-84, iv, 226.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 *Ibid.*, 231.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 256.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 263.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 257.
- 50 William Hedges, one of the Company's directors was sent in 1682 to be its Agent in the Bay, independently of the Governor and Council at Madras. EF, 1678-84, iv, 188-289.
- 51 Hedges' Diary, i, 100.
- 52 EF, 1678-84, iv, 277-278.
- 53 HB, ii, 383.
- 54 Hedges Diary, i, 117, 121, 133, 139; HB, ii, 384.
- 55 EF, 1678-84, iv, 277-278; HB, ii, 383.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 330, 347.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 EF, 1678-84, iv, 349-52.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 308.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 336.
- 61 HB, ii, 384.
- 62 Hedges, ii, 51, 53. Hedges mentioned that the Dutch freely talked of establishing a fortified settlement, and if they did, he feared, the English would be driven out i.e. in that case the friendship between the Mughal and the Dutch would create trouble for the English.
- 63 EFI, 1655-60, 124.
- 64 Mirza Amin, son of Khwaja Mirza Ahmad, MU, ii, 1073. Aurangzeb sent Amin as *mutasaddi* to Surat in April 1659. The guns were sold to Shahbaz Khan, the general of Prince Murad in 1657. EFI, 1655-60 214, 218.
- 65 For rials of eight see Appendix A.
- 66 EFI, 1655-60, 124.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 *Ibid.*, 1661-64, 13; The English very occasionally sold artillery and munitions to the Mughals. There was, however, no regular arms trade, Aurangzib, v, 413.
- 69 Mustafa Khan was a Shia of Afghan descent. He joined the service of Prince Azam Shah and earned reputation through good service. MU, ii, 328-31.
- 70 EFI, 1661-64, 13-15.

## FOOT NOTES

- 71 Another version derived from the Dutch factor at Surat (Dagh Register, 1651, 411), shows that the conclusion was not so favourable to the English as is made out above by the English. As the demands of Mustafa were unpalatable to the President, he resolved to withdraw secretly from Surat. For this purpose two small vessels were prepared by order of the President. Learning of it through his spies Mustafa doubled the guard of the factory, resolving to starve the English into surrender. At last on July 23, Andrews was forced to make overtures to the *mutasaddi* for reconciliation. Mustafa insisted that the two English vessels should be handed on land and dismantled and then negotiated an agreement (EFI, 1661-64, 15). Owing to the paucity of indigenous sources it is very difficult to reconcile the two versions mentioned above.
- 72 EFI, 1661-64, 13-15.
- 73 His life in MU, i, 678-80.
- 74 EFI, 1661-64, 288. The factors and other employees of the factory were directed to take military training so that in case of sudden attacks they could defend it. Elphinstone, 47.
- 75 Elphinstone, 46. Shivaji wrote in his letter to Aurangzeb after the plunder of Surat,—‘Surat ra be surat Kurd’, i.e. ‘I have spoilt the face of Surat’. Shivaji indulges in a pun on the word ‘surat’. BSSLD, i, Pt. i, 18.
- 76 Mahabat Khan Mirza Lahrasp or Mahabat Khan Khanan Sipah Salar of Jahangir, MU, ii, 28.
- 77 Bruce, ii, 145.
- 78 EFI, 1661-64, 310-311.
- 79 Bruce, ii, 145.
- 80 War was going on in the Mewar and Marwar in Rajputana and in the Deccan. Aurangzib, v, 218-19.
- 81 In 1678, Rolt, the President of Surat and Governor of Bombay (January 1678—December 1682) referred to the above causes in his letter to the Directors in London which were responsible for dwindling the importance of Surat as a trading centre. EF, 1678-84, iii, 227-28.
- 82 EFI, 1668-69, 240.
- 83 Cooke had been a petty shop-keeper (tendeiro) at Lisbon. EFI, 1661-64, 322n.
- 84 EFI, 1665-67, 61.
- 85 *Ibid.*
- 86 EF, 1678-84, iii, 219. One important factor in the development of Bombay was that the Company decided to forge all customs on exports and imports for a period of five years, commencing 1 January 1670. EFI, 1665-67, 239.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 218.
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 *Ibid.*, 1670-77, i, xii.

- 90 By a secret article of the marriage treaty with Portugal (1661), England guaranteed the safety of the Portuguese possession in the East against the Dutch and got Bombay as the dowry of the new queen. Being dissatisfied, the local Portuguese officials of Bombay did not hand over Bombay to the English until February 1665. CHI, V, 86-87.
- 91 C. Fawcett, *The First Century of British Justice in India*, 1.
- 92 *Ibid.* Oxinden suggested to develop Bombay 'very privately' i.e. secretly because 'spies are sett in every place to watch what is done' and the report was sent to the imperial court at Delhi. EFI, 1667-69, 78-79.
- 93 HF, 130.
- 94 EF, 1678-84; iii, 28-29.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 289.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 317.
- 97 Kartalab Khan superseded by Salabat Khan in 1684. For biography see MU, ii, 697, 859.
- 98 EF, 1678-84, iii, 346 ; HF, 127-130.
- 99 *Ibid.*, 323.
- 100 A. Wright, *Annesley of Surat*, 92-98.
- 101 Bruce, ii, 637-639.
- 102 The terms of the treaty has been discussed in detail in Sarkar's *Aurangzib*, v, 274.
- 103 The effects of this plunder have been discussed in detail in Sarkar's, *Aurangzib*, v, 277-286.
- 104 Manucci, ii, 47.
- 105 *Ibid.*
- 106 It has been generally stated that the two Childs ( Sir Josiah and Sir John ) were brothers but this was not the case. His namesake and patron Sir Josiah was actually no relation of Sir John. O. Strachey, *Keigwin's Rebellion*, 20, 162 ; Ovington, 93n.
- 107 India office Records, collected by Dr. S.A. Khan and published in JIH, i, November 1921, 71.
- 108 *Ibid.*, 75
- 109 C.J. Hamilton, 43.
- 110 IOR in JIH, 1921, 74.
- 111 Hedges' Diary, ii, 117.
- 112 *Ibid.* It will not be out of place to mention here that the Restoration in England (1660) took place during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign in Mughal India. From the time of the Restoration, the mercantilists influenced English policy towards the countries where the English had their commercial interests. E. H. Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth century*, ii, 240,
- 113 Hedges' Diary, 78.
- 114 CHI, v, 103.

## FOOT NOTES

- 115 The English East India Company had established the Fort St. George in 1640. Vestiges, 1640-1700, i, ii.
- 116 RFSG (Letters from Fort St. George), 1698, Vol. 8, 24-25.
- 117 C S. Srinivasachari, History of the City of Madras, 108.
- 118 For Pagoda see Appendix, A.
- 119 C.S. Srinivasachari, Loc.Cit., 76-77 ; H. K. Sherwani, History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty, 630-631.
- 120 Porto Novo or Porta Nova, so called by the Portuguese, lay on the Coromandel Coast, between twenty and thirty miles to the north ward of Tricombar or Tranquebar where the Dutch had a factory. R. N. Banerji, Economic Progress of the E.I. Co. on the Coromandel Coast. 8.
- 121 Cuddalore, lay about a mile to the south ward of Fort St. David, *Ibid.*, 8.
- 122 Aurangzib, v, 140.
- 123 RFSG (Letters), Vol. 8, 38-39 ; Martin's Memoires, ii, 568.
- 124 Srinivasachari, History of the City of Madras, 108.
- 125 RFSG (Letters), Vol. 8, 93 ; HM, 109.
- 126 CHI, v, 103.
- 127 RFSG (Letters, 1700-1701), Vol. 10, 90. Thomas Pitt, the President of Madras wrote a letter on December 24, 1701 to John Haynes, Deputy Governor of Fort St. David, informing him of Aurangzeb's demand for compensation.
- 128 For biography see MU, i, 171.
- 129 RFSG (Letters, 1700-1701), Vol. 10, 23.
- 130 Thomas Pitt (1653-1726) usually called 'Diamond Pitt' an English merchant and was an interloper first, but was latter Governor of Madras, was born at Blanford, St. Merry, Dorset on July 5, 1653. In 1701 Pitt brought the famous Diamond which he sold to the Regent of France, Philippe duc d' Orleans in 1717, and which now known as the 'Regent' is in the Louvre Museum in Paris. His grandson was the famous William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. Ency. Brit. Vol. 17, 1118 ; DNB, Vol. 15, 1233-35 ; (N. Calton, The Life of Thomas Pitt.)
- 131 RFSG (Diaries and Consultation Book, 1702, 12 ; HM, 122 ; for Pagoda see Appendix A.
- 132 *Ibid.* 38.
- 133 Srinivasachari says 25,000 rupees. History of the City of Madras, 77.
- 134 RFSG (Diaries and Consultation Book, 1702), 12 ; HM, 122, 77.
- 135 Biddulph, Pirates of Malabar, 52-53.
- 136 Norris Embassy, 21 ; Bruce, iii, 250 ; Wilson, i, 160.
- 137 Norris Embassy, 21 ; Bruce, iii, 258.
- 138 *Ibid.*, Bruce, iii, 265.
- 139 *Ibid.*, 47. William iii, was the English King.

- 140 *Ibid.* Second son of Thomas Norris of Speke Hall, Lancashire, by Katherine, DNB, Vol. 14, 589.
- 141 DNB, Vol. 14, 589.
- 142 Norris set sail in January 1699 but reached Panhala in 1701. The reason of his delay was because he landed at Masulipatam first in September 20, 1699 and planned to proceed to the imperial court from there. But soon he came to learn that this would be a difficult task and then again went to Surat from Masulipatam and from there to the imperial court. Norris Embassy, 112.
- 143 *Ibid.*, 311.
- 144 *Ibid.*, 313. Gold cabinet 'Finely wrought' containing 201 gold *mohurs*, a small pair of pocket screw-barrel pistols, great guns. There were two sets of presentation one set was of King William and the other was of Norris.
- 145 *Ibid.*, 314.
- 146 Content of reply is not known.
- 147 Norris Embassy, 326. But it is strange that Thomas Pitt from Madras remarks in his letter (December 1701) to John Haynes, Deputy Governor of Fort St. David on Norris that the latter 'had got Phirmaunds (*firman*) and God knows what, but as often contradicted'. (letters from Fort St. George 1700-1701, Vol. 10, 89). But I find no reference to such grant of *firman*. All that transpires from the account left by Norris is that he received from the emperor a '*saropa*' or robe of honour. Though the *firman*s were drafted remained unsigned. According to Dr. Sukumar Bhattacharya 'He (Norris) had not secured the much desired farmans from Aurangzeb....' The East India Company and the economy of Bengal from 1704 to 1740; 'The mission of Sir William Norris was, however, a complete failure'. Murshid Quli, 103.

