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THE AGE OF REFORM
AND
LIBERAL EXPERIMENTS IN BRITISH INDIA BY
LORD BENTINCK AND LORD DALHOUSIE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Dilip Kumar Chattopadhyay
December, 1974

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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August 8, 1974
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Dedicated to
The Most Revered Srimat Dadaji

PREFACE

The purpose of the present thesis is to trace the experiments of liberalism in Indian politics undertaken by Lords Bentinck and Dalhousie, against the setting of the "Age of Reform." It will show how the impact of such liberal experiments moulded Indian ideas and consciousness during the 19th century, usually called the "seed-time" of Indian nationalism.

The writer expresses his deep debt of gratitude to Professor Dr. A. Stanley Trickett for his constant encouragement and valuable guidance in the preparation of this study and in its eventual fruition. Mrs. Elizabeth Laird of the Gene Eppley Library deserves sincere thanks for her ungrudging assistance in procuring through inter-library loan most of the works and sources used in this volume. For consulting the journals in the Byron-Reed Collection, the writer had to use the services of the Omaha Public Library. Last, though not least, Mrs. Barbara Kirchmann, a friend and associate, greatly favored the present writer by the typing of the entire manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

THE AGE OF REFORM

The Age of Reform (1830 to 1870) serves as a perspective against which one may study and analyze reforming principles as they were applied by Lord William Bentinck (1828-35) and Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) during their tenure as Governors-General in India. The Reform Era followed in the wake of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions of the eighteenth century.¹ The total effect of these changes stirred the people considerably and subjected them to violent convulsion in every sphere of national life.

With the death of George IV (1830), William IV succeeded to the English throne. A new Parliament was eventually elected. Revolution had already raised its ominous head all over the European continent (especially in France, Italy, Germany and Belgium).² This wave of Revolution reached England too, and caught the imagination of her people, who increased

¹E. L. Woodward, The Age of Reform, 1815-70 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 52-86, 88-90. Hereinafter referred to as Woodward, Reform.

²G. M. Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century and After (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 227-30. For an idea about the "Condition of the Working Classes," cf., The Observer (London), May 16, 1830, p. 4.

their clamor for political reform. As the people had hardly any love for the traditional views, they demanded a new view of things. The Reform Bill (1832) failed to assure representation to the masses of people and most artisans belonging to the proletariat class were denied any share in the political power. However, as an outcome of this Act, the political control of England was shared by the landed aristocracy and the emerging industrial magnates.³ A spate of public and social welfare measures followed, one after another, the passage of the 1832 Reform Act. Incidentally, the dissatisfaction with the Reform legislation led to the rise of a popular movement, best expressed after 1837, in the Chartist Movement. This asked for reforms (1837 on) for universal adult suffrage, voting by secret ballot, removal of property qualifications for, and payment to members of Parliament, equal electoral districts and annual elections. Though these demands were not immediately met with, the eventual growth of a liberal and democratic spirit paved the way for their ultimate accept-

³To Macaulay, the Reform Act was a historical necessity if England wanted to avoid revolution and bloodshed. Cf., John Clive and Thomas Pinney, (eds.), Thomas Babington Macaulay: Selected Writings (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), Intro. XVIII. Hereinafter referred to as Clive and Pinney, Macaulay. G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), pp. 619-39. cf., N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), pp. 173-202. Hereinafter referred to as Gash, Politics.

ance.⁴ During the early years of the Victorian Era (1837 onwards), especially in the 1840s, cheap and efficient postal services (followed by the introduction of telegraph and telephone at a later date) along with the opening of Railways and Canals and a better network of roads, the new ways of transport and communication revolutionized the social and economic life of the country. The Public Works Department was re-organized and the Public Health Services (Act of 1848) was modernized during the period under review.⁵

The Age of Reform is primarily associated with the doings of Palmerston (1809-65), Cobden, Bright, Peel,⁶ Gladstone and Disraeli amongst others. Political barriers throughout the land were gradually breaking down. By the 1850s,⁷ the old Whig and Tory labels began to give way. Thus, great political changes appeared imminent. The Parties developed belief in the laissez-faire concept advocated by Adam Smith in

⁴R. K. Webb, Modern England from the Eighteenth Century to the Present (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1968), pp. 247-249. Hereinafter referred to as Webb, Modern England. Cf., Woodward, Reform, pp. 133-34, 137-39.

⁵Webb, Modern England, pp. 220-21, 213n, 263-66, 288-89. Cf., Woodward, Reform, pp. 41-42.

⁶H. W. C. Davis, The Age of Grey and Peel, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), pp. 292-301. "The Reform Act unleashed and afforded opportunities to the more active forces in English political life," cf., Woodward, Reform, p. 90.

⁷J. W. Dodd, The Age of Paradox (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1952), pp. 15-20.

his The Wealth of Nations (1776), which supported free-trade and argued against the Old Mercantile Theory.⁸ This is illustrated through the repeal of the Corn Law (1846) and of the Navigation Act (1849)--that are generally regarded as milestones in British liberal experiments. This indicated beyond doubt that there would be no government interference at any level of socio-economic growth.⁹ J. S. Mill thought that "people should be left alone to die." But, then, "nature teaches us to survive," and that explains why Social Darwinism gained potency in the 1860s. Herbert Spencer and Samuel Smiles also belonged to this school of thought.¹⁰

During the Victorian Era, a new group of people occupied prominent places in the society. The advantages and opportunities flowing from commercial privileges gave these people wealth and prestige in the altered political set-up of the day (i.e. Rothschild). Constantly to the First Great War, (1914-18) the old aristocracy experienced a declining influence. The newer group of people, however, was felt to be less

⁸Gash, Politics, pp. 173-202. Cf., E. Halevy, History of the English People in the 19th Century, translated from the French by E. I. Watkins, (6 Vols.; London: E. Benn, Ltd., 1951) IV (Victorian Years), 166-67, 290. Hereinafter referred to as Halevy, Victorian Years.

⁹Halevy, Victorian Years, IV, 133-36, 273-77. Woodward, Reform, pp. 124-25, 365.

¹⁰A. Briggs, The Age of Improvement (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965), pp. 450-52. Woodward, Reform pp. 543-46, 573-76.

than fully appreciative of traditional values. During this period, the concept of civic virtues steadily developed. The general outlook and attitude of the Victorians was that they should try to live up to their responsibility to doing "good" in the society. Thus, a new spirit of dedication developed with the result that a newer view "if we don't change with time, we stagnate," began to be universally accepted. This almost sounded like a Rotarian chastisement.¹¹

Against this liberal and thus, radical philosophical background, one has to evaluate the reforming attitude and activities of Lord Bentinck and Lord Dalhousie as Governors-General in India.¹² Apart from the concept of "laissez-faire," liberalism of the period aforesaid was marked by a combination of utilitarian emphasis on good laws and administration, and a growing concern for Representative Institutions and Civil liberties. From a review of both Bentinck and Dalhousie's work and ideals, one may measure the extent to which liberalism flourished between the early 1830s and the late 1840s. As statesmen imbued with the practical spirit of reforms in

¹¹Based primarily on Dr. A. S. Trickett's Seminar Lecture, History 963, University of Nebraska at Omaha, October 22, 1973.

¹²James A. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion (2 Vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1958), II, 140-41. Both Bentinck and Dalhousie may be described as protagonists of the utilitarian doctrine, which was, to some extent, modified in the 1850s, vide E. Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 249-50. Hereinafter referred to as Stokes, India.

the political and administrative set-up, both the Governors-General had some dedication to utilitarianism, but were chiefly motivated by the laissez-faire principle. In fact, their attitudes towards their respective administrative jobs in India may be appreciated from their professed personal philosophies. In his letter to Jeremy Bentham, Bentinck said: "I shall govern in name, but it will be you who will govern in fact."¹³ Bentham, the un-crowned Philosopher-King of India's millions, advocated enlightened despotism for all India.¹⁴ On the other hand, Dalhousie's role in India "had been really that of a King, one who acted for himself and who came directly into contact with the people."¹⁵

Although he belonged to the conservative school, Dalhousie had to demonstrate more sympathy and favor with liberal measures of reform. In some specific sense, he also might be said:

to stand in the line of the Utilitarian Succession, the

¹³Great Britain. Parliament. British Sessional Papers, 1852, XXXII, 159-60: "Evidence of Sir C. Trevelyan to a Select Committee," June 21, 1853. Hereinafter referred to as B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, etc. Cf., V. Cohen, J. Bentham (London: The Fabian Society, 1927), p. 8.

¹⁴J. Bowring, ed., Works of Jeremy Bentham (10 Vols.; Edinburgh: W. Tait; London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1843), X, 490. For the role of the Utilitarian reformer see P. Spear, India, Pakistan and the West (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 95. Hereinafter referred to as Spear, India.

¹⁵Editorial on "Death of the Marquis of Dalhousie," The Times (London), Dec. 21, 1860, p. 10. Hereinafter referred to as "Death of Dalhousie," The Times (London).

strong authoritarian reformer, the enlightened despot, that both Bentham and James Mill had thought the ideal type for the government of India. 16

Dalhousie's utilitarianism, characteristic of his age and time, conformed to a bold aggressive reasoning with which a man of affairs could undertake to solve some burning political problems of the day.

¹⁶For Dalhousie's Utilitarianism, cf., Stokes, India, p. 249. Also J. Baird, Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1911), p. 410-11. Hereinafter referred to as Baird, Private Letters.

CHAPTER II

EARLY CAREERS OF LORDS BENTINCK AND DALHOUSIE

Bentinck as Governor of Madras (1804-7) and in the Continent (1808-14)

If against the background of socio-economic metamorphosis of Britain, we place the periods of the Indian Governments of Lords Bentinck and Dalhousie, we may be in a position to trace the evolution of their reforming ideas and efforts, and the story of their fulfillment, though in an altogether different national setting.

A review of the early career of Lord Bentinck prior to his arrival in India may be helpful for a study of his later career. Born on 14 September, 1774, William Cavendish was the second son of the third Duke of Portland, William Henry Bentinck.¹ He entered the Army in 1791 as an ensign in the Coldstream Guards. Later, he served in the Scottish Greys--the 11th Dragoons, the 18th Foot and the 20th Dragoons. In 1795,

¹Alexander John Arbuthnot, "Lord William Cavendish Bentinck (1774-1839)," Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sir L. Stephen and Sir S. Lee (22 Vols.; London: Humphrey Milford, 1920-21), II 293-94. Hereinafter referred to as Arbuthnot, "Bentinck," D.N.B. II.

Bentinck became an A.D.C. to King George III with the rank of Colonel. He was a witness to the battles in Italy from 1799 to 1801, after which he went to Egypt.