## CHAPTER X

### ACQUISITION OF ZAMINDARI CUM COMMERCIAL RIGHTS BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

( 1698-1717 )

The century from Khurram's *nishan* in 1618 to Farrukhsiyar's *firman* of 1717 witnessed a slow but steady penetration of the East India Company into the economy of Mughal India, both commercial and agrarian. While granting some economic privileges to the English in 1618, Khurram prohibited the establishment of a factory at Surat. However, he allowed them only a rented house for residential purposes. Jahangir's *firman* of 1624 permitted them to establish a factory there for the first time. Three years later Prince Khurram issued a *nishan* to the English repeating the economic privileges granted by his father since 1624. In 1651 Prince Shuja, Governor of Bengal, first allowed the English duty-free trade there in lieu of an annual sum of Rs. 3000. In 1653 Shahjahan rejected the prayer of the English to establish a fortified position at Surat. But he ordered that the English were not to be troubled with any further demands anywhere else in the empire if they once paid usual customs at Surat, Broach or Lahari Bandar, i. e. at any two places. By this Shahjahan supported the *nishan* of Prince Shuja as regards duty-free trade in Bengal. In 1664 Aurangzeb granted all merchants (both Indians and Europeans) duty-free trade for one year. From 1665, the English had to pay 2½% customs. But in 1682, by his



*firman*, Aurangzeb increased the rate of customs all over his empire from  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ . After the war, the emperor reinstated the English with all privileges enjoyed by them before, i. e. the rate of customs decreased to  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ .

The period from 1698 to 1717 saw a momentous change in the character of the East India Company. During Aurangzeb's preoccupation in the Deccan, Prince Azim-ush-shan, as Governor of Bengal, granted the *zamindari* of three villages here to the English. By his *firman* of 1717, Farrukhsiyar granted further *zamindari* rights to them not only near Calcutta but also 5 towns in Madras, Divi island and 400 *bighas* of land at Surat on rent, besides the long coveted privilege of customs-free trade (in lieu of a fixed sum of Rs. 3000/-). Hence, while retaining its mercantile character, the East India Company also became a *zamindari* power in certain places of Mughal India.

#### I. The Bengal Nawabs and the East India Company :

The conclusion of Anglo-Mughal peace in Bengal (February 1690) paved the way for the return of the English to Bengal<sup>1</sup>. Aurangzeb instructed (23rd April, 1690) Ibrahim Khan, the *subahdar* of Bengal (1689-1697) to permit the English to carry on their trade free of customs in Bengal on an annual payment of Rs. 3,000 in lieu of customs<sup>2</sup>. But the failure of Ibrahim Khan to resist the rebellion of Sobha Singh, a *zamindar* of Cheto-Barda, worsened the state of law and order in Bengal<sup>3</sup>. This internal condition in Bengal was used by the English as a lever to strengthen their position there. Being afraid of possible plundering of their goods and effects, the European merchants prayed to Ibrahim Khan for his permission to fortify their factories. Ibrahim Khan ordered them to defend themselves. Taking advantage of this order, the English established Fort William in Calcutta, Dutch in Chinsura (later on named Fort Gustavas), and French in Chandarnagar (named Fort Orleans)<sup>4</sup>. Aurangzeb removed the indolent *Subahdar* Ibrahim Khan from Bengal. Prince Azim-ush-Shan,<sup>5</sup> the next *subahdar* of Bengal (1697-1712) on assuming the charge of government of Bengal in November

1697,<sup>6</sup> issued a *nishan* to the servants of the Company in Bengal in July 1698 allowing them to purchase the right of renting the three villages of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindapur from their respective owners on payment of Rs. 16,000.<sup>7</sup> The deed of purchase for villages was executed on November 9, 1698.<sup>8</sup>

The establishment of Fort William and the right of renting the villages definitely gave the English a secure foot hold in Bengal. Now it should be examined whether the Prince had any right to confer such power and responsibility on foreigners. Theoretically, the emperor was the supreme authority in such matters. The Provincial governors must take prior permission from the emperor before taking such an important decision. We have no evidence to assert that the Prince secured permission from the emperor and even if it had been secured later on it meant that the emperor recognised the right of the *subahdars* to grant *zamindari* right to the foreigners. But in the entire Mughal period from Akbar to Aurangzeb we do not find a single occasion when the emperor delivered such power and responsibility to the provincial governors. Therefore, this grant of the Prince to the English was absolutely an illegal act which the central authorities could annul. But in this case Aurangzeb then far away in the Deccan, did not take any action. It means either he was not informed of this Anglo-Mughal arrangements by his spies or he did not give much importance to this grant of the Prince.

Whatever might have been the case the grant of *zamindari* by the Prince in 1698 to the English was a fateful event in the history of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations. From the position of traders, the English secured the right to enjoy ownership of land in Bengal by depriving the indigenous owners of their property but also the right of administration and became co-sharer of rights and privileges with other Indian *zamindars*.

A change thus came over the character of the East India Company. This mercantile body now became a *zamindari* power in Bengal.

Things became worse, however, just after the death of Aurangzeb (March 3, 1707).<sup>9</sup> The inefficiency of the later Mughals failed to

check the growing importance of the English. Under the weak successors of Aurangzeb, the powers of provincial governors and local officers had been developing fast. The management of customs became worse day by day.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, though the English East India Company became *zamindar* and owned a fortified settlement in Calcutta their trade and commerce in Bengal failed to find any security.

In 1700 Murshid Quli Khan,<sup>11</sup> a distinguished soldier and an expert in revenue administration, was appointed as the *diwan* of Bengal to help the imperial *subahdar* and arrived in Bengal in December 1700.<sup>12</sup> The Khan was not favourably disposed to the English because he rightly realised that the East India Company's duty-free trade in Bengal resulted in heavy loss to the imperial exchequer. If Murshid Quli Khan, 'showed great indulgence to merchants of every description, he was jealous of the growing power of the Europeans' in Bengal.<sup>13</sup> Murshid Quli was 'certainly shrewder and wiser than the emperor or his *wazir* (Abdullah Khan) in as much as the former realised that acknowledgement of concessions and privileges like the possession of 3 riparian villages, and use of the mint would make the English too strong in the country'.<sup>14</sup> His officers increasingly tended to ignore the imperial *firman*.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the new Company in London<sup>16</sup> and Sir Nicholas Waite, President of their establishment in Bombay, wrote to Aurangzeb accusing the Old Company's servants of being thieves and confederates with pirates.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the servants of the Old Company definitely became discredited and their trade also was affected.

The death of Aurangzeb (1707) also alarmed the English and presented a fresh problem to them. They feared a revolution in the country and confusion in their business in Mughal India.<sup>18</sup> They were specially perturbed thinking of the fate of their commercial privileges granted by the late emperor. Would these privileges be confirmed by the new administration or would the Company be obliged to obtain a fresh *firman* from the new emperor? Again, the need of funds for the upkeep of their fortified settlements in Mughal

India led the English most probably to consider whether they could add some more adjacent territory to their existing settlements in Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindapur from where they could obtain more revenues.

Therefore, the servants of the Old Company thought it wise to approach the emperor Shah Alam Bahadur Shah<sup>19</sup> to obtain a *firman* for grants of territory and other commercial privileges. But the problem was how to obtain it. Sending an embassy to the imperial court to secure such territorial concessions would be the best idea cherished by Governor Pitt<sup>20</sup> (of Madras and later of Bengal). A very friendly relation had developed between Pitt and Shah Alam when the latter was in Southern India and was brought near to Madras in the course of his struggle with his brother Kam Bakhsh.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Pitt had very friendly terms with Ziau d-din Khan,<sup>22</sup> the *diwan* of the country of Chinapatam or Madras, whose uncle had been *wazir* and father-in-law was governor of Kashmir, and who had considerable influence in the imperial court.<sup>23</sup> Finding the moment opportune for sending an embassy, Pitt in 1708 arranged to send an embassy to the emperor. But soon Shah Alam withdrew from the South after defeating his brother and Pitt was also removed from his office. So the whole scheme for sending an embassy was dropped for the time.<sup>24</sup>

The negotiations for sending an embassy were revived in 1710, when Ziau-d-din Khan was appointed as *faujdar* of Hugli and admiral in the Bay.<sup>25</sup> When the present to be given to the emperor was ready and the Council at Calcutta was considering whom to send with the present as ambassador, the news came that the emperor had died at Lahore in 1712.<sup>26</sup> The usual dynastic disputes followed. By the end of the year, Farrukhsiyar seated himself on the peacock throne (11 Feb. 1713—Feb. 1719). Farrukhsiyar, like his father Azim-ush-Shan, was a traditional friend of the English in Bengal.<sup>27</sup> Therefore the English thought of securing from him more concessions, if possible, in territorial grants; besides trade privileges than before. In March, 1713 the President and Council at Calcutta wrote to Farrukhsiyar, desiring to send an ambassador and present to the

emperor. Referring also to the harmful action of the *diwan* Murshid Quli Khan, the staunch enemy of English trade in Bengal, the English requested the emperor to permit their trade in Bengal without any interruption by the *diwan*.<sup>28</sup> They also sent Khwaja Sarhad,<sup>29</sup> and Armenian merchant at Calcutta, who had personal acquaintance with the emperor, to the imperial court to enter into private negotiations with the Court. The present<sup>30</sup> to be given to the emperor was also sent with him. As a result, an imperial order arrived at Dacca in January 1714 forbidding Murshid Quli Khan to interfere with the English trade. At this stage, the Council of Calcutta began thinking seriously of sending an embassy with fresh presents.<sup>31</sup>

Accordingly, in the summer of 1714, an embassy was sent to Delhi consisting of John Surman<sup>32</sup> the leader, Khwaja Sarhad, Edward Stephenson<sup>33</sup> as the secretary of the embassy, and William Hamilton, as a surgeon of the embassy.<sup>34</sup> Two sets of presents were sent with the embassy. The first consisting of goods and rarities<sup>35</sup> valued at Rs. 1,03,472-11-4 was intended for the emperor. The second set valued at Rs. 1,08,248-11-3 along with a stock of wine and liquors were intended to present to the court nobles. The embassy was warmly received at Delhi in July 1715.<sup>36</sup>

## II. Grant of Firman (1717) to the English :

But this warm reception did not last long. It is clear from Surman's correspondence at this time, that the king was not thinking about them. 'We are.....preparing petitions to be delivered to his Majesty', he writes on August 4, 'hoping we shall do something for our honourable masters that has not been yet obtained'.<sup>37</sup> Obviously the English embassy was in a position of great disadvantage for pursuing their mission. On November 1715, the English delivered their petition to *Khan-i-Dauran*, the deputy *bakhshi* and the latter presented it to the emperor in December 1715.<sup>38</sup> The petition contained nineteen articles of which the following first eight related to Bengal, two related to Surat, six to Madras and three were general terms.

## (a) For Bengal :

1. The English were to be given a fresh *firman* confirming the previous *firman* of Aurangzeb, the *nishan* of Shah Shuja, Azam Shah (second surviving son of Aurangzeb) and Azim-us-shan, the *hasbu-l-hukum* of Asad Khan and other *sanads* and orders, allowing them duty-free trade everywhere in Bengal Presidency (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) in lieu of yearly 3,000 rupees paid as a *peshkash* in the imperial treasury of Hugli.