Owing to his claims to blue blood, Bentinck did not have to make much effort to gain political positions. In his twenties, he was assured of a Parliamentary seat. When he was not yet thirty, Bentinck was appointed Governor of the Madras Presidency under the East India Company (1803).² His involvement in the Mutiny of the Sepoys at Vellore (1806) brought him into disrepute, and led to his recall to England the next year. Between 1808 and 1814, Bentinck was variously connected with different European events. He commanded a Brigade during Sir John Moore's retreat to Corunna. Later, during the closing stages of the Peninsular War, Bentinck was employed on the eastern Spanish coast. Then as a minister at the Court of Sicily, he sought to introduce the principles of the British Constitution there (between 1811 and 1814) against the wishes of the reigning Queen and her Courtiers, but this proved abortive. It is recorded in history that Bentinck's project for Sicily was opposed by the Duke of Wellington among others.³ About 1814, he issued two Proclamations in Genoa which fore-

²"Death of Lord William Bentinck," The Morning Chronicle (London), June 21, 1839, p. 5. Also see the obituary notice in the Annual Register for the year 1839 (London, 1840), pp. 344-45. Cf., Arbuthnot, "Bentinck," D.N.B. II, 293-94.

³W. Napier, History of the Peninsular War in the South of France from 1807-1814 (5 Vols.; New York: Worthington Co., 1890), III, 437.

shadowed by almost 50 years, the founding of Italian unity, and thus caused embarrassment to his Government. He finally left Sicily in July 1814. A decade later (1825), prior to his return to India, Bentinck was raised to the rank of General.⁴

His success in convincing the Home Government that he had been unjustly treated during his first assignment in India led to his appointment, in July 1828, as the Chief Executive in the Company's Services. Compared to Bentinck's earlier acquaintance with India and her people, Dalhousie was a stranger to the Indian scene, when he joined the Company's Services as its Governor-General early in 1848. We should evaluate the doings and achievements of both these British Indian statesmen in succeeding chapters.

Dalhousie's Early Days in Politics in England

Parallel to Lord Bentinck's career on the Continent (1808-14), prior to his Indian assignment in 1828, Lord Dalhousie's early life presents an equally interesting study. Like Bentinck, James Andrew Ramsay, Marquis of Dalhousie, also had a claim to noble heritage. His father, George, was made

⁴John Rosselli, "Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily (1811-14)," p. 50, cited in the American Historical Review, Vol. 63 (October, 1957), 182-83. Cf., Arbuthnot, "Bentinck," D.N.B. II, 294.

Baron Dalhousie in the Peerage of the United Kingdom (Aug. 1815), and after serving in various capacities, became at the end of his public career Commander-in-Chief in India. His mother combined with "great natural gifts an unusual variety" of accomplishments. From his parents, Dalhousie inherited those qualities which laid the foundation of his character. About him, when he was barely eight years old, his mother predicted: "If it pleases God to spare him, he seems to be a heaven-born judge." Unfortunately, the mother did not live long enough to see the realization of her dream as she died in 1853.

Dalhousie's brilliant academic career at Oxford ended abruptly due to the untimely death of his elder brother. Here his contemporaries were Lord Canning and Lord Elgin, both of whom became Viceroys of India in succession after Dalhousie. In 1835, Dalhousie contested from Edinburgh at the general election and lost. But he was returned a member of Parliament from East Lothian in 1837. However, he entered the Lords at his father's death in 1838,⁵ and figured prominently in the debates there. He was a member of the General Assembly of the

⁵W. W. Hunter, The Marquess of Dalhousie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), pp. 22-23, 25. Hereinafter referred to as Hunter, Dalhousie. Cf., "Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), Dec. 21, 1860, p. 10. Baird, Private Letters Intro. viii-x. Cf., Alexander John Arbuthnot, "James Andrew Broun Ramsay, Marquis of Dalhousie (1812-1860)," Dictionary of National Biography ed. Sir L. Stephen and Sir S. Lee (22 Vols.; London: Humphrey Milford, 1920-21), XVI, 690. Hereinafter referred to as Arbuthnot, "Dalhousie," D.N.B. XVI.

Church of Scotland. In early 1843, Dalhousie was appointed the Captain of Deal Castle. Later, in the same year, he became the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, under Mr. W. E. Gladstone, and became its President in succession to the latter in 1845. While reviewing the railway question of the day (1845-46) at the Board of Trade, Dalhousie gained insight into the railway business. Though his scheme remained a paper-proposal merely, this experience proved invaluable to him later, when as Governor-General of India, he worked to initiate the construction of railroads there.⁶ On him also devolved the duty and responsibility of defending Lord Peel's Corn Law policy. Dalhousie rejected the offer of the Presidency of a Railway Board that carried an emolument of £2000 a year, due to a pre-condition which might have taken away his liberty of political action. He then remained in the opposition till July 1847, when he, after Lord Hardinge's resignation, was appointed the Governor-General of India in January 1848.⁷

Like Bentinck's constitutional experiments in Spain, Dalhousie, though in a different direction, favored reforms in

⁶For criticism of Dalhousie's Railway policy at home, see the Editorial on Dalhousie's Administration in The Morning Chronicle (London), Dec. 22, 1860, p. 4. Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 27-28. Dalhousie's views in regard to "railways" were foreshadowed by Macaulay, who held that the sphere of state interests included, besides public order, defence, etc., the railways, too; see G. M. Young, Victorian England: Portrait of an Age (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 53. Cf., Arbuthnot, "Dalhousie," D.N.B. XVI, 690.

⁷Baird, Private Letters, Intro. pp. x-xi.

matters of lay patronage. Between Bentinck's departure from India (March 1835), and Dalhousie's assumption of office and responsibility (Jan. 1848), there lay a period of about a dozen years, when the good work of reforms initiated by the former suffered a serious set-back due to a sudden change in the attitudes of successive war-like Governors-General like Auckland (1836-42), Lord Ellenborough (1842-44) and Lord Hardinge (1844-48). But, the foundations of a benevolent and paternal administration had been well laid by Bentinck during his seven years in office. Thus, when Dalhousie arrived in 1848, he did not need to begin this reforming activity from scratch. At least, some pioneering work had already been undertaken in different areas of the national life of India by one of his predecessors who is usually acclaimed "as a man of peace."

Bentinck Assumes Office as Governor-General

When Lord Bentinck was given the opportunity for the second time to go to India and take over the reins of administration as its Governor-General (July 1828), he was under instruction to set the Company's Government in order. Moreover, the Parliament was about to review the issue of the renewal of the Charter of 1813. At least two urgent problems needed Bentinck's immediate attention; first, increasing the efficiency of the Covenanted Civil Services, and then, making

good the yearly deficit of two and a half crores (one million sterling) of rupees. As he failed to make much progress with the revenue settlement of the Western Provinces under Regulation VII (1822), Bentinck realized that the administrative machine was on the brink of collapse. Though the Provincial Boards of Revenue had been serving as the intermediary between the Supreme Government on the one hand and the District Collectors on the other, there was hardly any effective control over the District Revenue Administration. Again, the judicial and revenue system, as a whole, suffered from a lack of co-ordination under one authority.

The gross defect, thus described, was to be removed by the reform scheme of Holt Mackenzie,⁸ that laid emphasis on individual rather than collective, controlling method. In other words, the executive officers were to be subordinated directly under a superior controller, to whom they would be individually accountable and the latter, in turn, would remain responsible for their actions. Ideas such as these were closer to Bentham's concepts about administrative re-organization.⁹

⁸B.S.P. 1831-32, XII, Holt Mackenzie's report, in "Revenue Letter from Bengal," pp. 385-89. Holt Mackenzie was a Secretary to Bengal Government in the Territorial Department (1817-31), and Privy Councillor, Commissioner of the Board of Control (1832-34).

⁹Stokes, India, pp. 151-52. In fact, Bentinck approved of Mackenzie's scheme for Divisional Commissioners, in Stokes, Ibid., p. 154.

However, Bentinck's concept of a centralized administrative complex stemmed from the fact that he did not favor creating a double government for the Bengal Presidency, and weakening in the process regional contact of the Supreme Government with Bengal. He foresaw that effective control over the subordinate Governments of Madras and Bombay was a necessity, and thus, urged a single army and a single central legislature, which was later to be developed by Lord Dalhousie in 1854, for the entire sub-continent under the East India Company's Control. In his arrangement, therefore, "interference" was to be more in the nature of "a check--a preventive and restraining," rather than of a decidedly "meddling character."

Thus, while approving in principle the scheme of Holt Mackenzie for a reformed and re-oriented administration, Bentinck preferred the system of Board Management in the Revenue and other departments, and maintenance of the Councils at the level of the sub-ordinate Presidencies.¹⁰ This was some sort of a democratic centralization in brief.

Between Bentinck's retirement from the Governorship of Madras (1807) and taking over of the Governor-Generalship (1828) there lay two decades in which his political philosophy matured. From the beginning of the second term of his office, Bentinck became wiser and more cautious. His under-

¹⁰Bentinck to H. Tucker, Chairman, Court of Directors, 11 Aug., 1834; Bentinck Mss. cited in Stokes, India, pp. 174-75.

standing of political issues and handling of leaders during the later period was intelligent and commendable in every respect.

His earlier political setbacks notwithstanding, the basic philosophical attitude of Governor-General Bentinck did not undergo any appreciable change between 1828 and 1835. As the utilitarian principle had been deeply ingrained in English life, Bentinck could easily move along with that stream. His work in the highest office of the Company's Government shows his capability to adjust his political ideals to the practical needs of the hour. Though he simultaneously held the post of a Lieutenant-General in the Army, Bentinck demonstrated little direct interest in the various wars of annexations.¹¹ However, on the pleas of misgovernment or maladministration, the Governor-General did annex certain Indian territories, such as, Coorg (1831), Mysore (1831), Cachhar (1832), etc.¹² Mysore was partitioned between two ruling houses in 1831, and only became re-united fifty years later during Lord Ripon's

¹¹G. D. Bearce, "Lord William Bentinck--The Application of Liberalism to India," Journal of Modern History, Vol. 28, Sept. 1956, p. 236. Hereinafter referred to as Bearce; "Bentinck," J. Mod. Hist., XXVIII.

¹²It is sometimes wrongly stated that Bentinck had annexed Cachhar (1832) through the application of the "Doctrine of Lapse," vide William Lee-Warner, The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie (2 Vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904), II, 133. Hereinafter referred to as Lee-Warner, Dalhousie, II.

viceroyalty (in 1881).¹³

As regards Oudh, we see that Bentinck warned its King that unless his territory was well administered, he would be forced to annex the same to his government. This was no mere threat, for the Governor-General had recorded his views on this matter in the despatches of 1831 and 1832.¹⁴ Needless to mention, these despatches became strong supporting evidence for Dalhousie's plea for the ultimate annexation of Oudh (Feb. 1856). In this context, we should note that Dalhousie, too, had made some "peaceful" invasions or "bloodless" annexations, especially through the revival of the "Doctrine of Lapse" in 1848.¹⁵ However, as our main objective will be to study and interpret the

¹³E. Thompson and G. T. Garratt, Rise and Fulfillment of the British Rule in India (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1962), p. 470. Hereinafter referred to as Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India.

¹⁴D. C. Boulger, Lord William Bentinck (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), pp. 139-40. Hereinafter referred to as Boulger, Bentinck.