2. The English were to be permitted to rent thirty-eight riparian villages adjacent to Calcutta in addition to the three villages of Sutanuti, Calcutta and Govindapur which were given to them by Azim-ush-shan. They further suggested that the town of Calcutta should be renamed as Farrukhbandar, and other villages with the thirty-eight villages were to be united into a single unit or *pargana* to be called Farrukhabad.

3. In addition to the Company's settlements in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the English were to be allowed to settle at other places too. In Patna, they were to be permitted to use the house of Muhammad Muzaffar (deceased) for their residence.

4. The *Gomastas* ('Gomastoes') of the Company were to be given protection by 'Jemidars' (*Zamindars*) of those places.

5. The *diwan* of the *Subah* was to be content with a 'copy' of the *firman* 'under the Cozzys (*Qazi's*) seal and not insist on seeing the Original Phirmaund' (*firman*).

6. Three days a week were to be set apart at the Murshidabad mint for coining bullion of the English by 'taking their mintage only'.

7. The English were to be permitted to buy goods at Hugli without hindrance i.e. the *darogas* ('Drogas') permission would be 'sufficient to bring goods, from Merchant Houses to the Factory'.

8. The English chiefs of the factories in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and other places were to be allowed to issue passes for protecting their native agents from being molested in course of their buying and selling on behalf of the Company.

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(b) *For Surat :*

9. The English were to be allowed to trade at Surat free of customs at the payment of 'Certain yearly peeshcash' (*peshkash*) as in Bengal. The factory of Surat which was withdrawn due to 'injustice done' by the local Mughal authorities, could not be 'resettled without peculiar marks' of the emperor's 'favour' ; such as have been shown in Bengal etc. Therefore, the English were to be shown special favour of the emperor.

10. The English were to be granted a site of 4,00 *bighas* at Surat (outside the town) for building their factory, residence and garden because their present rented residence at Surat was 'gone to ruine' and they were 'unable to repair itt'.

(c) *For Madras and Coromandel :*

11. Money coined at the mint at Madras, though as fine as money coined at the mint at Surat, were to pay heavy 'discompt' (discount). So the 'Mutsuddys' (*mutasaddis*) of every Mughal *subah* were to be instructed 'forbidding that imposition for the future' and Madras rupees were to be allowed to pass current like those of Surat.

12. Five towns of Madras (Vizagapatam, Perwanna, Wooda Punda, Woodall-Terri and Maalcapour)<sup>38a</sup> were to be given to the English on a yearly rent of 4,862 rupees to be 'paid into the imperial treasury of Sitta Cole'.<sup>39</sup> It would be more convenient for the English if the latter were given 'Alipour, Dundepour, Jagarass and Cuperah' in lieu of 'Perwanna and Wooda Ponda' which were far away from the factory than these three.

13. The island of Divi (near Masulipatam) was to be delivered to the English at the yearly rent of 7,000 pagodas for making their settlement and also for the 'Great improvement off (of) the island'.

14. In return of the supply of 'all sorts of Ammunition, Cannon and Provision' to Aurangzeb during the latter's 'warr of Chingee' (war of Jinji)<sup>40</sup>, the English were given five towns (villages) of Madras as a reward. But these towns had now been seized by the local Mughal officials. Remembering the service rendered by the

English to Farrukhsiyar by means of supplying 'all manner of ammunition, provisions etc', in Hugli in his fratricidal struggle; the English demanded those places to be re-granted to them.

15. The 'Port of Cuddalore'<sup>40a</sup> which the English 'bought' at the request of Aurangzeb to prohibit the supply of 'Provisions and Ammunition' sending by his enemies against him through the port, in the war of Jinji; surrounding that port at present 'severall Jemidars' (*zamindars*) were troubling and molesting the English. Therefore, the English demanded that the Mughal ('*Mutasuddys*') of the place was to be instructed to help the English so that the latter might 'be able to punish those who gave' them 'any molestation'.

16. The English were to be given fresh *firman* confirming their former privileges of carrying on trade at 'Gulkhandah Golconda or Haidarabad) Carnatuck (Carnatak) country, Metchlipatam (Masulipatam) and Vizagapatnam' (Vizagapatam) free of customs and at Madras at the payment of yearly '1200 pagodas into the kings treasury'.

(d) *General Terms for the English in Mughal India :*

Besides these grants issued by Farrukhsiyar for each region, three more privileges for the entire Mughal empire were given to the English.

17. The English were to be exempted from the, 'farmaish<sup>41</sup> phowsdarry (*Faujdari*), Jemidarry (*Zamindari*<sup>42</sup>) and all other impositions.' They were to be allowed to carry on their commercial transaction 'with satisfaction and content'.

18. *Mutasaddis* of all Mughal ports were to be ordered to render help to the English ships in distress at sea and compelled to take shelter at ports 'by reasons of Stormes and Misfortunes'.

19. Protection given by the Mughal officials to 'severall off the Company's servants' particularly absconders or debtors of the Company was to be withdrawn and they were to be 'sent back to the Chief of the Factory'.<sup>43</sup>

Obstructed by bureaucratic system of administration at every step, Surman very soon realised how difficult it was to obtain an



imperial *firman*. Moreover, Khwaja Sarhad who accompanied the embassy persistently misled Surman as to the proper course of negotiations. The petition of the English, it appears, was delivered not to the *Wazir*, the only proper channel for request for *firman*s, but to *Khan-i-Dauran*, the Deputy *bakhshi*.<sup>44</sup> The English had been led to believe that *Khan-i-Dauran* was all powerful with the emperor and they expected that a petition presented by him would have been almost immediately granted.<sup>45</sup> At last after a long lapse of time and after the expenditure of much time and money, the English realised that in the Mughal court 'everything runs in its proper and set channel'.<sup>46</sup> At the beginning of November 1716 the English brought Sarhad to confess that their petitions must first go to the *Wazir* for his perusal and approbation.<sup>47</sup> On November 10 all petitions were submitted to the *Wazir*, Abdulla Khan, and the latter ordered the *diwan-i-khalisah* to carry them immediately to the emperor, to get them signed which was accordingly done.<sup>48</sup> Seeing the rapidity with which the business of the English proceeded, they were taken aback. 'We might have expected the wazir', the English observed, 'in whose power it was would have stopped our business on this occasion or caused many delays, the sure way to squeeze a sum of money which must have been very large. But he has behaved himself with far more generosity, our papers no sooner, reaching than they received despatch'.<sup>49</sup> The *Wazir* was, however, heavily bribed. Stewart testifies that 'as soon as the money was paid ( as bribe ), the Vizir (*Wazir*), and all his dependents, appeared as much inclined to forward their views, as they had hitherto been averse.....' and tried their utmost to obtain the imperial *firman*.<sup>50</sup> Rejecting the objections expressed by the imperial revenue department which says 'grant of this nature had no precedent, and was against the best interest of the empire',<sup>51</sup> the *wazir* on November 20, issued order to the Secretary's office for the preparation of three *firman*s incorporating articles in the petition. After completion of the task, on December 27, drafts of these *firman*s were submitted to Farrukhsiyar for his approval which he granted three days later. The whole month of January 1717 was taken for the preparation of

fair copies and for procuring imperial signature on these copies. On April 10, these were handed over to Surman by Sarhad.<sup>52</sup>

#### IV. Factors behind the grant of Firman :

Three principal factors were at work behind this grant of *firman* to the English by Farrukhsiyar in 1717: bribery, threat and by means of English physician's service to the emperor.

First. When Surman was trying to have the *firman* from the emperor, the agents of Murshid Quli Khan, the *nawab* of Bengal, who was a staunch enemy of the prosperity of the English commerce in Bengal, exerted themselves to thwart the measure and by their influence and bribery postponed the business for fourteen months.<sup>53</sup> At length Surman was advised by other members of his embassy to bribe a 'favourite Eunuch in the seraglio',<sup>54</sup> who had considerable influence on both the emperor and his *Wazir*. To their great surprise, as soon as the money was paid, Surman and his associates found the task was accomplished, i. e. the *firman* was obtained very quickly and without any further hindrance.<sup>55</sup>

Second. Surman told privately to the Eunuch to represent to the emperor and the *Wazir* the 'dangerous consequences' that would befall the Mughals in case 'of a further refusal of the English petition' by the emperor. He reminded him of the earlier plunder of Mughal ships in the Red Sea in 1695 by the English. This suggestion was readily listened to both by the *Wazir* and the emperor.<sup>56</sup>

Third. The service rendered by William Hamilton, the doctor attached to the mission in curing the emperor of a painful disease and this must have 'helped to create a friendly atmosphere' between the English and the Mughals.<sup>57</sup>

Besides, the factional rivalry<sup>58</sup> between Abdullah Khan and Husain Ali on the one hand Farrukhsiyar and the Sayyid brothers on the other pushed the general administration of the state from bad to worse.<sup>59</sup> Naturally an administration of this nature failed to consider the future effect of such grant.

This was, in fact, the first imperial *firman* granted to the English

in Mughal India allowing them duty-free trade in lieu of customary payment of 3,000 rupees *per annum*. This grant 'forms a landmark in the growth of the East India Company's importance in India's trade'.<sup>60</sup> Wilson made Abdullah Khan rather than Farrukhsiyar responsible for this grant.<sup>61</sup> Whether Farrukhsiyar was wholly or partly responsible that will be discussed afterwards. But the 'events demonstrated the personal dominance of the *Wazir*'<sup>62</sup> in the imperial administration for the latter rejected the objections expressed by the imperial revenue department. Murshid Quli Khan, not daring openly to oppose the imperial mandate, privately threatened the proprietors of the land that they would be punished in case they parted with their *Zamindari* to the English upon any terms that should be offered.<sup>63</sup>

But the dissension between Murshid Quli and the English openly ensued when a question arose, whether the English were entitled, under the privileges granted in the *firman*, to participate in the internal commerce of Bengal. The English maintained that they were so entitled. But the *nawab* insisted, that the immunity extended only to such articles as were either imported, or intended to be exported, by sea. The controversy became acute over the abuse of the *dastaks*. The imperial *firman* actually granted the English the right of issuing *dastaks* with the provision that the provincial government had the authority to check the *dastaks*. But the English were not prepared to allow the officers of the *Nawab* to inspect those.<sup>64</sup> Salt, betelnut, tobacco, and several others articles of general consumption, the *Nawab* says, were either farmed out in monopolies, or taxed with heavy duties. Therefore, if the English were allowed to trade in these articles, it would not only be a great injury to all the other merchants, but also be a 'considerable diminution of the public revenue'.<sup>65</sup> Again, Murshid realised that the 'acknowledgement of concessions and privileges like the possession' of 38 riparian villages adjacent to Calcutta in addition to the three villages of Sutanuti, Calcutta and Govindapur and 'use of the mint would make the English too strong in the country'<sup>67</sup>. In allowing the English to increase their

'pre-eminence' in the commercial sphere, Farrukhsiyar definitely committed a crime. But actually the *firman* granted by Aurangzeb in 1690 allowing the English to enjoy far-reaching economic rights in Bengal<sup>68</sup> and the *nishan* issued by Azim-ush-shan in 1698 allowing the English the rights over the three riparian villages of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindapur<sup>68a</sup> had already virtually conferred on the English significant political as well as commercial rights.