¹⁵The Directors in their despatch of 1834 advised Lord Bentinck to implement the Doctrine of Lapse, and thus augment the Company's territorial jurisdiction. However, Bentinck thought it wise to refrain from such an interference in the affairs of the Indian States. Mention may be made of the Policy of Non-intervention as laid down in Pitt's India Act (1784), which became susceptible to interpretation at the hands of different Governors-General. Cf., J. W. Kaye, A History of the Sepoy War in India (3 Vols.; London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1864), I, 69-96. Hereinafter referred to as Kaye, Sepoy War, I. Cf., Charles Jackson, A Vindication of the Marquis of Dalhousie's Indian Administration (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1865), pp. 5-12. Hereinafter referred to as Jackson, Dalhousie's Administration.

various administrative measures and reforming activities of Lord Bentinck and Lord Dalhousie, we shall briefly refer to these conquests and annexations, as and when relevant. This is especially so with Dalhousie, whose laurels on the field of battle and annexations along with his measures of progressive reform contributed materially to the Sepoy Mutiny, about a year after his retirement from the field of activity.

CHAPTER III

THE INDIAN NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

BENTINCK'S GOVERNMENT

Early Symptoms of Renaissance

From the opening decade of the 19th century, a wave of national resurgence passed throughout the length and breadth of India. The establishment of a printing press at Serampore (West Bengal) in 1800, under the superintendence of the Baptist missionaries headed by William Carey, the founding of the Fort William College as a language training center for the British Indian Civillians in the same year--where Carey became a Professor of Bengali and Sanskrit (1801),¹ and the Hindu College in Bengal (1817), the stronghold of the Company's Government in India--all these indicate the nature of changes made during the period. From Bengal, the renaissance movement spread gradually to Bombay and other areas under the ad-

¹William Carey, the Baptist preacher, was a linguist, and translated the Bible into several Indian vernaculars. He was a truly renaissance scholar, and the renaissance movement in Bengal owes much to his zeal and enterprise, cf., J. C. Marshman, Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward (2 Vols.; London: Longmans and Co., 1859), I, 465-66. Hereinafter referred to as Marshman, Life and Times I. See G. D. Bearce, British Attitudes Towards India: 1784-1858 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 83-84. Hereinafter referred to as Bearce, British Attitudes.

ministration of the Company.

Significant it is that Raja Rammohun Roy--the "Erasmus of India"²--was a pioneer in many of the movements of reform and regeneration. These included the founding of the English seminaries, the Press, the newspapers and periodicals, the Brahmo Samaj--a non-sectarian platform for the worship of the Supreme Being (i.e. Brahma)--the abolition of the Suttee rite,³ and many other aspects of social, economic and political importance. The Raja also attached great value to the Reform Bill agitation that had become a liberal byword during the early 1830s. In fact, Rammohun's voyage to England in November 1830--in defiance of the ban on orthodox Hindus from crossing the seas--was itself an act of revolt against medievalism and superstition. It was undertaken to present India's case before a Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the renewal of the Company's Charter.⁴ This coincided with the debate of the Reform Bill then in progress in the British Parliament. Rammohun's letter to an Editor of a London newspaper republished in both the Madras Ga-

²George Smith, The Life of Alexander Duff (2 Vols.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1879), I, 112-13. Hereinafter referred to as Smith, Duff I. Also see S. D. Collet, The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy, eds. D. K. Biswas and P. C. Ganguli (Calcutta: Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 1962), p. 279. Hereinafter referred to as Collet, Rammohun Roy.

³Collet, Rammohun Roy, Note III. pp. 247-48.

⁴Ibid., pp. 318-19.

zette (Sept. 24, 1831) and the India Gazette (Oct. 8, 1831), as well as Sutherland's account of the voyage in the Calcutta Review, make his views regarding Parliamentary Reform clear.⁵ As a practical minded reformer Rammohun understood that, until the Reform issue was settled, any question concerning the welfare and improvement of India, or any other part of the British dominion was of comparatively little significance. Incidentally, the effect of this contagious enthusiasm of a whole people in favor of a grand political change upon such a mind as Rammohun's was, of course, electrifying, and he caught up the tone of the new society.⁶

It is equally interesting that, the India Gazette (January 2, 1832) then directed by Dwarkanath Tagore (popularly known as "Prince Dwarkanath")--Rammohun's close associate--characterized it as "the Bill of Indian Reform as well as of British Reform," in the success of which "every man, woman and child of British India is interested."⁷ This is a clear example of the response of the Indian mind to a significant Western measure of liberalism and progress.

⁵See "Sutherland's Narrative of the Voyage of Rammohun Roy," in the Calcutta Review, October 1835 (Calcutta), pp. 58-70. Also Collet, Rammohun Roy, pp. 318-22.

⁶Collet, Rammohun Roy, pp. 308-9.

⁷Ibid., pp. 331-32, 396. Cf., R. P. Masani, Britain in India: An Account of British Rule in the Indian Sub-Continent (London: Oxford University Press, Amen House, E. C. 4, 1962), p. 33. Hereinafter referred to as Masani, India.

The Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833 as liberal measures of the British Parliament constitute an important chapter in the growth of modern India. The Charter Act of 1813 is notable in three respects. For the first time, the British Parliament separated the East India Company's political from its trading activities, and it lost its monopoly of the Indian Trade.⁸ Secondly, and this was more important from the Indian point of view, a sum of 1 lac of rupees (£10,000) was earmarked for:

the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. ⁹

A note of liberalism underlies this provision. Once this policy and process of liberalization was started, it led, in course of time, to a demand and struggle for more and more measures of liberal reform, as we shall find later. Lastly, Christian missionaries were henceforth permitted to carry on their missionary activities in various parts of the country.¹⁰

⁸Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 319.

⁹Ramsay Muir, The Making of British India: 1756-1858 (Karachi: Pakistan Branch, Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 296-97. Hereinafter referred to as Muir, British India. Cf., The Cambridge History of the British Empire, ed. H. H. Dodwell (8 Vols.; Cambridge: University Press, 1932), V, 1-2. Hereinafter referred to as C.H.B.E. V. Also see "Charter Act of 1813," Asiatic Journal (London), Feb. 1816, p. 112. Hereinafter referred to as Asiatic Journal.

¹⁰P. Spear, India: A Modern History (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), p. 258. Hereinafter referred to as Spear, Modern History.

This factor also led to conflict with orthodox sections of Hindu society. This is evident from the early 1830s, and reached its climax during the 1850s.

The Charter Act of 1833 was, in some respects, more significant than that of 1813. As a result of this measure, the Company was deprived of its remaining monopoly of the Chinese trade rights. Until that time, the Company was more a trading and commercial concern than a territorially sovereign authority. After 1833, however, it became solely concerned with territorial issues and hence was endowed with political authority.¹¹ As a whole, the Act of 1833, while imperfect, was permeated by the liberal ideas of the age. It treated the slavery question with caution, tried to introduce competition into the recruitment of the Company's Service, liquidated the Company's trading rights, anticipated the growing employment of the Indians, and led to the reform and codification of the Indian law, through the appointment of an additional member of the Governor-General's Council. T. B. Macaulay, who came in this capacity in 1834, is most remembered in connection with his work in India for his famous Education

¹¹ Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., Vol. XVIII (1833), June 17, 1833, "East India Charter," pp. 851-52. Hereinafter referred to as Hansard, 3rd, XVIII (1833), etc. Cf., C.H.B.E. V, 10-11. Friends of India, Mr. O'Connell and J. Buckingham were bitter critics of the "East India Monopoly" which was being reviewed in 1830, cf., "East India Monopoly," in The Observer (London), May 9, 1830, p. 2.

Minute (1835).¹²

Defects of the Act aforementioned, were no less striking. These can be briefly stated as follows: first, the Indian government was not yet adequately re-organized. The Governor-General, for instance, would be assisted by a Councillor from each Presidency, and should be exempt from the responsibilities for local administration in Bengal. Secondly, the zeal for excessive supervision in every matter led to over-centralization of legislation and administration. Indeed, the Act imposed on the Government of India, duties and obligations, too extensive to be carried out by one group of men. Bentinck, then Governor-General, admitted that:

in order to become an attached dependency of Great Britain, India must be governed for her own sake, not for the sake of 800 or 1,000 individuals who are sent from England to make their fortunes 13

with the Company. More than anything else, owing to the incompetence of the young and untrained civilians sent to India by the Company, administration in all its civil branches--rev-

¹²Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 311. The pace needed for formulation of substantive law slackened after Macaulay's departure, and the good work was postponed for a quarter of a century. Cf., W. H. Moreland and A. C. Chatterjee, A Short History of India (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), p. 136. Hereinafter referred to as Moreland and Chatterjee, Short History. Also Clive and Pinney, Macaulay, pp. 237-51.

¹³Hansard 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India," pp. 1134-40.

enue, judicial and police--had been a failure.¹⁴ The influence of Jeremy Bentham's ideas on Lord Bentinck is seen in the foregoing lines. Bentinck, it may be recollected, was at the time experimenting with his program of socio-economic welfare.

Through these Charter Acts, the British Crown and Parliament were gradually extending their influence in regulating progressively the Company's affairs in India.

Reforms and Regeneration

Imbued with a genuine desire (as his past attitudes would testify) to bring greatest good to the majority of the people,¹⁵ Lord Bentinck experimented with and introduced a series of liberal reform projects that embraced almost every aspect of India's national life. First, in the domain of economic reform and re-organization, Lord Bentinck was an advocate of Free Trade principles, and urged capital investment in India with a view to raising the living standard of the

¹⁴Cf., Report of the Committee of Parliament on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1833, vide Muir, British India, p. 305. Also consult the Evidence of Lord William Bentinck before the Select Committee, July 1837, cited in The Friend of India (Serampore) June 6, 1844, p. 6. Cf., Lala Lajpat Rai, England's Debt to India (New York: B. W. Huebsch 1917), p. 37.

¹⁵Review "On Utilitarian Theory of Government, and the Greatest Happiness Principle," in the Edinburgh Review, Vol. 50 (October 1829), pp. 99-125.

people.¹⁶ It is interesting that for the most part, the Utilitarians interested in India allied themselves with the general tenor of reforms. Free Trade with cheap and efficient administration to bring about rapid modernization of India, were ideals espoused by all reformers.¹⁷ An advocate of the scheme of European colonization in India, Bentinck removed the severe restrictions on European ownership of land. This issue of European colonization was endorsed by, among others, stalwart Indian reformers like Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore, on the ground that apart from investment of European capital and commercial prospects, cultural exchanges were likely to result from such contacts between India and the West, and prove beneficial to the former's social, literary and political interests in the long run.¹⁸

Bentinck firmly believed, however, that "knowledge and instruction so much needed by India can never be sufficiently provided by European colonists and speculators only." He

¹⁶Cf., "Freedom of Trade and of Settlement in India," Edinburgh Review, Vol. 48 (Dec. 1828), pp. 335-37. See W. W. Hunter, The Indian Empire: Its Peoples, History and Products (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), p. 475 Hereinafter referred to as Hunter, Empire.