Dr. Sukumar Bhattacharyya opines that the *firman* of 1717 should be regarded as 'magna carta'<sup>69</sup> of the English trade in Bengal. Wilson remarks that it was a real diplomatic success of the English<sup>70</sup>. But at the same time it should be remembered that the *firman* of 1717 was only an extension of the *firman*s issued by Jahangir (1624), Shahjahan (1653) and Aurangzeb (1690) and also the *nishans* of Shuja (1651) and Azim-ush-shan (1698) respectively. Farrukhsiyar's *firman* was, therefore, not only a novel concession. He just confirmed the economic privileges and the rights confirmed the English by his predecessors. A close examination of some of the terms of privileges granted in the *firman*s and the *nishans* will clarify the position. The sovereign right to punish offending Englishmen through the normal judicial machinery of the state was given up and the Company's authorities in India were permitted to try them. By this self-denying ordinance of 1624 Jahangir allowed the English to be co-partners in the administration of justice in the empire.<sup>71</sup> Thus he allowed the English to become independent of the normal Indian administrative set-up and took the first-step in granting extra-territorial privileges to the English. This was supplemented by Shahjahan's permission to trade freely without any hindrance throughout the Mughal empire and giving them rights to recover their debts from the subjects of the Mughal empire in 1653.<sup>72</sup> Then, after a temporary eclipse caused by the Anglo-Mughal war, Aurangzeb restored to the English their former privileges by his *firman* of 1690. Their position was still further strengthened when in 1698 Prince Azim-ush-Shan, the subahdar of Bengal, issued a *nishan* to the English allowing them to purchase from the owners

the right of renting the three villages of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindapur. In this background the view of Dr. S. Bhattacharyya that the *firman* of 1717 conferred 'extraterritorial privileges'<sup>73</sup> on the English seems to be an overstatement of its importance. The process of granting extra-territorial privileges to the English had begun long before Farrukhsiyar. The *firman* of 1717 thus marked the culmination of this development.

Apart from commercial privileges, even with regard to territorial concessions i.e. with regard to *Zamindari* rights and possession of lands on rent, given by the *firman* of 1717, the way had been shown by Azim-ush-Shan's grant of 1698. By renting the three villages the Company became one of the *Zamindars* in Bengal.

The *firman* of 1717 gave the Company, in addition to the above three villages, the *Zamindari* of 38 more villages in Bengal. Further it also granted a site of 400 *bighas* at Surat and five towns of Madras and Divi island on a yearly rent. Virtually, therefore, the Company came to acquire *Zamindari* rights not only in Bengal but also in Surat and Madras. As *Zamindar* the Company gained a 'definite status to levy internal duty and customs on articles of trade passing through its districts and impose petty taxes and cesses on the cultivators...'.<sup>74</sup> Again, the Company became responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the areas concerned. Hence, the need of policing the *Zamindari* led the Company to provide for the maintenance of armed guards. Thus both in economic and administrative affairs of the areas concerned the East India Company now came to occupy the position of a country *Zamindar* in its relations with the rulers of the country.

Hence, the nature of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations completely changed after 1717. This new relation with the English put the local administration in Bengal in an awkward position. Though the *firman* is silent about the *dastak*, the *Hasb-al-hukm* touched upon this point. The wording of the *Hasb-al-hukm* about *dastaks* makes the future situation anomalous. 'A list taken from under the seal of the chief of factory and that, according to it you *sunnuds*, under your own seal' made the Company's *dastaks* ineffec-

tive unless the latter were checked and verified by the provincial officers. When the English demanded from Shujauddin Muhammad Khan (1727-1739) the right to issue *dastaks* for private trade according to the *hasb-al-hukm*, the rupture broke out.<sup>75</sup>

Again the English, by means of this *firman* obtained legal authority to rule certain places in India and they did not allow the Mughal Government to interfere therein. Finding that Calcutta was fast developing, the 'governor' of Hugli wanted to send a *Qazi* and some 'officers of the Police' to Calcutta for the administration of justice among the Indians living under the English flag' in 1699. But the move was foiled by the Company's officials who bribed the *subahdar*, Prince Azim-ush-shan, to restrain the governor.<sup>76</sup>

Thus the year 1717 was an important landmark in England's quest of trade in Mughal India that had begun unofficially from 1583. For the English the quest was long and troublesome, with alternate periods of despair and hope. As far as the Mughals were concerned, they displayed successively and in the long run lack of wisdom in yielding to pressure. The initial stages of trading voyages and despatch of merchants and ambassadors failed to move the Mughals. But a policy of force and piracy drew concessions from them through *firman*s and *nishans* which placed the East India Company in a stronger position than the Indian merchants. Commercial privileges came to be first granted in 1618 and continued off and on in various degrees down to 1717. Extraterritorial rights and permission to build a factory was first given in 1624 and a fort in Calcutta in 1697. The rights of a *Zamindari* were first given in 1698. These rights were destined to affect the political and economic stability of the empire adversely. And now in 1717 the *firman* of Farrukhsiyar not only granted customs-free trade privileges but added to the *Zamindari* of the East India Company thereby darkening the future of the country still further. Thereafter the stage was set for the growth of the Company as a territorial power, first in Bengal and then in other part of India.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 HB, ii, 386 ; Stewart's Bengal, 543.
- 2 *Ibid.*, Stewart, Appendix, VI, and VIII.
- 3 E.A., i, 147. The rebellion of Sobha Singh (1695-96) even in the life time of Aurangzeb showed how helpless the Mughal government was in Bengal (*Riyaz-us-Salatin*, tr. Abdus Salam, 229-31). If the Dutch navy could not arrest the progress of the rebellion (*Ibid.*, 234), the *subah* of Bengal would have been conquered by the rebel forces. Aurangzeb effected an administrative change by dismissing Ibrahim Khan, the Governor of Bengal, and placing his grand-son Azim-ush-Shan as the Governor of Bengal. HB, ii, 394 ; Bruce, Annals, iii, 250, 265.
- 4 EA, i, 139-140.
- 5 Prince Muhammad Azimuddin, second son of Bahadur Shah, later entitled Azim-ush-Shan. L.M. 382.
- 6 HB, ii, 397.
- 7 SB, 8 ; Wilson, Old Fort, i, 39 ; Bruce, Annals, iii, 250, 265.
- 8 Wilson, Fort William in Bengal, i, 40-41.
- 9 L.M, 1.
- 10 The conditions of land customs that existed at this time are well described by Khafi Khan, 'In most parts of the imperial territory the *faujdars*, *jageerdars* by force and tyranny now exact more than even from the traders and poor necessitous travellers. The zamindars also seeing that no enquiries are made extort more on roads within their boundaries than is collected on roads under royal officers. By degrees matters have come to such a pass that between the time of leaving the factory or port and reaching their destination goods and merchandise pay double their cost price in tolls'. E & D, vii, 248. The conditions of sea customs were not better than the conditions of land customs mentioned above.
- 11 He was born of a Brahmin family, but was purchased by Haji Shafi Ispahani, who brought him up like his own son. MU. iii, 75. Sir Jadunath remarks that Murshid was a 'South-Indian Brahmin' HB, ii, 40. But Abdul Karim in his 'Murshid Quli Khan and His Times' (15) expressed his doubt saying that 'there is no evidence'.
- 12 HB, ii, 397.
- 13 Salimullah, *Tarikh-i-Bengla* (tr. Gladwin), 81.
- 14 SELMI, 363-64.
- 15 SB, 17.
- 16 In 1689, by the Act of British Parliament a new or English East India Company was established in contradistinction to the Old or London Company which broke the latter's monopoly of India trade. EA, ii, Pt. ii, viii.

## FOOT NOTES

- 17 EA, ii, Pt. ii, viii ; Bruce, Annals, iii, 337.
- 18 Murshid Quli, 125.
- 19 Muazzam, the second son of Aurangzeb, ascended the throne under the title of Bahadur Shah I. He died in 1712. L.M. 133.
- 20 See Chapter IX (130n) for further information about Pitt.
- 21 Prince Kam Baksh, the fifth and last son of Aurangzeb was born on March 7, 1677 and died in 1700. L.M., 61.
- 22 Ziau-d-din was Lord High Steward of Shah Alam's Household. SB, 18.
- 23 EA, ii, Pt. ii, X.
- 24 *Ibid.*, i, 184 ; ii, 337-346.
- 25 *Ibid.*, ii, xii, Murshid Quli, 31.
- 26 L.M., 133.
- 27 EA, ii, Pt. ii, xiii.
- 28 The Diary and Consultations of the English Council in Calcutta, 17th August, 1711, Murshid Quli, 145. Murshid Quli wanted to grant the English *Sanad* and promised to procure an imperial *firman* for economic privileges in lieu of Rs. 52,000 (Murshid Quli, 148).
- 29 Khwaja Israel Sarhad was an Armenian merchant and was well acquainted with English and their affairs. He had been to England at one time with his uncle, the celebrated Khwaja Fanus Kalantar. EA. ii, pt. ii, xv.
- 30 The present consisting of cloth, silks and brocades, fire arms, spirits, perfumes, glassware, clock-work and other toys. EA, ii, Pt. ii, xiv.
- 31 EA, ii, Pt. ii, xiv.
- 32 John Surman, the son of John Surman, born probably in London, was a coach-maker. EA. ii, Pt. II, xvii. Dictionary of National Biography and Encyclopaedia Britanica are strangely silent on John Surman.
- 33 Edward Stephenson, born in Cumberland in 1691, was elected a writer in the Company's service on November 24, 1708.
- 34 EA, ii, Pt. ii, xix.
- 35 *Ibid.*, xxi
- 36 *Ibid.*, xxxix
- 37 EA. ii, Pt. ii, 94 ; Stewart, 398,
- 38 *Ibid.*, 65-68.
- 38a Except Vizagapatam and Malcapour ( i.e. Malkapur, Lat. 74°30', Long, 17°30', now in Maharashtra ) other places are difficult to be located,
- 39 Sitta Cole, for Sikakul or Chicacole, a town in the Ganjam district. Lat 18°18' Long. 83°58'
- 40 Jinji, a town now in the South Arcot district was besieged by Aurangzeb from 1690 and taken on 7th Feb. 1698. Aurangzib, v, 89,
- 40a Cuddalore is now in south Arcot district. Lat. 80°45' Long. 12°45'.
- 41 *Farmaish*, requisitions to furnish goods for the emperor or high officials.



- 43 *Faujdari*, fees or dues collected by the faujdar ; *Zamindari*, revenue demand from the land.
- 43 EA, ii, Pt. ii, 59-65 ; Stewart, 398. S. Bhattacharyya has given a photostat copy of the same ; ( East India Company and Economy of Bengal, Appendix. )
- 44 EA, ii. Pt. ii, 75 ; Stewart, 398-99 ; Satish Chandra, 120.
- 45 EA, ii, Pt, ii, 79.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 153.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 140 ; Stewart, 399-400.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 140-141 ; The *diwan-i-khalisah* was Ihtisham khan.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 142-143 ; Stewart, 400,
- 50 Stewart, 399-400. .
- 51 EA, ii, 48.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 53 Murshid Quli, 164. Dr. Karim says that the Bengal Council were still negotiating with Murshid Quli Khan,
- 54 See Glossary,
- 55 Stewart, 399-400.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 400. Similarly while negotiating with Prince Buland Akhtar in 1709 for the right to trade free of duty in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the English had threatened to retaliate at Hugli if their petition was not accepted. EA, i, 297.
- 57 SB, 19. Hamilton was rewarded by the emperor for his service. Among the presents given to Hamilton on this occasion were models of all his surgical instruments, made of pure gold, Stewart, 397n ; LM, 30.
- 58 The real cause of this rivalry was power politics. For details see Dr. J. N. Sarkar's 'A Study of Eighteenth Century India', i, 73-81,
- 59 Satish Chandra. 120.
- 60 *Ibid.*,
- 61 E. A., ii, 48.
- 62 Stewart, 401-402,
- 63 *Ibid.*, 402.
- 64 Murshid Quli, 188.
- 65 *Ibid.*
- 66 *Ibid.*, 402,
- 67 SELMI, 363-63. The terms of the *firman* has been discussed in detail in Sarkar's Aurangzib, v, 274.
- 68 Details have been discussed in Chapter IX,
- 68a See p, 173 ante.
- 69 SB, 29.
- 70 E. A., ii, XLVI,
- 71 See Chapter vii ante for details.

## FOOT NOTES

72 See Chapter viii ante for details.

73 SB. 29.

74 Wilson, Old Fort William, i, 115, Fn. 2.

75 K. K. Dutta, Survey of India's social life and economic condition in the eighteenth century ( 1707-1813 ), 46 ; Murshid Quli, 170.

76 Orme, History of the Military transaction of the British nation in Indostan, ii, BK, vi, 17-18.

## CHAPTER XI

### RESUME

From the year 1583 the English were visiting the imperial court and trying to establish and develop commercial relations with the Mughal empire. The foregoing survey of the historical materials, points to certain striking conclusions. It endeavours to trace the stages of development of the Anglo-Mughal commercial relations and their impact on political-economic condition in India.

The reign of Akbar did not occupy any important position in this survey because the commercial activities of the English during this time were very insignificant. The foundation of East India Company took place in London towards the end of the reign (31 December, 1600). Long before the establishment of the Company, however, Ralph Fitch, an Englishman visited the court of Akbar and his account on the wealth of Mughal India excited the cupidity of Englishmen. But no commercial relations could be established till the reign of Jahangir.

The reign of Jahangir saw the arrival of many Englishmen as representatives of the newly formed East India Company among whom Captain Thomas Best was the first who claimed to have secured an imperial document from Jahangir in 1613. But it was full of omissions and it lacked the signature of the emperor. But most scholars, Indian and European, have accepted the document as valid<sup>1</sup> and therefore also fixed the date 1613 as the date of establish-

ment of first English factory at Surat ignoring the inherent defects of the document. The arrival of Best, was also a colourful event in the history of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations for another reason. The Victory of English navy under Best over the Portuguese navy removed the fear of the Mughals from the latter.

Sir Thomas Roe's mission to the court of Jahangir proved to be a 'costly failure'.<sup>2</sup> He was in fact, one of the principal architects of the destruction of Indian mercantile activities. It is interesting that he realised that it would be an 'error to seek garrisons and land wars in India'<sup>3</sup> in order to compell the Great Mughal to grant preferential commercial privileges to the English. So Roe devised a plan to which the attention of the scholarly world has not yet been drawn by any writer. Roe sought to destroy Mughal India's sea-borne commerce in the Red Sea region by means of piratical activities against Mughal junks by the English ships.<sup>4</sup> By this means Roe thought of compelling the Great Mughal to issue a royal *firman* granting the English privileges as they desired. So our future masters started as pirates. In fact, the observation of Roe for not forming a land army in Mughal India was the keynote to the policy followed by the English Company in India till 1664 when the authorities of Surat factory formed a small army to resist Shivaji's assault on Surat.<sup>5</sup>

Roe also attempted to strengthen and fortify the place where the English lived and kept their imported goods and purchased articles for export. But his attempt proved to be a failure.<sup>6</sup> Though the English records often use the word English 'factory' in Mughal India, actually the imperial consent for the establishment of English 'factory' by the English themselves could not be obtained before 1623.<sup>7</sup> In all probability the English used the word 'factory' to denote their dwelling place where also they stored their goods. Roe even endeavoured 'to exempt the English from control on the part of the local governor even of Prince Khurram himself'.<sup>8</sup>

The reign of Shahjahan witnessed the deterioration of port administration of Surat. This must be attributed to the practice

of farming out of the office of the *mutasaddi*. The bidders made rash promises of fabulous amount to be given to the royal exchequer in their bid to secure that lucrative post being not sure whether they would be able to collect of that amount to fulfill their promises. Again Shahjahan's grant of *firman* to the English allowed the latter to build 'ware houses' at Surat for the first time in Mughal India. These 'ware houses' later formed the foundations of fortified settlements.<sup>9</sup>

During the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) the empire was rarely free from a state of war. After the sack of Surat in 1657 first by the soldiers of Dara and then in 1664 by Shivaji, Sir George Oxinden urged the Directors of the Company in London the necessity of finding a place like Bombay outside the Mughal dominion in which adequate measures might be taken for the defence of the Company's servants and property from such attack as well as from the constant petty exactions imposed by the local officials. Why Aurangzeb did not occupy Bombay, a fine and natural fort, particularly when his image as a mighty emperor was known in every direction, is a matter of further research.

Gerald Aungier, who succeeded Oxinden as President at Surat in 1669 threw his whole energy in the task of transforming Bombay into a shipping and trading station fully equipped for defence. While Aurangzeb devoted his whole energy in subduing the Deccan, the English established themselves in Bombay and Madras practically as a territorial power. To quote Charles II's own words 'the principal advantage' the English proposed to themselves by obtaining Bombay was the 'enlargement' of their own territories and dominions.<sup>10</sup>

The Mughals had no definite commercial policy by which the prosperity of vast masses could be augmented. On the contrary granting privileges to the foreign traders and securing money from them was the order of the day. Prince Shah Shuja as a *Subahdar* of Bengal established the practice of carrying on private trade on his own account. Mir Jumla, Shaista Khan and later on Prince Azim-ush-shan indulged in private trade through their agents.<sup>11</sup> Azim-ush-shan

monopolised the trade by purchasing merchandise at the place of production or at times at the port of embarkation and then selling it to the merchants at a high price. This was called the *sauda-i-khas* or private trade of His Excellency.<sup>12</sup> Naturally, as a result of this policy, the people suffered and on the other hand, there grew an *entente* between the *nawab* and the English. But Aurangzeb took a stern measure against this policy pursued by Azim-ush-shan. The emperor not only threatened him by letter but also reduced his rank by one thousand.<sup>13</sup> Defeating the English ignominiously in 1688 Aurangzeb did not try to drive the English out of his empire. It is not possible to predict what would have been the future history of India if Aurangzeb concentrated his efforts in driving the English out of Mughal India. But handicapped by lack of a naval force, pre-occupied with the Marathas and failures in protecting pilgrim ships, Aurangzeb had no other option than conciliating a naval power like the English with a view to securing their help in keeping the sea clear of pirates. These events eventually led the English to transform themselves quickly from a commercial organisation to a political power with considerable military strength. The fortified factory in Calcutta subsequently known as Fort William was built in 1700.

So long as the imperial Government had some effective power and authority they kept a watchful eye upon the activities of the English, who were then insignificant traders dependent for their existence on the privileges which the Mughal permitted them. Whenever the interests of the country appeared to be injured by these privileges, remedial measures were promptly taken. Illustrations for this are to be found in Aurangzeb's dealings with the Company in 1688. But the conditions were completely changed just after the death of Aurangzeb (1707). In 1707 Aurangzeb returned to Ahmadnagar defeated, exhausted, disgusted and disgraced from his Deccan wars and died leaving after him a scene of quarrels, disorganisation and dissension.

Farrukhsiyar by his famous charter of 1717 allowed the English East India Company in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to carry on duty-

free trade. For a long time after 1717 the company considered the remission as their inviolable and sacrosanct rights and endeavoured, if possible, to extend it to its private servants for inland trade. This the servants of the Company were successful in asserting and maintaining by force as the Company grew in with the lapse of years after Murshid Quli, Alivardi and the battle of Plassey.

The above survey of Anglo-Mughal commercial relations throws valuable light on some aspects of the commercial policy pursued by the Mughals from Akbar to Farrukhsiyar.

Akbar generally maintained a liberal commercial policy and allowed every merchant irrespective of caste and nationality, to take part in commerce in Mughal India. Tempted by the unusual profit of foreign commerce and anxious to safeguard the interest of pilgrim traffic, he developed the Mughal sea ports, particularly Surat, a chief outlet of Mughal foreign commerce. But the English could not establish commercial relations with the Mughals during the reign of Akbar, and the latter's general commercial policy was to encourage the Indians as well as the Portuguese merchants.

During the reign of Jahangir, when Anglo-Mughal commercial relations came to be established, the English sought to obtain preferential treatment from him. But the Indian merchants of Surat, who must be given due credit for their clear grasp of the situation,—backed by Prince Khurram and *mutasaddis* of Surat, resisted the undue demands of the English. Surprisingly enough, Khurram rose to the occasion. He succeeded in impressing upon Jahangir that the commercial activities of the English would bring the economy of Mughal India to the brink of disaster. But Jahangir most probably desired to use the English to counter the Portuguese menace. The emperor, therefore, followed a dilly-dallying commercial policy until he was compelled by the English policy of force to change his commercial policy in favour of the English.

When Prince Khurram became emperor Shahjahan he gradually changed his earlier anti-English policy. After the abortive indigo

monopoly (1633-35) and the equally unsuccessful effort to form an *entente* with the Dutch against the English, he had to eat the humble pie and pursue henceforth a definitely pro-English commercial policy, which proved to be unfavourable to the interests of the Indian merchants.

Aurangzeb's commercial policy was characterised by a two-fold discrimination: between Hindus and Muslims on the one hand and between Indians (including Hindus and Muslims alike) and the Europeans on the other. The latter enjoyed greater privileges than the Indians who were evidently put to a great disadvantage. Again Aurangzeb was the first and last Indian ruler who brought the English down to their knees. However, he re-instated them in their former privileged position. The great Mughals, some of their sons, governors and *mutasaddis* prosecuted trade to fulfil their personal ambitions which led them to treat the Indian merchants trading in the same regions as their rivals.