¹⁷Stokes, India, p. 52.

¹⁸B.S.P. 1831-32, VIII, 288-91, Appendix: "European Colonization," Also "European Colonization in India," Asiatic Journal, June 1830, p. 69. Cf., Rammohun Roy, English Works (Allahabad: Panini Office, 1906), pp. 315-47. Hereinafter referred to as Roy, Works. See K. C. Mitra, Memoirs of Dwarkanath Tagore (Calcutta: Town Hall, June 1870), p. 53.

rightly suggested that the Indians must be encouraged to go to Europe and study in the best schools (especially, the Sciences).¹⁹ We shall find later that it was as a response to the Western impact that Rammohun Roy also was led to favor the schooling of Indians in the Sciences and Technology of the West.

To Bentinck, again, goes the credit of appointing a Commission (1834) to inquire into the system of Indian customs duties and post office charges²⁰ (the latter task to be taken up again by Lord Dalhousie's Government when another Post Office Commission was appointed in the early 50s). As a result of their findings, the Indian traders were exempted from offensive tariffs and internal customs duties. To streamline trade and commerce, Bentinck undertook the survey of the Ganges Canal, resorted to road-building, and helped, to a certain extent, the steam navigation of the Indian rivers.²¹ In some of these attempts, i.e., the Ganges Canal, road-construction, etc., Bentinck anticipated Dalhousie.

Soon after his arrival in India, Bentinck discovered

¹⁹B.S.P. 1837, VI, 551: "Minutes of Evidence by Lord William Bentinck before the Select Committee."

²⁰B.S.P. 1851, XLI, 197: "Post Office: Commission," (Inc. Tariffs, in British India).

²¹Hansard, 2nd, XIX (1828), June 28, 1828, "Speech of Sir James Mackintosh," pp. 1397-1405. Cf., Lord Ellenborough's statement in Parliament in this regard, made on Feb. 9, 1830, in The Observer (London), Feb. 15, 1830, p. 4.

that the agricultural practices in operation were a curse to the cultivators. Likewise, the manufacturing industry and commerce were also inefficient. Dearth of finance greatly handicapped the government in organizing its defense network and hindered various national welfare projects like the public works, irrigation, transport, as well as education and moral amelioration²²--all of which items were to be taken up at mid-century and ably dealt with by Lord Dalhousie.

Indeed, through his varied measures of economy and reconstruction of the finances (by curtailing unnecessary expenditures and avoiding wars of every description), Bentinck piloted the Company's Government out of crises and thus rendered valuable assistance in the task of consolidating its political and administrative supremacy. "Peace, Retrenchment and Reforms" became the watchword of his Government. Thus, it is evident that the Governor-General's measures were tinged with a liberal utilitarian note.

Bentinck the Humanitarian

A devout Christian, Bentinck was also an inspired humanitarian. A believer in the principle of secularism in religion, the Governor-General adopted an attitude of tolerance

²²"Bentinck Papers: Finance and Revenue Minutes," May 30, 1829, cited in Bearce, "Bentinck" in J. of Mod. Hist. XXVIII, Sept. 1956, p. 238.

towards all other forms of religious beliefs. Bentinck's humanitarianism stands out through his two notable measures of reform: (1) dispensing with the Corporal Punishment in the Sepoy Army (1835), and the more important one, (2) abolition of the practice of the Suttee--i.e. self-immolation of Hindu widows on the burning pyres of their dead husbands.²³ Referring to the latter, it is said that Bentinck's primary object was to benefit the Hindus, by removing this " . . . foul stain upon British rule." It was largely due to the tact and initiative of the Governor-General, that this age-old inhuman custom of the Suttee was finally abolished--in the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay by the issuing of a Proclamation.²⁴ Because of its historic importance in the social life of the country, an in-depth look at this practice is required--at once socio-religious in character and bearing.

The practice of the Suttee was forbidden by the Supreme Court in Calcutta in 1774, in the time of Sir John An-

²³B.S.P. 1836, XL, 3: "Abolition of Corporal Punishment," Bentinck's Minutes, January 1, 1835. See B.S.P. 1830, XXVIII, 550: "Abolition of Suttee," Regulation XVII, Dec. 4, 1829, p. 1059. Cf., "Proclamation Prohibiting Suttee in India," in The Times (London), Jan. 22, 1830, p. 2. Also see "Burning of Indian Widows," in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, (Feb. 1828), 161-62. Hereinafter referred to as Blackwood's Magazine.

²⁴Cf., Hansard, 2nd, XXIV (1830), June 4, 1830. "The Abolition of Suttees," pp. 1355-56. To Spear, abolition of the Suttee indicated the "first feature of the Indian New Deal," vide Spear, Modern History, p. 259. Bentinck's Minute on Suttee, Nov. 8, 1829, cited in Boulger, Bentinck, pp. 94-110. Cf., C.H.B.E. V, 131, 140. See Hunter, Empire, p. 475.

struther and also during the same century by the Dutch at Chinsurah, and by the French at Chandernagore (both in the Bengal region) within their respective jurisdictions. Later, the Danish Government at Serampore (Bengal) followed the British precedent. But the evil practice was not minimized to any appreciable extent.²⁵ The Suttee, a so-called religious custom among some sections of the Hindus suddenly became a serious problem about the first two decades of the 19th century, and the figures enormously mounted in areas round about Calcutta. According to official account, the number of Suttees, especially in the Bengal Presidency reached 839 in 1818, but showed a downward trend between 1823 (775) and 1828 (464) except in 1825 (639).²⁶

Lord Bentinck found from reports in 1829 that the rite was widely practised even in 1828. In that year, such acts took place in the provinces of the Eastern Presidency, i.e. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, whereas the number of Suttee in the Lower Provinces was 420. The majority of such cases were in the Calcutta Division--there the number stood at 287.²⁷ It is

²⁵ Judicial Proceedings, Criminal Consultation No. 10, Vol. 541, pp. 538-39, (The MSS, volumes are preserved in the State Historical Archives at Calcutta, West Bengal). Hereinafter referred to as Judl. Procdgs., Crim. Consl. No. 10.

²⁶ Judl. Procdgs., Crim. Consl. Nos. 4 and 9, pp. 219, 467.

²⁷ Judl. Procdgs., Crim. Consl. Nos. 3 and 7, pp. 217, 267-431. Cf., Collet, Rammohun Roy, p. 258.

thus evident that with the number, the inhumanity of the rite also went up.

From the mid-eighteenth century, the Company's rule appeared to the religious-minded Hindus as militant and aggressive in outlook and approach. They thought that the Government sought to interfere with their religious customs in order to promote the cause of Christianity, and thus injure the socio-religious fabric of Indian life. This along with other social and economic factors may explain why the number of Suttees was on the increase during the early 19th century.

Judged from the standpoint of national history, the agitation against the Suttee was itself an effect of liberal thinking and social consciousness, and these obviously reflected the impact of the West. Mention must be made of the fact, that the Indian leader, Raja Rammohun Roy, stood behind the Governor-General in his attempt to stop Suttee and thus aided considerably in this work of national regeneration.²⁸ The agitation launched by the Raja was, however, based on a critical and liberal interpretation of the Hindu Scriptures, and aimed at dealing a death-blow to the reactionary and conservative attitude behind the perpetuation of this evil.²⁹

²⁸Jeremy Bentham addressed Rammohun Roy as his "intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborator in the service of mankind," vide Collet, Rammohun Roy, Appendix, VI, 488.

²⁹"The Suttees and Hindoo Scriptures," Asiatic Journal, March 1822, pp. 220-24. Cf., William Theodore deBary, ed., Sources of Indian Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 571.

Though Rammohun himself was in favor of persuasion rather than legislation, his movement was itself a typical expression of the liberal thought that had cast its influence on the progressive section of the educated Hindus. The Raja contemplated that the "practice might be suppressed quietly and unobservedly by increasing the difficulties and by the indirect agency of the police."³⁰

The vigorous stand of the progressive section led Bentinck to decide upon his own course of action. An elaborate "Minute," dated Nov. 8, 1829 to accomplish this purpose was placed before the Council.³¹ This Governmental attempt to suppress the Suttee led the orthodox community of the Hindus to take up the challenge in earnest. They first appealed through a deputation to the Governor-General himself to get the New Regulation abolishing the Suttee, repealed. Bentinck, however, advised them to appeal directly to the King-in-Council. Attempts were made through the Privy Council to have this Regulation (Reg. XVII of Dec. 4, 1829) declared null and void.³² But, there too, the liberal verdict was con-

³⁰ See Judl. Procdgs., Crim. Consl. No. 10, pp. 528-46, for the text of the Suttee Minute of Lord Bentinck, 8 Nov. 1829. Cf., Collet, Rammohun Roy, p. 257.

³¹ Cf., Collet, Rammohun Roy, p. 257. See "Suttees" in The Observer (London), March 29, 1820, p. 2. See Hansard, 2nd, XXIII (1830), March 16, 1830, "Suttees," p. 390.

³² See Parliamentary Proceedings re: "Abolition of Suttees" in The Times (London), Jan. 5, 1830, p. 4. Cf., B.S.P. 1830, XXVIII, 783; "Communication Regarding Burning of Hindoo Widows."

firmed³³ and thus Indian liberalism witnessed its signal success on the land of liberties. A respectable meeting in Calcutta sent their Address of Gratitude to the King for suppressing this rite of the Suttees.³⁴

It is rather interesting that though the Suttee was officially abolished in 1829, the practice did not completely disappear even in 1832, as might be seen from an eye-witness account sent to the United States from Calcutta by a native of Pittsfield, Massachusetts and published in a New York newspaper. The writer mentioned that though the Government put every obstacle in the way of this procedure, their agency (i.e., the Police) was "not strong enough to prevent this abominable custom."³⁵

It would be historically correct to assert that the abolition of the aforesaid practice had been really possible because of the initiative and wholehearted efforts of individuals like Rammohun Roy and his group of enlightened friends,

³³"Rite of Suttees in Privy Council," The Times (London), June 25, 1832, p. 6.

³⁴For the text of this petition, cf., Collet, Rammohun Roy, pp. 463-67. Also see The Times (London), May 18, 1833, p. 3.

³⁵For a vivid eye-witness account of Suttee, see The New York Mirror: Devoted to Literature and the Fine Arts (weekly), New York, Oct. 20, 1832. p. 126. Hereinafter referred to as The New York Mirror.

Christian missionaries like William Carey,³⁶ and Lord Bentinck, aided by the public conscience of the day.³⁷ This was an indication of how India was gradually emerging from her age-old medievalism and stepping firmly into an era of modernism in socio-religious belief, thought, and action.

Again, Bentinck as a clear-sighted statesman understood that the entire country needed a single code of law for "black and white, native and European." He felt that because of her diverse population, with various languages and religions, India stood more in need of a code than any other country. For a code "is perhaps the only blessing which absolute Governments are better fitted to confer on a nation than popular Governments." Bentinck was interested in promoting "the principle of equality of law" in India,³⁸ and in this direction, the Indian Code, masterminded by T. B. Macaulay, -the Law Member of his Council, was designed as a safeguard against

³⁶William Carey, the Baptist-missionary had the bitter experience of witnessing the incident of a Hindoo widow sacrificing herself on the funeral pile of her husband early in 1800. He was much moved by that episode and fought wholeheartedly for the eventual eradication of that practice, see Periodical Accounts (1827-34), No. 5, pp. 364-65 (Volume preserved at Serampore College Library, West Bengal).

³⁷Cf., "The Suttee," Asiatic Journal, May 1831, p. 16. Also the eye-witness account of Suttee in The New York Mirror, Oct. 20, 1832, p. 126.

³⁸For the liberal standpoint, cf., Hansard 3rd, XIX (1833), July 10, 1833, "Macaulay's Speech," pp. 503-36. Also see B.S.P., 1837, VI, 550-54: "Bentinck's testimony to a Select Committee,"

the maltreatment of the Indian people.³⁹ It is interesting to note that, while urging codification of the Indian laws, Rammohun Roy, the liberal reformer, based his action upon the authority of Jeremy Bentham--the prince among the utilitarian philosophers. The principles of the British Constitution made him eager to obtain for his countrymen identical guarantees of individual liberty like that of the Englishmen (i.e., their Habeas Corpus rights), and made him an ardent devotee of the idea of "Separation of Powers" in government.⁴⁰

Reform of the Company's Services

Lord Bentinck also set himself to reforming the abuses in the Company's arrangements for employing "servants" (officials). Acting with insight and imagination, the Governor-General "opened the gates of the Civil Service" as he realized the folly and mistake of excluding the educated Indians from a fuller participation in the government of the land.⁴¹ Alluding to the provision of the 87th Clause in the Charter Act

³⁹Muir, British India, p. 281.

⁴⁰"Rammohun Roy and Utilitarianism," Calcutta Review, July-Dec. 1845, P. 386. Also see "Rammohun Roy and Influence of British Constitution," Modern Review (Calcutta), Jan.-June, 1909, p. 511. Also Roy, Works (Judicial System of India), p. 253.

⁴¹Boulger, Bentinck, p. 163.

of 1833, commonly called Lord William Bentinck's Clause, Sir Charles Trevelyan told a Select Committee two decades later in 1853, that Lord Bentinck had been guided by the principle that "India was to be governed for the benefit of the Indians." Moreover, this step suggested to him as financially expedient for the Company's Government.⁴² To further this end, Bentinck introduced his "Merit Fostering Minute" (Jan. 1834), and thus regardless of race, creed, and color made talent the only criterion for a service with the Company. This, in actual fact, meant that for certain categories of the Company's services, qualified Indians would also be considered for appointment, especially in the Judicial Services. In this respect, the Judicial Reforms introduced by Bentinck's government were to benefit the country in the long run.⁴³ Dalhousie also was favorable to this concept of "career open to talent" as we find later.

It should be mentioned in this context that to ensure purity in the judicial administration, Rammohun Roy proposed a substantial increase in the salary paid to Indians in the Company's service, and correspondingly, no reduction of the

⁴²B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, 158-59; "Minutes of Evidence by Sir Charles Trevelyan." Boulger, Bentinck, p. 104, and Muir, British India, p. 282.

⁴³"Judicial Reforms," Asiatic Journal for Sept. 1832, p. 13. C.H.B.E. V, 26. Also cf., Spear, Modern History, pp. 259.

salary paid European judges.⁴⁴ In his evidence before the Police Reform Committee in 1838, Dwarkanath Tagore pinpointing the insecurity prevailing in the Mofussil said that this was because "from Daroga to the lowest peon, the whole of them were a corrupt set of people." As an alternative to this miserable state of the Mofussil Police, Dwarkanath suggested the appointment of Deputy Magistrates, which the Government accepted with certain modifications in 1843. This is corroborated from the Parliamentary debates on the said subject in early 1850s.⁴⁵

Incidentally, though the explanatory despatch of the Directors (Dec. 10, 1834) laid down that "fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility," practically no great difference in the employment of the educated Indians took place during the next decade as natives were successfully excluded "from the most valuable offices by drawing a distinction between the covenanted and the uncovenanted servants of the Company."⁴⁶ This is borne out by the fact that while regretting

⁴⁴Roy, Works, pp. 245, 248. Cf., The opinion of the "Reformer," cited in the Asiatic Journal, May 1832, p. 17.

⁴⁵Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India," pp. 1108-1111. Also B. B. Majumdar, History of Indian Social and Political Ideas (Calcutta: Bookland Press, 1966), pp. 81-82.

⁴⁶Hansard, 3rd, XXXVII (1855), March 5, 1855, "Education in India," p. 84. Also see A. C. Banerjee, Indian Constitutional Documents, 1757-1858 (2 Vols.; Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Co., Pr. Ltd., 1945), I, 252-54.

the discouragement lately given by the Court of Directors to the employment of Indians in the Revenue Department as Deputy Collectors, the Police Committee, noted in their report of August 10, 1838, that by this measure the Government and the people of India were deeply indebted to Bentinck's benevolent and paternal administration.⁴⁷

It should be remembered that Bentinck had laid down, and during his whole tenure of office:

strenuously acted upon the broad principles that the good of the great body of the people, not the selfish interests of the ruling power or of its servants, ought to be the object of all Government. 48

He also believed that the only effective way of converting the Indians as faithful instruments of the Government was to employ them, under European superintendence, in positions of trust with adequate remuneration.⁴⁹ In this respect, Bentinck was the pioneer among the English rulers in holding out to Indians "the prospect of equal rights, and an honorable share in the Company's Government."⁵⁰ This policy, expedient as it

⁴⁷Cf., Review of "Administration of Justice in India," vide Edinburgh Review, Vol. 73, July 1841, p. 233-34.

⁴⁸See Boulger, Bentinck, p. 204. Cf., "Present State and Prospects of British India," Edinburgh Review, Vol. 71, July 1840, p. 185.

⁴⁹B.S.P. 1837 VI, 553: "Bentinck's Evidence Before a Select Committee."

⁵⁰"Self-Government in India," British Quarterly, Vol. 38, p. 421. Also cf., C.H.B.E. V, 29.

was both politically and financially, contributed to the development of a spirit of self-government among Indians towards the close of the nineteenth century. Later, Lord Dalhousie reviewed and tried to improve the Civil Services, through the open competition system as urged by the British Parliament.⁵¹

Crusade Against Thuggee

Bentinck tried to deal efficiently with the terrible crime of "Thuggee" (derived from the word "Thug," which literally means a "cheat," but more correctly a robber) that had found its way into the country. Within the course of a few years it had seriously challenged "law and order" and the regime established by the Company government in the areas under its control in India. The remedy for this malady may be viewed as falling less under the category of social reform as being more in the area of administrative re-organization. According to one view,⁵² the institution of Thuggee was not of indigenous growth, but was introduced, across the Sutlej from Hindustan, by a ruffian retainer of one of the Sikh robber-chiefs, in the period when Ranjit Singh was rising into eminence. The first Thug initiated his sons and relatives, and so the prac-

⁵¹ Hansard, 3rd, CXXXVII (1855), March 5, 1855, "Education in India," pp. 86-87. See Chapter IV.

⁵² "India Under Lord Dalhousie," Blackwood's Magazine (Aug. 1856), p. 241.

tice continued and came down as a legacy from one generation to the next. The Thugs were sometimes favored, but mostly persecuted by provincial Governors. Upon the disorganization of the Sikh polity, after Ranjit Singh's death, Thuggee acquired a further development. It is said that during the period 1832 to 1852, about 1,384 murders were committed by Thugs and that during the troubled period of the 1st and 2nd Sikh Wars, 1845-1849, the yearly average went beyond 100. In 1852, the number of murders was lowered to 35, while the next year, only one murder of this type was recorded. By the end of Lord Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship, the crime appeared to be extinct.⁵³

According to modern historical researches, the origin of Thuggee as robber bands was, in a large measure, due to the economic changes of the time, following the establishment and consolidation of the Company's administration. As the Maratha forces suffered their final defeat at the hands of Governor-General Lord Hastings (1813-23) in the third Maratha War (1818), and the Empire fell into pieces, the native warrior-bands were disbanded and demobilized. This multitude of restless but trained personnel, now rendered unemployed, rapidly re-organized themselves into menacing robber groups, and be-

⁵³ According to Sir Charles Trevelyan, "Suttee, Thuggee, human sacrifices, etc., were excrescences of Hinduism and tacitly enjoined by it," vide Trevelyan, "Education of the People of India, 1838," p. 83, cited in Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 318n.

came a social and administrative problem for the Government of India.⁵⁴ In British Indian history, these organizations are famous as "Thuggee." The "Thugs" thrived on "robbery"--which had become a fine art in their hands--after murdering the victims. The Government of Bentinck was forced to treat the problem in a pseudo-military manner, and created a special department under Colonel William (nicknamed "Thuggee") Sleeman to root out this evil. Substantial help also came from Oudh, Gwalior, the Maratha Darbars and Hyderabad. Though not entirely successful, Bentinck at least prevented and checked the oppressive growth of the Thuggee as an institution.

In 1836, after Bentinck's departure from India, an Act was passed by the Indian Council declaring that members of a gang of Thugs were liable to imprisonment for life, and the special measures authorized for the enforcement of this drastic, but necessary legislation, eventually broke the Thug tradition and led to its gradual extinction.⁵⁵ However, the sta-

⁵⁴Spear, India, p. 103. The crusade against the Thuggee had a humanitarian perspective and significance, and was carried on in violation of the religious sanction which the Thugs claimed for themselves, cf., L.S.S. O'Malley, Modern India and the West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 320. Hereinafter referred to as O'Malley, Modern India. Also see H. N. Mukherjee, Bharat Varsher Itihas (in Bengali), (2 Vols.; Calcutta: Vidyoday Library, Pr. Ltd., 1950), II, 252-70.

⁵⁵Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 302. Hunter, Empire, p. 475. Cf., Philip Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India (The Founders), (London: Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, 1963), pp. 248-65. Hereinafter referred to as Woodruff, The Founders. Also cf., Moreland and Chatterjee, A Short History, pp. 136-37.

tistics furnished above attest that the evil of Thuggee was not completely removed till the period of Dalhousie.⁵⁶ The suppression of the Thuggee was thus a pre-Mutiny achievement on the part of the Company.

Educational Reconstruction

At the behest of the British Parliament, the Charter Act of 1813 provided that a sum of one lac of rupees (10,000) should be annually applied:

to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. 57

Nothing could, however, be done in this direction until the Directorate of Public Instruction was set up a decade later in 1823.

For a number of years, a sharp controversy raged over the adoption of a suitable medium for instruction in Indian schools and colleges. Two groups existed in the Committee of Public Instruction--the Orientalists, including several Europeans, foremost of whom was Horace Wilson, the Principal of the Hindu College; and the Anglicists, whose spokesman was the

⁵⁶ Supra, pp. 39-41.