Farrukhsiyar's *firman* virtually confirmed the earlier commercial privileges of the English and even extended the privilege of customs-free trade to whole of Mughal India. It also gave the English the *Zamindari* of 38 villages in Bengal in addition to the earlier one of three. There was none in the Delhi Court to realise the grave economic implications of these concessions. Murshid Quli in Bengal proved to be wiser than the authorities in Delhi. The survey will show that Mughals had hardly any consistent commercial policy during the greater part of this period, and when one existed it proved to be bankrupt and not conducive to the interests of the country.



## FOOT NOTES

- 1 For discussion see Chapter V ante.
- 2 Embassy, i, XI. xiii.
- 3 EA, i, vii.
- 4 For discussion see Chapter VII.
- 5 In 1664 when Shivaji plundered Surat, the Englishmen of the factory were given military training. This may be indicated as the first instance when the English gave a shape of land army.
- 5 EA, i, 196 ; EQ, 283 ;  
For discussion see Chapter VI ante.
- 6 EFI, 1618-27, 37 ;  
For discussion see Chapter VI ante.
- 8 EQ, 284.
- 9 Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, 'Colonial Policy' e. f. G. L. Beer.
- 10 Williamson, 256.
- 11 HB, ii, 402.
- 12 Raiz-us-Salatin, 214 ; Tarikh-i-Banglah, f, 24b.
- 13 HB, ii, 403.

## APPENDIX—A

### *Ready reckoner of value of coins*

#### *I Rial of eight :*

The name of real or rial of eight, actually should be described as pieces of eight rials ; the Spanish rial was described as pieces of eight rials. The Spanish rial was worth slightly more than six pence in English money. Eight rials was equivalent to about 4 shillings and 6 pence, or practically 2 rupees.

#### *II Pagoda :*

Pagoda, new (gold) = 3 – 3½ rupees

Pagoda, old (gold) = 4 – 5 rupees or over

(A *hun* was a gold coin, forming the usual currency in Bijapur and Golkonda and Hindu territories further south and called *Pagoda* by Europeans)

#### *III Mahmudi :*

The *mahmudi* was a silver coin, circulated extensively in Western India, worth 30 pice or 2/5 rupee.

## APPENDIX—B

### *Ralph Fitch's route from London to India*

From London (12 Feb. 1583)—Birra—Felugia<sup>1</sup>—Babylon—Basora<sup>2</sup> (August 6, 1583)—Ormuz<sup>3</sup> (early in September)—Diu (November 5, 1583)—Daman—Basain—Tana—Chaul (10 November, 1583)—Goa (20 November 1583).<sup>4</sup>

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1 Felugia or Feliga stands on the Euphratus.

2 Newberry's plan was that he wanted to go by boat from Basora to Bushire on the Persian coast, and thence proceed by land to India ; but he was obliged to abandon the idea owing to the non-availability of a suitable interpreter. ETI, 2.

3 This island of Ormuz or Hormuz stands at the entrance to the Persian Gulf from the Gulf of Oman, is thirteen miles in circumference, and presents an extraordinary appearance from the sea. The Great Albuquerque captured the place in 1507-08 in pursuit of his policy of destroying the commerce carried on by the Muhammadans with India. The British and Persians recaptured Hormuz in 1622. This was, in fact, very important trading station through which Indian goods were re-exported to the different places of Middle East and Europe.

4 Ryley, 48 ; ETI, 2 ; Macpherson, 75.

## APPENDIX—C

*Date of Mildenhall's arrival at Agra is nowhere stated*

It is assumed that the news of Queen Elizabeth's death (March 24, 1603) took six months to reach Mildenhall at Lahore through English merchants of Levant Company who often travelled between London and Constantinople. Mildenhall received the news of the Queen's death about September 1603 and then wrote to Akbar at Agra. So his letter took at least three weeks, to reach Akbar. According to Mildenhall 3 weeks or 21 days<sup>1</sup> required for messengers to reach Agra from Lahore.

3 weeks

In reply to Mildenhall's letter Akbar instructed the Governor of Lahore to make arrangements for Mildenhall's safe arrival which further required

3 weeks

Allowances (for preparations of writing and sending the letters)

2 weeks

Total : 8 weeks

So we can tentatively infer that Mildenhall arrived at Agra by the end of November 1603.

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<sup>1</sup> ETI, 55.

## APPENDIX—D

*King Charles I's letter to Shahjahan*

Dated January 1637

“Our monarchy had always been honoured and preserved by justice, which we equally administer, both at home and abroad, and the king doubts not but that herein the Moguls ‘resolution doth also concur’ it being the foundation on which their correspondence and intercourse has been built. Yet neither the power nor the justice of any Prince can prevent his subjects from offending ; he can only ‘disfavour the offences and punish the offenders’, when in his power. Such is now the case, for king charles has bee ninformed by merchants trading in Surat under his commission and the Mogul’s protection that ‘an infamous piracy’ has been committed by some called English under English colours, but who they are is not yet clearly proved. The king is persuaded that ‘none that bath not withdrawn himself from our allegiance’ dare so offend, and thinks fit to let the Mogul know that he absolutely disfavours both the offence and the offenders, and will use his authority and the best means to have them apprehended and punished, ‘that the damages of your subjects may by then bee repaired. Our merchants have already discovered some supposed to be their factors’ who are now, with the king’s leave, being prosecuted in the High Court of Admiralty, where justice shall be done, and use made of such evidence as is sent from ‘those parts’. King Charles expects and hopes that the Mogul will in return see that justice is done to the English subjects under his protection, and not suffer the innocent to be punished for the guilty ; that for private interests the Mogul will not discourage so great and hopeful a trade, whereby much profit and advantage may grow to his Crown ; and that he will use his royal authority that the English merchants may have recompense for what they have suffered, and in future be secured in their persons and estates, ‘as by compact they ought to bee’. In that case all friendly offices shall be shown on all occasions to his subjects’<sup>1</sup>

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1 E. B. Sainsbury, Court Minutes of the East India Company 1635-39, 217-18.

Date of the letter is not mentioned.

This letter has been discussed in Chapter viii.

## APPENDIX—E

*Comparison of and comments on the terms of 1623  
( unconfirmed ) and the Agreement of 1624*

November 10,<sup>1</sup> 1623

'The future regulation of the  
trade<sup>2</sup>

For the better conservation of amitic, peace and free commerce of trade with the English, who have justlie complained of sundric abuses and hindrances thereunto for the passed, it is agreed and granted unto Thomas Rastell, President, with his Councell, for and in the behalfe of that nation, that they shall freelie for ever hereafter enjoy the benefitt of these grants and priviledges hereunder written.

1. They ( i.e. the servants of the Company) shall bee permitted free trade as well in the ports of Surratt, Cambaya, Goga, Sinda and Bengala as

September 7, 1624

'THE AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE SURAT  
AUTHORITIES.

A contract of Peace made with Rastell, Captain of the English nation, which we for the future do oblige ourselves exactly to observe.

1. It is agreed that the English shall freely trade at their pleasure in the ports of Surat, Cambaya, Baroch, Goga, Bengala, Scynda, and

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1 27th of the month Mahram (Muharram) in the year of Mahmad 1033.

2 Van Den Broeck gives the date of the agreement as the 13th while Emanuel Butta, Captain of the *Blessing* says that it was signed on the 12th p. 344. A rough summary of the English demands is given in Hague Transcript sr. i, vol. vi, No. 200.

in all other citties and places within the dominions of Jangere Paudshah, without prohibition of any commodities to bee brought in or exported out of the kingdome, neither limitation confininge them either unto places, times or quantities where, when, or how much of any merchandize, Gould or rials they shall so bringe in, carrie away or transporte from place withing or without the aforsaide dominions.

2. There shall no governours, customers, or other officers, for or in the name of the kinge or prince engroce unto themselves in the way of merchandizinge such commodities as the English doe usually bringe and sell in these parts, more than what shall bee properlie needfull for use of the kinge or prince their circares.
3. The house of Cojah Hassen Allee in Surratt, with the garden, Stable, and other conveniencies thereunto belonginge, shall bee lett them to lease for the tearme

in other the cities of the kings dominions, and that they shall have liberty to import and export all sorts of goods, excepting currall (coral) for one year, we promising not to question them either touching the quantity of time, be it silver or gold or any other goods whatsoever they shall export from Hindustan for their own country, excepting as we said currall for one year, which being expired the import of that also shall be permitted.

2. That it shall not be lawful for either the Governor, the officers or Droga (Darogah) of the custom house upon the pretence of the king princes occasion to require the same (sale?) of any goods unto them, intended for their own proffitt, onely what shall be indeed necessary for the kings use may be taken.
3. That the house belonging to Coja Hassan Allee, wherein they formerly lived, paying rent, shall be continued unto them.

## APPENDIX

of seven years imediatelie followinge the date here of, they payinge for the same the annull rent of ( blank ),<sup>3</sup> and after that time expired shall have their lease renewed or som other house of the like conveniencie given them for their monie.

4. They shall have free licence either for the buyinge or buildinge in Surratt, Barroch, or Gundivee of four friggats a yeare, with libertie of their ports, rivers and dockes for the sheathinge or carreninge of their shipps, and that no matterials or workmen for performance thereof be denied them for their money.

Blank

5. Neither cartes nor boats in a sufficient number shall att any time bee denied or prohibited for transporte of their goods either to or from the shipps, or any water forbidden them upon pretence of any duties to bee paide to the present or future governours of Urpall (Olpad), whoe shall cease to demannd or exact the same any more here after.

4. That whatever carts shall be needfull unto the English for bringinge of their goods from the maryne of the towne Swally and for transport of goods from the river Tappee and other places, as also water and provisions for their ships. expences, they shall be furnished of them without molestation or prohibition ( Sic ) by the Governors of

<sup>3</sup> The amount of rent is mentioned (EFI, 1624-29, 321). as Rs. 14000/- per annum.



- Woorpar,<sup>4</sup> either present or to come.
6. The actions of any other christian nation of whatsoever, whether damageable unto foreigne Muscellmen or the subjects of this kingdome, shall bee no way imputed to the English for them to be liable.
  7. The exacted radares (i.e. *rahdari*, charge for guarding a road) or duties at Unckliseare (i.e. Anklesvar), Daita, Bayara (i.e. Viara, on the Surat—Burhanpur Rd), Kerka,<sup>5</sup> or any other places of tne kingdome, shall for ever hereafter bee remitted them.
  8. There shall henceforwards no violence bee practized by assaultinge their house, people or servants ; and if in defence of themselves
  5. That if any other christian shall offend any man belonging to the kings port, the English are not to be questioned for it, but if any Englishman do commit any offence they are answerable for it.
  6. That no land cuntoms at Baroch (Broach), Broadera (Baroda), Uucleaster (Anklesvar), Kurkeh, Berchaw (Varia or perhaps Viara). places belonging to this king shall be demanded of them. nor any molestation for matter of Jagatt (Jakat, Road cesses) offered. But Baroch, being a port towne, though they ship not their goods but bring them thence by land, the customs of that are payable ; and order to be given that the English receive no trouble in the particular.
  7. That nobody shall enter forcibly into the English house ; but if there accurr any accident of concequence, the captain shall repair to

<sup>4</sup> Olpad, to the northwest of Surat ; Swally was within the jurisdiction of the Governor of Olpad.