⁵⁷ "Charter Act (1813)," cited in "Our Indian Empire," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1856, p. 651. Cf., Supra, p. 22. Note, 9.

noted Indian reformer Rammohun Roy.⁵⁸ The former upheld the policy of educating the people in different departments of knowledge and learning through their respective vernaculars-- Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic--while the latter group appeared as the champions of a Western education, especially in the sciences, through the medium of the English language.⁵⁹

It is heartening to find that, as an inevitable impact of Western liberal thought, the Anglicist standpoint was reinforced by Rammohun Roy, himself an able and profound scholar in the Oriental languages such as, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, etc., amongst others. The Raja believed that until Indians could learn the improved sciences and the technological skill of the Western world through English, they had hardly any prospect of advancing their social and political interests in the foreseeable future.⁶⁰

At the outset both the Orientalists and the Anglicists had conceded that "the ultimate medium of instruction for the Indians would be their vernacular languages," but because of the barrenness of the vernacular literatures, the question

⁵⁸Muir, British India, pp. 298-99.

⁵⁹Cf., Education Minute of Lord Macaulay in S. Sharp, Selections from Educational Records (2 Parts; Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1920), I, (1781-1839), 109. Hereinafter referred to as Sharp, Selections, I.

⁶⁰"Rammohun Roy's Letter to Lord Amherst on Western Education" (1823), cited in Collet, Rammohun Roy, pp. 186-88. and Appendix II, pp. 457-60. Cf., Sharp, Selections I, 101.

arose as to what classical language would be employed for a better transition. Ultimately, a virtual deadlock developed over the issue whether Sanskrit or English should be the vehicle for teaching.⁶¹

At one stage during this crucial battle-royal, Bentinck himself turned to the Committee for its advice and suggestion in the matter of teaching medium. But, because of the protracted stalemate, there could be no satisfactory solution to this issue. At this critical moment, Thomas Babington Macaulay arrived on the scene as the Law Member of the Governor-General's Council. Under instructions from his chief, Macaulay drew up a blueprint for the educational reform and reconstruction of the country.⁶² While disclaiming any first-hand knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic, for both of which he had profound disregard, Macaulay tried to assess their worth from translations of famous Arabic or Sanskrit works. To his way of thought, "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."⁶³

Macaulay dimly visualized the day when, armed with the

⁶¹Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 314. Infra, Appendix, I, 120-22.

⁶²C.H.B.E. V, 111, Cf., P. J. Griffiths, The British Impact on India (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), p. 400. Hereinafter referred to as Griffiths, British Impact.

⁶³For Macaulay's Education Minute (Feb. 2, 1835), see Supra, note 59, p. 43. Also cf., Clive and Pinney, Macaulay, p. 241.

knowledge of the West through the English language, Indians would rise to a position of self-government. He rhetorically expressed that would be a moment of joy and pride for the British Government itself, when that dream should materialize. This was the sum and substance of the famous Education Minute (Feb. 2, 1835), which was confirmed in the Education Act of Lord Bentinck's Government of March 7, 1835. As a result, the long controversy was brought to an end, and English was acknowledged as the medium of "superior education in India."⁶⁴ Once a modern type of education in the College was decided upon, practical considerations weighed in planning of a curriculum. Bentinck personally felt that science would be the most useful subject to be taught, and believed that the English language, rather than the "dead" Indian vernaculars, to be the best vehicle.⁶⁵ It appears from a report in a contemporary journal that in order to encourage the study of English, Lord Bentinck employed it in his correspondence with Fyz Mohamed Khan, a native chief of the West--thus creating a great sensation in Delhi.⁶⁶ To Professor Spear it seemed that

⁶⁴B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, 147; "Sir Charles Trevelyan's Evidence before the Select Committee." Cf., Sharp, Selections, I, 117, 130-31.

⁶⁵Muir, British India, pp. 298-99 and C.H.B.E. V, 111-115, 120. Cf., Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 314-15.

⁶⁶Cf., "The Periodical Press and Education in British India" in The American Quarterly Register (Boston), Aug. 1834, p. 42. Hereinafter cited as "The Periodical Press," in Amer. Quart. Reg.

the "utilitarian and evangelical conviction of the general usefulness of the English tongue combined to secure this linguistic revolution of 1835."⁶⁷

It is sometimes argued that if the Education Resolution had not been made effective, the relevant clause in the Charter Act of 1833, providing for the employment of Indians, however restricted in degree it might be, would have been rendered meaningless.⁶⁸ It was thought that in the changed context, moral and religious education would be deemed necessary with the objective of improving the moral standard and ensuring progress of the political character of the people.⁶⁹

Though not an avowedly anti-vernacularist in his attitude, Bentinck was eager to help in the development of a small educated class, who through their knowledge and mastery of English would be able to interpret the West and its culture to the masses. This is, what went in the making of the "Filtration Theory," asserted in the "Minute" by Macaulay, who de-

⁶⁷Spear, India, p. 104. Also Thomas R. Metcalf, ed., Modern India: An Interpretive Anthology, (London: The Macmillan Co., Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1971), Part III, 165-68. Hereinafter referred to as Metcalf, India. The Muslims opposed the entire project, for encouragement of English appeared to them as a step towards religious conversion, vide C.H.B.E. V, 113.

⁶⁸Cf., "Trevelyan on Education in India in 1838," in the Eclectic Review Vol. 70, p. 393. Cf., Boulger, Bentinck, p. 160.

⁶⁹B.S.P. 1832-33, VIII, 19-21: "Education in India," See "Wilberforce on Moral and Religious Instructions in India," vide Pamphleteer Vol. 3, p. 43.

sired the creation of "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."⁷⁰ It was also fondly hoped that this "small class" might in course of time:

refine the vernacular dialects of the country and enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. 71

Bentinck simultaneously decided to replace Persian with English as the official language for the conduct of Government business. Since 1835, English had been used as the language of diplomacy, of higher government transactions, and in the Courts of Law. Incidentally, the liberalizing effect of Western ideas and education might also be traced in the introduction of the anatomical dissection of the human corpse, undertaken for the first time at the Calcutta Medical College (1837) by Madhusudan Gupta, a young scholar of the new school.⁷²

⁷⁰Cf., Remarks on portions from Macaulay's Education Minute, in Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, Appendix C, pp. 660-61.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 313-15, infra, Appendix I, 120-22; Sharp, Selections, I, 116.

⁷²K. Ingham, Reformers in India: 1793-1833 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 115. Cf., D. H. Emmott The Birth of Modern Education in India: A History of Christian Schools in Bengal Prior to 1857 (unpublished typed script preserved at the Serampore College Library, West Bengal), pp. 112-13. T. McCully's "English Education and Origins of Indian Nationalism," reviewed in The American Historical Review, Vol. XLVII, 123. Cf., K. M. Panikkar, Asia and Western Dominance: 1498-1945 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 503.

The infiltration of Western ideas through English was no unmixed blessing for the people and the country, though in politics, it introduced the concepts of personal liberty, the rule of law, self-government and nationalism implicit in all English literature and reinforced by a study of the writings of liberal European leaders like Mazzini.⁷³ On one side, copying of the West in its externals and in the admiration of its culture, led to the large-scale conversion of educated Hindus to Christianity. With the rising generation, the guiding principle was: "Hate everything Oriental, adore everything Western."

Another result of the establishment of English education was the demolition of the superstitions and idolatries of the past ages. The Hindu College, set up in 1816 as a seminary for higher Western education in all its branches, became a breeding-ground for rationalists and atheists--at least so far as traditional Hindu religion was concerned. The missionary fathers, acting as unofficial spokesmen of the Government, helped in this process of Westernization. The Reformer, an organ of a large and influential body of educated Hindus, however, making a comparative estimate of the missionary efforts at westernization through evangelization and those

⁷³Spear, Modern History, p. 261. Cf., Bearce, British Attitudes, pp. 169-79. Cf., R. Coupland, Britain and India: 1600-1941 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941) pp. 27-29. Hereinafter referred to as Coupland, Britain.

achieved by the Hindu College thus proceeded:

Has it (the Hindu College) not been the fountain of a new race of men amongst us? From that institution, as from the rock from whence the mighty Ganges takes its rise, a nation is flowing in upon this desert country, to replenish its withered fields with the living waters of knowledge. . . . Have all the efforts of the missionaries given a tithe of that shock to the superstitions of the people which has been given by the Hindu College? . . . This at once shows, that the means they pursue to overturn the ancient reign of idolatry is not calculated to ensure success, and ought to be abandoned for another which promises better success. 74

Even missionary Duff, without committing himself to this comparative assessment, believed that "such genuine native" testimonies were conclusive as to the operative power of a "high English education" in overturning the superstitions and idolatries of India.⁷⁵ We are already familiar with Macaulay's estimate of the vernacular languages (Sanskrit and Arabic), and their worth, compared to the Western education and English language. Later, Sir Charles Trevelyan, an eminent English official in India during the period of the Sepoy Mutiny, made, in a different strain from Macaulay's, an illuminating analysis of the political results of the various systems of education operating in India in 1838. He was foresighted enough to discover that "by giving them [Indians] knowledge, we are giving them power, of which they will make

⁷⁴B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, 420. Appendix E, referred to in the Evidence of the Rev. A. Duff, Q. 6107, p. 54.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 420.

the first use against ourselves."⁷⁶ From his scrutiny of the Arabic and Sanskrit systems of learning, Sir Charles found that the Arabic or Muslim system was based on the exercise of power and the indulgence of passion. The Muslims derived from Divine Right, their idea of Universal Supremacy, and their religion sanctioned this "Rule of the Sword." Consequently, the non-conformists were to be kept in a state of abject subservience. Again, though less violent and militant than the Muslim the Hindu system appeared to Sir Charles as still more exclusive. For, anyone not a Hindu was considered an impure outcast, fit only for servitude, and duties of Government were vested in the military under the dictates of the priestly class (i.e., the Brahmins).⁷⁷

It was foreseen by intelligent British officials, foremost amongst whom was Sir Charles Trevelyan, that in spite of the introduction of English education, or rather because of it, the existing link between England and India would not be durable, as nothing could prevent Indians from gaining their independence. There were two roads leading to such a result; one through revolution, the other, through reform. The only means the Government had for preventing violent revolutionary

⁷⁶B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, 495; Appendix K (Referred to in the Evidence of Sir Charles Trevelyan, Q. 6794, p. 187). Extract from a work on the Education of the People of India, by Charles E. Trevelyan, Esq. of the Bengal Civil Service, London, 1838.

⁷⁷Ibid., Appendix K, pp. 495-96.

course and ensuring the more desired reform course was, "to set the natives on a process of European improvement, to which they were already sufficiently inclined, thanks to English education." It was also believed that as the political education of a nation was a time-consuming factor, a hundred years would hardly suffice to prepare the people for self-government on the European model.⁷⁸ In fact, in less than fifty years' time India received its first schooling in self-government under Lord Ripon.