<sup>5</sup> It is not found on modern maps.

anie maime or (sic) manslaughter should in such case happen to any subject of this kingdom the English shall bee free of any punishment or fine whatsoever for the same.

9. There shall not any of their caphilaes be hindred in their despatch or stopt in the way upon any pretence whatsoever; but the difference that might cause the same shall bee referred for triall and accomodation twixt their cheefe and the Governour, etc. in Surratt.
10. They shall bee permitted to bee instant possessours and masters of their owne goods and rarities whatsoever at the present landinge thereof, which no Governour, customer, or any other officer shall deteine in custome house or enforce from them at their own rates, but suffer them quietlie and speedilie to house them into their owne warehouses, where and nowhere elce shall bee the place of recourse for their marketts.
8. That their Caffelas (*qafila*, a caravan) shall pas freely through the country without molestation; and if any man have any just exception to make against them, he is to appear before the Governor of Surrat and the English Captain, that they be (ing?) made therewith acquainted it may be decided.
9. That whatsoever goods or varietyes be brought in by the English, neither the Governor of Surrat nor the Droga of the Custome house shall detain them, or endeavour to put a price upon them in any place of their own, but at that very instant they shall cause them to be delivered to the owner that they may be conveyed to the English house, wether whosoever had occasion to buy may repair.

the Governor and accomodate the difference.

11. They shall quiet lie and freelie exercise their owne religion, weare armes for their defence. and execute justice on their owne people, though the offence bee donn to Musselman.
12. Their brokers shall have free libertie of speech before any Governor, to deliver the mind of the English, without threats, punishments or interruption; whoe shall not be abused or dailie find, imprizoned, or detained by every inferiour officer upon slight and triviall occasions.
13. And for the avoidinge of all future delaies in Custom
10. That the English may have the free exercise of their own religion. And in case any quarrell or difference happen between Englishmen, their captain shall decide it. And in case any quarrell or difference arrise betwixt an Englishman and a Musselman, the captain shall repair to the Governor and they together examine the cause thereof, if the fault shall be proved to be in the English man, his punishment is referred to the Captain; if in the Musselman, the Governor is to punish him; but if the Captain do refuse to do justice on his people that offend, the Governor may.

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## APPENDIX

house, the goods, rials and other treasure, jewells, etc., of the English as well that which they importe as whatsoever they shall exporte, either in or out of the aforesaide dominions, shall forever hereafter bee free of the accustomed duties which hath bin (been) usuallie paide by that nation in Surratt ; with condition onlie that for customes that might arise from the date of these presents till the finishing of this Monzoone (which we limit to the '60 (1st ?) Narouse) they shall pay unto the kinges circare (*sarkar*) the full somm of 30,000 m (ahmudis) and from that time forwards shall give a constant rent of 40,000 m (ahmudis) per annum ; provided that the first payment of the aforesaide 30,000 m (ahmudis) bee forborne them till the usuall time of their next shipps arivall out of England for the following rent of 40,000 m (ahmudis) aforesaide they bee also privileged from that day 12 month imediatelie followings for its payment, and so

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from yeare to yeare, to bee so constantlie paide in consideration of the duties of all such goods, jewels, treasure etc, as they shall yearelie bringe in or carrie forth as aforesaide, which shall bee not stopt, hindred nor delaied in custome hous or elcewhere, neither their people searched upon any pretence whatsoever, but they shall despose of their goods either too or from shippes with freedom both for time and convayance, either when or which way themselves shall thincke fitt.

14. In case of mortalitie hapninge either into the cheefe himselfe or any substitute of his, or whatsoever other degree of the English in generall. within the aforesaide territories, the estates, whether in goods, money, jewells or other of the partie or parties so deceased shals remain to the surviving cheefe and the rest of his nation, without any ceasure or other impediment thereunto whatsoever; and in case of no English lefte

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11. That if the chief or any other person belonging to the English chance to decease in any part of the kings countrey, those goods that be in his custody, whether money, jewells, or other goods appartaining to the English, shall be taken into the charge of any other English that shall be present no man elce may have to doe with them: But if it should so happen that all the English in the countrey doe dye, so that no one

livinge to demand and possess the estates of the deceased as aforesaide, then shold the governour, cazie, etc., of the towne or place where such goods are so remaininge take them by account into their owne safe custodies before witnes and reserver the same to the use and behope of such other English as shall hereafter com to challenge and possess the same.

15. Lastlie, the passed or present stoppage of the kinge, prince, or his subjects junckes shall not bee imputed to the English as a crime or offence, seinge that the want of justice upon sundrie abuses, outranges, prohibitions, and losses sustained hath justlie as not able longer to supporte them; wherefore they shall not bee liable to the surrender of any parte or parcell of whatsoever goods or treasure which hath bin either taken or delivered them out of any of the aforesaid junckes towards satisfaction of the damages, losses and hindrances prementioned; neither shall the cheefe or any other of the

A. M. C. R.—14

remaines to take those goods left in his custody, in that case the Governor and Cozzee ( Qazi ) of the place, takeing an exact accompt of them, shall cause them to be safely housed ( and ? ) kept untill some other English shall appear to receive them, in fine, to the English they aae to be restored.

12. That at all times in case of necessity, wheither in harbour or at sea, you shall administer to the kings ships all friendly assistance to your power. And as the English are to pretend no right or claim to any ship appertaining to the kings post, nor to any goods on board them, so if the English in their own revenge do assaultt or revenge or surprise any ship belonging to the portugalls, Dean ( Decemes ? ) or any other their enemys, the king's people shall lay no claim, nor in any wise take part with any such their enemies.

English nation bee hereafter calld in question for the same or any restreints or punishments inflicted or their persons ; with an absolute remittance of all thinges never hereafter to bee questioned'.

(Copy 3pp. Endorsed 'A copie of the articles of agreement betwixt the English and the Guzerratts upon the seisure of their junckes, anno 1623').<sup>6</sup>

(Here ends the draft of 1623).

13. That whensoever the captain or any other English shall have occasion to go on board their ships, as an acknowledgement of the Governor he shall desire his lycence and not goe without it whilst this our friendship continueth. So doing, no person shall be denied or molested ; only in way of acknowledgement of the Governors authority they shall always on their going on board acquaint him therewith.

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14. That from whomsoever the English have any just de-

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<sup>6</sup> BFI, 1622-23, 309-312.

mands within the province of Gujarat, satisfaction shall be made them justly. And for whatsoever they shall have returned unto the merchants according to their severall writeings they are to receive requittance. And as concerning their request we shall remitt our petition unto the court for the grant of His Majesties phyrmaund. And for what shall be due unto them in any other province of the kings dominions from any person, their Vackeels (*Wakil*, an agent) at court is to acquaint the king thereof with (sic) and for recovery thereof to petition for His Majestys Phyrmaund. Given the 25th day of the moon Shahur Noor Allee, in the 25 years of the reigne of Shaw Jehangeere'.<sup>7</sup>

Saif Khan (Governor)

Qazi Mahmud Kasim

Jam Quli Beg (The Captain of the Castle)

Virji Vora

Is-haq (Beg)

Ali Hasan

Nazmuddin

Ali Quli Sadr

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<sup>7</sup> BFL, 1624-29, 27-30.



Ali Quli Mahmud  
 Mahmud Sufi  
 Raza  
 Jalaluddin Mahmud  
 Mahmud Salih Tabrizi  
 Naziruddin  
 Mahmud Ali Ispahani  
 Ali Mashadi  
 Saadat Yar  
 Mutawalli Mahmud  
 Mahmud Ibrahim  
 Hazi Abdul Nabi  
 Hari Vaisya

#### Comments

Jahangir did not want to conclude any agreement with the English, hence, the draft of that year (1623), prepared by the English became invalid. The English resorted to piracy again and eventually an agreement was concluded between Jahangir and the English in 1624. Jahangir issued a *firman* to them. As there are some differences in the clauses of the two documents these are placed side by side for the sake of analysis and understanding of the attitudes of the Mughals.

1. The English wanted in 1623 to carry on their trading activities in the ports of Surat, Cambay, Goga, Sindh and Bengal and also wanted 'free trade.....without prohibition of any commodity'. But in the agreement of 1624, though prohibition was imposed on the trade in coral for one year, Broach was included along with the above ports, and thereby indicating that the Mughals wanted the extension of English trade in India.
2. The draft of 1623 states that the Governor and the Officers or *Daroga* of the customs house were not to import any goods (which the English usually brought and sold in Mughal India),

for their own trade except those really needed for the use of the emperor or prince. In the agreement of 1624, the above terms were accepted by the emperor.

3. In the draft of 1623 the English demanded the lease of house belonging to Khwaja Hasan for 7 years and on the expiry of that period, either its renewal or some other house for their accomodation. But in the agteement of 1624 the English were allowed the house (to 'be continued unto them') permanently. Thus the English could legally start their factory there for the first time in Mughal India.
4. Free licence for the buying or building of four frigates in the Mughal ports with necessary men and material, was sought in the terms of 1623. In spite of vacillation, Jahangir did not finally permit this in the agreement of 1624.
5. In 1623 the English urged that arrangements for transporting their goods from Mughal ports (named earlier) to inland markets were to be provided by the Mughal authorities without any hindrance. This was accepted in 1624.
6. In 1623, the English demanded that they were not to be responsible for any injury inflicted on Mughal subjects by any Christian nation. But in the agreement of 1624 the English were made responsible 'if any Englishman do commit any offence'.
7. In 1623 English urged perpetual remission of *rahdari* or duties (i. e. land customs or charges for guarding a road) at 'Unkleswar (i. e. Anklesvar), Daita, Bayara (i. e. Viara, on the Surat-Burhanpur Road), Curka or any other places of the kingdom'. This was accepted in 1624 cxcept at Broach where the customs were 'payable'.
8. The claim of the English to punish Mughal subjects for any wrong inflicted by the latter on themselves was rejected not only in 1623 but also in 1624. Now on the contrary, the English were to lodge complaints to Mughal authorities for such wrongs.
9. In 1623 the English sought the right of unhindered passage of their caravans on the way, and also requested joint settle-

ment of any dispute between the Mughals and the English. This was accepted in 1624.