Advocates Steam Communication Between
England and India

Bentinck's desire to improve India's contacts with the West, especially Britain, is demonstrated by the fact that as early as August 1830, the Governor-General decided that "letters and tidings" should travel via the Red Sea Route in preference to the slower Cape of Good Hope Route. In some respects, steam communication was to have more salutary effect on India than education itself. Bentinck gave evidence in 1837, after he returned to England, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, urging the necessity for steam com-

⁷⁸B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, 496. Appendix K.

munication by the shortest and fastest route. The evidence⁷⁹ because of its bearing on later history of India deserves re-production here:

It is through the means of a quite safe and frequent communication between all India and England that the natives of India in person will be enabled to bring their complaints and grievances before the authorities and the country; that large numbers of disinterested travelers will have it in their power to report to their country at home the nature and circumstances of this distant portion of the Empire. This result, . . . will be to rouse the shameful apathy and indifference of Great Britain to the concerns of India and by thus bringing the eye of the British public to bear upon India, it may be hoped that the desired amelioration may be accomplished. . . . Ram-mohun Roy has broken the ice by overcoming the barrier of certain customs as to food prescribed by the Hindu religion . . . some rich and well-educated natives are preparing to tread in his footsteps, with the same laudable desire of seeing what India may become, by what Europe and especially, England, is; and of raising their country by the same means from the moral and political degradation in which she is plunged. 80

The strong utilitarian intention to uplift the moral and political tone of the people of India is clearly brought out through the above.

Free Press

Last, though not the least significant measure of amelioration with which Bentinck's government has been credited,

⁷⁹B.S.P. 1837, VI, 552: "Lord Bentinck's Evidence before the Select Committee On Steam Communication with India." See Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 316.

⁸⁰B.S.P. 1837, VI, 540-41: "Evidence of Sir Alexander Johnstone on Steam Communication with India."

is the arrangement for a free press in India. The question of a free press is intimately associated with that of education, which explains its relevance in the present setting. Bentinck's liberal attitude in this matter may best be understood from his communique which appeared in several journals of the Bengal Presidency in 1834. It runs:

The Governor-General invites the communication of all suggestions (from all native gentlemen, merchants, landholders, etc., and also from all Europeans, both in and out of service, including that useful and respectable body of men, the indigo planters) tending to promote any branch of national industry, to improve commercial intercourse by land or water, to amend any defect in existing establishments, to encourage the diffusion of general education and useful knowledge, and to advance the general prosperity and happiness of the British Empire in India. ⁸¹

The touch of liberal utilitarianism is quite conspicuous in the communique, and it is not strange that in this liberal climate the periodical publications flourished.

We find that between 1814 and 1834, there was a significant increase in the number of periodical publications in the Bengal Presidency.⁸² By the close of 1834, in Calcutta alone, there were eight daily English newspapers, two papers issued thrice a week, one twice a week, nine weekly, six monthly, four quarterly, and six yearly--in all, thirty-six.

⁸¹"The Periodical Press," Amer. Quart. Reg., Aug. 1834, p. 41.

⁸²In 1814 there were a few periodicals, including The Asiatic Mirror. For a complete list of English and native newspapers, see S. Natarajan, A History of the Press in India (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 25-26, 58-59. Hereinafter referred to as Natarajan, Press in India.

Apart from these, there were a large number of other papers and periodicals published in the Provinces. Thus, it may be argued that for all practical purposes, the Press in India was "free" during the administration of Lord Bentinck.⁸³ He had "sowed the seed and nursed it to maturity." For this, of course, the Governor-General had to bear all sorts of personal criticism from his Home Government.⁸⁴

The movement for a Free Press in India, was started by Rammohun Roy as early as 1823. Rammohun had anticipated many of the arguments of John Stuart-Mill--the liberal utilitarian.⁸⁵ His spirit of revolt is evident from the fact that the Raja instantaneously stopped the publication of his vernacular journal--the Mirat-ul-Ukhbar (i.e., the Mirror of News), a Persian weekly--on July 2, 1823, in protest against the arbitrary Press Licensing Regulations issued by John Adam, the acting Governor-General that year (March 1823).⁸⁶

Supported by five other signatories (friends and as-

⁸³Cf., "The Periodical Press," in Amer. Quart. Reg., Aug. 1834, p. 41. See Boulger, Bentinck, p. 161.

⁸⁴B.S.P. 1852-53, XXXII, 159: "Minutes of Evidence by Sir Charles Trevelyan." Consult Edward Thompson, Life of Sir Charles, Lord Metcalfe (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1937) p. 320-31.

⁸⁵Roy, Works (Memorial to the Supreme Court), p. 443. Cf., Collet, Rammohun Roy, pp. 423-29. (Appendix 1).

⁸⁶Collet, Rammohun Roy, p. 455. Also Natarajan, Press in India, p. 39.

sociates of the Raja), Rammohun sent an "Appeal" to the King-in-Council and a Memorial to the Supreme Court, praying for the restoration of their lawful rights, which were denied them by Adam's Regulation. Though nothing substantial resulted from the Memorial itself, it marks an important stage in the growth of Indian political consciousness, quite novel for that age, and characterized as "the Areopagitica of Indian History" by the English biographer of the Raja. The "Appeal," says Collet, was written "in a language forever associated with the glorious vindication of Liberty"⁸⁷ The memorial and the appeal considered as landmarks in Indian national history, really represented the assertive attempts for a free press in India by the enlightened and liberal Indians. This was the beginning of that mode of constitutional agitation for gaining political rights, which Indians had learnt to value so much during the height of the Nationalist movement.⁸⁸

The idea expressed above is corroborated in historian, L. S. S. O'Malley's observation made a century later after the Round Table Conference in London in December 1930 and January 1931. He said:

A Round Table Conference in London to discuss India's future, with Indians taking a full share in the discussions, would have been a preposterous and incredible suggestion to Englishmen of the Company's days. It might never have come about had the great Rammohun Roy not taken the lead

⁸⁷ Collet, Rammohun Roy, p. 180.

⁸⁸ R. C. Dutt, cited in O'Malley, Modern India, p. 198.

and the three Tagores (Dwarkanath, Prosonno Coomar and Chunder Coomar), a Ghosh (Hurchunder) and a Bonergee (Gowree Churn) not joined with him in starting the process that led to it. 89

Though the movement for a free press was initiated long before Lord Bentinck assumed office in 1828, it almost reached its climax during his period. The vernacular press in India was, however, liberated by Sir Charles Metcalfe, acting Governor-General (March 1835 to March 1836), who has since been justly called the "Liberator of the Indian Press." Freedom of the Indian Press became a reality on August 3, 1835, with the passing of the Regulation XI and annulment of the previous Licensing Regulation of 1823.⁹⁰ When the Indian Press received its freedom, Lord Bentinck, however, was no longer the Governor-General. He had though, while in office, substantially helped assure the achievement.

It may be reasonably surmised that the Governor-General was influenced in this particular instance by Raja Ramohun Roy, as he had been influenced by the latter's knowledge and opinions in respect of the abolition of the Suttee rite and the introduction of English education.⁹¹ Fittingly

⁸⁹O'Malley, Modern India, pp. 198-99.

⁹⁰"Free Press in India," in the Asiatic Journal, March 1836, pp. 180-181. For the texts of the Ordinance of March 1823 and August 1835 see Natarajan, Press In India, pp. 325-29, 333-36.

⁹¹"Governor-General Bentinck's reply to the Address of the Natives," June 8, 1835, in Asiatic Journal, Dec. 1835, pp. 203-4.

enough, a Free Press Dinner was arranged at the Town Hall to commemorate the occasion on September 15, 1835, when the new Act came into force. Thereafter, the vernacular press in India continued free and unfettered until the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, almost a year after Dalhousie's departure from the country, when temporary restrictions on the press were once again introduced.⁹²

It should be mentioned in this context that the first vernacular newspaper was founded by Rev. J. C. Marshman in April 1818. This was the Samachar Darpan, (i.e. Mirror of News). The second noted paper was Rammohun Roy's Sambad Kaumudi (i.e. Moon of Intelligence) in 1821, followed by Bhabani Banerjee's Samachar Chandrika (1822).⁹³ Controversy among these three journals, especially over social and religious issues of the day, helped in awakening the social and religious consciousness of the people. They could moreover gradually appreciate the merits and drawbacks of the Company's administration. This helped the spread and popularity of the English language, and contributed, in course of time, to the growth of the Indian press--both in Indian language as well

⁹² "Indian Press--Its History," in the Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta), Centenary Supplement, ed., T. K. Ghosh, Part VII (1968), p. 56. For Elphinstone's views in this regard, cf., E. Thornton, History of the British Empire in India (6 Vols.; London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1845), VI, 72. See Griffiths, British Impact, p. 272. For the Press Act of 1857, cf., Natarajan, Press in India, pp. 337-41.

⁹³ Natarajan, Press in India, p. 60.

as English.⁹⁴ In a short span of time, these journals were to serve as useful vehicles and carriers of popular ideas and opinions.

⁹⁴Spear, India, p. 124. Cf., "The Periodical Press." in Amer. Quart. Rev., Aug. 1834, p. 41.

CHAPTER IV

LORD DALHOUSIE: BENEVOLENT DESPOT

IDEAL FOR CARLYLE'S "KING"

Periods of Peace Set In--During Both Administrators' Early Years

In certain respects there was a similarity in the atmosphere of apparent calm when Lord Bentinck arrived in 1828, and at the moment when Lord Dalhousie assumed office in January 1848. In the first instance, India (within the territorial limits of the Company's Government) had not yet fully recovered from the reverses of the First Burma War (1824-26), and was still in a critical financial position. The people eagerly longed for peace and stability, in society and in government, when Bentinck resumed office and saw his reforming drive as a panacea for every kind of evil. Similarly, when Dalhousie took up the charge of Indian Administration in 1848,¹ India had been enjoying a period of temporary peace, as the Sikh Confederacy had been lately humbled at the Sutlej (First Sikh War 1845-46), during Lord Hardinge's rule (1844-48), and the Maratha power had been shattered at Maharajpore

¹Cf., "Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), Dec. 21, 1860, p. 10. S. N. Sen, Eighteen Fifty-Seven (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1957), p. 330. Hereinafter referred to as Sen, Fifty-Seven.

and Gwalior.² As the country had been at peace with all its neighbors, its armed force was reduced by 50,000 men, while its finances, though not fully repaired, were steadily improving.

However, fond expectations for a durable peace were shattered within four months after Dalhousie came to power. A sudden outrage at Multan (leading to the murder of two Britishers) served as a prelude to the military rising in the Punjab.³ As a consequence of the second Sikh War, came the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, and its establishment as a British province. Burma was added to the Company's territory in 1852, following a Proclamation by the Governor-General.⁴ Besides these two important conquests, Dalhousie enlarged the area of the Company's territorial jurisdiction through his policy of annexations often couched in the "Doctrine of Lapse." Under this second category comes Satara, Jhansi, Berar (May,

²Cf., "Lord Dalhousie's Rule in India," in The Times (London), April 18, 1856, p. 1. Hereinafter referred to as "Dalhousie's Rule," in The Times (London). See Lajpat Rai, Young India (New York, Howard Fertig, 1968), Chapter II, 97-98. Hereinafter referred to as Rai, India.