10. In 1623 the English wanted that their goods on unloading from ships, should not be detained or 'enforce from them' by the Mughal officials at their own rates but that they were to be allowed to place those goods in the residence of the English from where the Mughal officials could purchase these if needed. These provisions were accepted in 1624.
11. The demand of the English in 1623 for complete religious freedom was granted in 1624. Disputes between the English and the 'Mussalman' subjects (the case of the Hindus was not mentioned at all) were to be decided jointly by Mughal judicial authorities and the English. Thus the latter came to share judicial responsibility in Mughal India in 1624. But the request of the English in 1623 for permission to 'wear arms' was explicitly rejected in 1624.
12. The right of 'free liberty of speech' of the (Indian) brokers of the English, and the right to exercise their daily duties without any hindrance by the Mughal officials claimed in 1623 was not included in 1624.
13. The wording of the document (1623) is extremely complicated and the comments made here are based on those of Sir William Foster's observations. To avoid the usual delays in the Customs office, the English demanded in 1623 the remission of all customs at Surat on both imports and exports. The demand of the English for perpetual remission of customs was actually a long standing one. Sir Thomas Roe had demanded it for the first time in 1616 on an annual payment of Rs. 12,000. But this was considered insufficient.<sup>1</sup> Now 'goods were freed from land tolls, and an arrangement was made by which a sum of 40,000 *mahmudis* (Rs. 16,000/-) was to be paid in lieu of all customs at Surat both outwards and inwards.'<sup>2</sup> Further the English also demanded in 1623 that they were not to be

1 Embassy, 210, 470.

2 EFI, 1622-23, XV.

searched 'upon any pretence whatsoever'. These terms were not included in 1624. In 1651 the English got the customs-free trade in Bengal only in lieu of Rs. 3,000/-.

14. In 1623, the English wanted that the law of escheat was not to be applied in the event of the death of an Englishman in Mughal territory, his property would be kept in the charge of any other Englishman present there ; but if all Englishmen in the country died, the Governor or the Qazi of the place should prepare an inventory and keep it in their custody pending the arrival of some other Englishmen there to receive it. In 1624 Jahangir accepted this.
15. In the last section of the draft of 1623 the English claimed that they were not to be held guilty for any past or present plunder or detention of Mughal ships as such action was due to various abuses and losses suffered by them. Neither were they to be asked to make good the loss nor would they be questioned for the same. In 1624 this was accepted and in addition to that, the English undertook responsibility of assisting i.e, protecting Indian ships by their navy at the ports or on the sea.<sup>3</sup>
16. The rejection of the draft of 1623 by Jahangir was followed by English plunder of Mughal ships in 1624. The English came to know this even before the Mughal authorities at Surat and, to escape the latter's vengeance, at once left the harbour on their ships secretly. Hence the *firman* of 1624 imposed a restriction on the English to prevent a similar contingency in future.
17. Though the clause was absent in 1623, the English demanded in 1624 that their 'just demands' in Gujarat were to be satisfied by the Mughal authorities there and in return they would pay back the dues of Indian merchants. The English would also send their 'petition' to the imperial court for the 'grant of His Majesties phyrmaund' (i.e. *firman*). Their *wakil* in the court was to 'acquaint' the emperor about the affairs of the English at other provinces and would try to secure emperor's order 'for recovery' of any dues from the Indian merchants.

<sup>3</sup> Future events show that the English did not observe this clause properly. See for details Chapter VIII.

## A P P E N D I X—F

### *Nurjahan's Commercial Relations with The English*

Nurjahan played a very important part in the history of Anglo-Mughal Commercial relations. But contemporary sources like Persian Chronicles are totally silent about Nurjahan's Commercial activities. No light has yet been thrown by scholars on Nurjahan's Commercial relations with the English. An attempt has been made here to show that Nurjahan's influence was one of the factors that led Jahangir to grant the *firman* in 1624 to the English.

Nurjahan wielded behind the *pardah* an almost irresistible influence over her 'imperial consort'.<sup>1</sup> Nurjahan's power and influence was undeniably very great in the Mughal empire. At the same time Nurjahan was much interested in trade and commerce. She invested considerable amount of money in trade with the Red Sea ports.<sup>2</sup> With the help of her brother, Asaf Khan, She carried on extensive trading operations there. The Queen had junks of her own, which regularly plied between Surat and Red Sea ports laded with articles of India.<sup>3</sup> But the detention of Mughal junks in the Red Sea waters by the Portuguese, created a lot of trouble and danger for her cargo going out of India. Mughal naval power was too insignificant to face the Portuguese challenge. Hence, Nurjahan 'was anxious to send her goods out on English ships<sup>4</sup>, escorted by powerful English navy. Naturally the Queen sought to foster her relations with the English.

What was the position of the English then? Their relation with Prince Khurram, then the Viceroy of Gujarat, was bitter. By dint of his position; Khurram enjoyed fairly independent authority in Surat port, the chief trading centre of the English trade in Mughal

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1 EFL, 1618-21, vii.

2 Pant, 164-165.

3 EFL, 1622-23, 81, 203.

4 Pant, 165.

India. Khurram raised a wall of opposition against the English commercial activities. He discouraged the 'new comers' i.e. the English and in this task he was ably assisted by Zulfiqar Khan, whom he appointed as the *mutasaddi* of surat port. Thus the position of the English became 'precarious' in Mughal India.<sup>5</sup> Staying at court for long, Roe might have realised that, however well-disposed the emperor himself might have been, there was another person whose good will they must secure, viz., Nurjahan.

Roe, therefore, must have sought to come into contacts with Nurjahan. English records reveal that in this effort he was successful. Nurjahan granted Sir Thomas Roe an interview and Roe promised to visit her.<sup>6</sup> Whether the meeting at all took place or not is not known from the contemporary records. But it is evident that a private commercial understanding between Nurjahan and the English was established, and Roe was 'fed with promises' and his demand of trading privileges received full support from her. Thus his 'hopes rose high in accordance'<sup>7</sup>

After this, Nurjahan's relation with the English began to develop very fast. She 'desired to be the protectresse of the English interest, in Mughal India, and she further agreed to look after the English, so that they were not 'bothered or wronged' by the imperial officials.'<sup>8</sup> Nurjahan ordered Asaf Khan to punish the defaulters and debtors of the English.<sup>9</sup> By this Nurjahan practically provided safeguards to the English to the extent that they did not incur financial losses at the hands of debtors and defaulters and thereby rescued the commercial prospects of the English in Mughal India. She even wanted to keep English merchandise in her own custody to ensure that they got fair price.<sup>10</sup> Roe exultingly wrote

5 Purchas, i, 572 ; ETI, 114.

6 Roe and Fryer, 120 ; Purchas, i, 572.

7 EFI, 1618-21, vii.

8 Roe and Fryer, 120.

9 Purchas, i, 572 ; ETI, 114.

10 *Ibid.*

to the Surat factors in 1616, 'Nurmahal (i.e. Nurjahan<sup>11</sup>) is my solicitor and her brother (Asaf Khan) my broker'.<sup>12</sup>

On Roe's complaint against Khurram, Jahangir once chided the Prince in the presence of all courtiers. If the above incident is examined in the context of Nurjahan-English commercial entente, one would not be surprised in detecting Nurjahan's hand behind the curtain. The cumulative effect of all this indirect evidence is to support the inference that Nurjahan induced Jahangir to grant the *firman* to the English in 1624.

It would also follow from the above, that much of the success achieved by the English was due to Nurjahan's generosity to them. While she needed assistance of the English in her commercial ventures her help also was instrumental in securing suitable and essential commercial privileges for the infant East India Company.

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11 In 1616 Jahangir announced that Nurmahal Begum to be called Nurjahan Begum.

12 Purchas, i, 572.

## APPENDIX—G

*List Of NISHANS And FIRMANS Issued To The  
East India Company : Details In Body Of The Book*

1. *Nishan* issued by Prince Khurram in 1618 (p. 81)
2. *Firman* issued by Jahangir in 1624 (p. 119)
3. *Nishan* issued by Prince Shuja in 1651 ( p. 132)
4. *Firman* issued by Shahjahan in 1653 (p. 137)
5. *Firman* issued by Aurangzeb in 1680 (p. 150).
6. *Firman* issued by Aurangzeb in 1684 (p. 157)
7. *Nishan* issued by Prince Azim in 1698 (p. 180)
8. *Firman* issued by Farrukhsiyar in 1717 (p. 180)



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## GLOSSARY

- Amin —A revenue officer to investigate and report on revenue.
- Bakhshi —He 'was an official of a high rank.....in charge of registration of a body of troops and had to pay them' (Ency. Islam, i, 600). But it would be incorrect to describe him as 'Pay master' of the forces only. Virtually he was the head of military department and secretary for war. His influence extended beyond his own department and he enjoyed significant prestige.
- Banian —The word Banian really only applicable to the *vania* or Hindu traders of Gujarat.
- Covado —A measuring unit varying much locally in value in European settlement not only in India but in China etc. It is a corruption probably an Indo-Portuguese form of Portuguese Covado, a cubit or ell.
- Darogah —A Superintendent of the Custom-house appointed by the *Mutasaddi*. There was another Darogah of the mint.
- Diwan —The Chief Revenue Officer under the Mughal system of administration.
- Eunuch —A castrated male.
- Firman —A mandate, a command or patent from the sovereign.
- Faujdar —An officer of the Government who was in charge of *Chakla* and combined civil and military functions.
- Gomastah —A native agent under the Company or its servants who purchased goods from the producers.
- Harem —Applied to the women of the family and their apartment.

- Kotwal** —Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and Civil Officer rolled into one.
- Nazim** —A Viceroy.
- Qazi** —A Judge, tried cases and delivered judgements.
- Nishan** —An order issued by the Prince.
- Parwana** —A warrant, an order from the high Mughal nobles such as the Nawab.
- Peshcash** —Tribute ; a fine or present to the ruling power on receiving an appointment or assignment of revenue, or on the renewal of a grant or the like.
- Ryot** —(Corruption of raiyat) A subject but specially a cultivator of lands.
- Subahdar** —Governor of a subah or province.
- Sanad** —A grant, a charter, a patent : a document conveying rights.
- Waqianavis** —He was the King's public intelligencer and was a check on the powers of the Governor of *Subah* and other high officers.

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

The book indicates the unknown history of the role of the Indian merchants as diplomatic negotiators in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries and their attempts to exploit both the Mughal administration and the English E.I.Co. for the accomplishment of their own economic interests.

Some grants on which the English E.I.Co. based their claim in India was not really granted by the Mughals.

This book is a practical guide to the students of history who want to find the process of how a commercial organisation becomes a political power

In the words of Prof. A. L. Basham this would form a very useful monograph for all students of the period.

The book as Prof. K. S. Lal remarks 'exhibits maturity of thought and painstaking efforts.'

In a letter I.C.H.R. expressed the view that the book becomes 'a historical monograph of a high quality.'

*With a foreward :*

*by*

**Dr. J. N. Sarkar M.A., Ph.D.**  
formerly Professor and Head of the  
department of History, Jadavpur  
University, Calcutta

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*Jacket design by*

*Subodh Das Gupta*

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Picture of the jacket based on an old steel engraving

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