³Cf., "Dalhousie's Rule," in The Times (London), April 18, 1856, p. 1. See also Arbuthnot, "Dalhousie," in D.N.B. XVI, 690-91.

⁴Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), May 20, 1853, "Annexation of Pegu," pp. 431-36.

1854) and Nagpur (July, 1854) and Oudh (February, 1856).⁵ in which misgovernment by the native King in violation of former promises was made a pretext for annexation. In point of time, the "Doctrine of Lapse" dates back to 1834--the closing period of Bentinck's Government. It had been unused for more than a decade, before Dalhousie was to utilize it to expand the Company's sovereign territorial authority. However, it is not this side of Dalhousie's Government with which we are solely concerned here. Like Bentinck, Dalhousie's Administration also was marked by several well-meaning reform activities which, however, appear to have been of mixed blessing to the people. Besides his extension of the territorial frontiers and the introduction of the concept of a United Indian Empire, Dalhousie's scheme of reforms, as we shall presently find, brought about a change in India that began the conversion of an agricultural land of the past into a mercantile and manufacturing country of the modern times.⁶

⁵Cf., Hansard, 3rd, CIX (1850), March 21, 1850, "Dependent Princes of India," pp. 1218-19. Also see B.S.P. 1857-58, XLII, 151: "Annexations," The Punjab, Pegu, Oudh, Nagpore, Berar, etc., comprised an area of 118,000 square miles, i.e., equal in extent to the United Kingdom, vide "India Under Lord Dalhousie," in Blackwood's Magazine, Aug. 1856, p. 236. Also cf., "Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), 21 Dec. 1860, p. 10.

⁶Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 10-11. But, along with industrialism, agricultural improvements continued as well, cf., "India" in The Times (London), 16 June, 1856, p. 9.

Railway Reforms

Despite his pre-occupation with the complex administrative problems of the country, especially of the Punjab, Dalhousie as a well-intentioned and benevolent statesman, did succeed with his broad program of social and national amelioration. From the nationalist Indian's point of view, it was not so much in wars of conquests and of annexations, but in the domain of administrative consolidation that the chief glory of Dalhousie lay. For the defence of the New Dominion (i.e. India), Dalhousie brought about an innovation in the system of internal communication, through reform and re-organization of the Railways, the Telegraphs and the Post Offices. In 1853, the Governor-General penned his famous Railway Minute--and the project as an elaborate and far-fetched document remained the basis of the entire railway network in the country.⁷

In keeping with his scheme of operation, the first railway line was opened in 1853 from Bombay to Thana,⁸ and a more important line was laid between Calcutta and the Raniganj

⁷B.S.P. 1852-53, XLVIII, 253: "Railways System: India." Cf., Kaye, Sepoy War I, 190-91.

⁸"Railways in India," in The Times (London), 18 May, 1853, p. 6. Cf., Edwin Arnold, The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India (2 Vols.; London: Saunders, Otley and Co., 1865), II, 225. Hereinafter referred to as Arnold, British India, II. Also see Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 190-91 and Griffiths, British Impact, pp. 423-24.

coal area in 1854. On the 3rd February, 1855, was inaugurated officially the opening of the Calcutta-Delhi-Lahore Railway, which traversed the most fertile tracts of India, connected its most densely populated and ancient cities with the ocean, and successfully opened out the huge wealth and resources of remote, and, at the time, inaccessible districts. A day later, the Bengal Railway covering a distance of 122 miles was declared opened.⁹ Before 1856 was over, thousands of miles of railways were under construction or survey. The railroad system thus piloted by Lord Dalhousie and developed by his successors, had 15,245 miles in operation and could carry over a hundred millions passengers by the 90s of the last century.¹⁰

However, the good work that the Governor-General had initiated through the railway system did not end in itself. The railways threw open the country to private enterprise and to English capital, and acted as the harbinger of a new industrial epoch. By offering the railways to public companies (under state-sponsorship), Dalhousie did much to stimulate that zeal of private enterprise which, he knew, had wrought such

⁹"Railways operated successfully from July 15, 1854," vide Dalhousie's letter of Aug. 12, 1854, in Baird, Private Letters, pp. 314, 336. Cf., "Opening of the Calcutta-Delhi-Lahore Railway by the Governor-General of India," in the Illustrated London News, March 24, 1855, p. 275, and Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 419.

¹⁰Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 190-91.

"wonders" in his own land.¹¹ The erection of the Indian railways, like his other reform measures, served a two-fold purpose. First, the compactness of the Company's conquered possessions increased the striking capacity of his military personnel at every strategic station of British India and railway construction was utilized as a bait "to introduce English capital and private enterprise in the country on a large scale." This served the Company's interests very well. Secondly, and this was no less important, the problem of communication, so far as the Indian people were concerned, was greatly improved, and easy communication brought people in different parts of the country closer than ever before. This acted as a cementing bond of unity for the country and served her well in the near future. Thus, the railways brought about commercial as well as social advantages for the government and the country.¹²

Dalhousie's railway scheme not only removed the ancient "checks and hindrances," but also made "all parts in India free" and boosted internal trade of the country. The

¹¹For a sharp criticism of Dalhousie's Railway policy in England, see the Editorial on Dalhousie's Administration in The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. Cf., Young, Victorian England, p. 53.

¹²Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 195-201. Cf., The article on "Opening of Calcutta-Delhi-Lahore Railway, etc.," in The Illustrated London News, March 24, 1855, p. 275. See Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 193.

railways, in some sense, more than the roads and canals,¹³ radically transformed the Indian transport system, and as seen already, helped the growth of the modern Indian economy. Incidentally, the results of Dalhousie's activity in railway building is clearly evident from available Parliamentary records.¹⁴ Today, India's 40,000 miles of railroad are nationally controlled and administered.¹⁵

Electric Telegraphs

Dalhousie also pioneered the construction of the electric telegraph,¹⁶ which brought the latest news from Calcutta to Delhi (about 1,000 miles) quickly. It furnished the details of the day's "battle or assault" to the Chief Executive of the Company's Government in Calcutta. The name of Dr. W. O. Shaughnessy (who became the Superintendent of the New De-

¹³B.S.P. 1857 (Session II), XXIX, 447: "Railways, Canals, Roads." Cf., Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India," pp. 1111-17. See Arnold, British India II, 220-21.

¹⁴B.S.P. 1857, XXIX, 13: "Revenues and Expenditure," Cf., Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 194-96.

¹⁵Spear, India, p. 97.

¹⁶B.S.P. 1854-55, XL, 485: "Telegraphs." Dalhousie had started large experiments on electric telegraphs as early as 1850, vide Baird, Private Letters, p. 119. Also see "Indian Electric Telegraph," in The Times (London), 28 April, 1854, p. 8; cf., "Summary of Indian News," in The Morning Chronicle (London), Dec. 3, 1855, p. 6.

partment of Telegraphs) should go down in history as the originator of the electric telegraph of the Republic of India. From his report (April 1856), we know that between November 1853 and February 1856, 4,000 miles of electric telegraph had been laid and placed in working order. It took 40 minutes for a news item to travel from Calcutta to Bombay (1,600 miles). The electric telegraph was so recent an institution in India, having only been opened to the public on 3rd February 1855, that the latter half of Dalhousie's rule saw both its inauguration and its completion. The political and military advantages which the British Administration in India derived from such an engine of power were too obvious. Even Dalhousie himself had to admit the political reinforcement of the telegraph.¹⁷

It is interesting that a mutineer, during the height of the Sepoy Mutiny, pointing to the telegraph wire, on way to his execution, exclaimed: "It is that accursed string that strangles us." The electric telegraph, apart from forming the basis of British military policy in India, also re-orientated the country's new mercantile system. By 1890s, the telegraph network had covered about 100,000 miles.¹⁸ It may be noted

¹⁷ "Our Indian Empire," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1856, pp. 656-57. See "Dalhousie's Rule," in The Times (London), April 18, 1856, p. 1. Cf., Dalhousie's letter of Feb. 5, 1855, in Baird, Private Letters, pp. 332, 337 and Arnold, British India II, 243.

¹⁸ B.S.P. 1856, XLV, 107: "Lord Dalhousie's Minute No. XIV." For a review of this Minute, cf., "India," in The Times (London), June 16, 1856, p. 9.

in passing from a report appearing in the Friend of India (September 13, 1855), that the cable from England to India was about to be a reality. It was certain that the line once complete would place India within one day's journey of England and thus help serve imperial interests better through the instantaneous communication system.¹⁹

Public Works, Roads, Irrigation, Post Office

Next, Dalhousie gave his attention to the problem of public works, which had to be re-organized to ensure the smooth working of the railway and the telegraph systems in India. During his eight-year period in office, Dalhousie removed the inefficient Military Board and introduced instead a new Department of Public Works,²⁰ which cost about £2,500,000 in 1856. The Punjab, and every province in India derived benefits from such administrative activity.²¹ The improved roads system, which later covered the whole of India with solidly erected bridges and durable hard-surfaced roadways, dates its

¹⁹"Indian Telegraphs," in The Times (London), Nov. 12, 1855, p. 5.

²⁰B.S.P. 1854, XLVIII, 1, 253: "Public Works." Cf., Dalhousie's letter of Feb. 28, 1855, in Baird, Private Letters, pp. 337-38. See "Letters to the editor on Public Works in India," in The Morning Chronicle (London), Dec. 21 and 31, 1855, p. 5 (both).

²¹B.S.P. 1854, LXIX, 455: "Punjab Administration."

renovation from the time of Lord Dalhousie. About 2,000 miles of road, bridged and hard-surfaced, almost the entire length from Calcutta to Peshawar,²²--the Grand Trunk Road, between Lahore and Peshawar, along the line of which the army of the Punjab was massed--was of special significance to the Governor-General.²³ By 1857, the Grand Trunk Road acted as the main artery for a branching system of highways and communications, connecting in a network Calcutta with Delhi, and pushing on towards Lahore and Peshawar. A grant of £70,000 was approved for bridges on the Grand Trunk Road, while a further £100,000 was appropriated for the road to Patna. A still bigger sum was allowed for the great Military Road from Dacca to Prome.²⁴ Though its value to the state and to the people was repeatedly declared both by the Home Authorities and the Government of India, yet from:

a political and military point of view its consequence can hardly be over-rated, as binding together all our great northern cantonments and maintaining communication with Peshawar--our greatest frontier station, the most important place perhaps, in that portion of Asia. In this respect, it is a work not so much for the province of the

²²"Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), Dec. 21, 1860, p. 10. Cf., Arnold, British India, II. 250-53.

²³B.S.P. 1854, LXIX, 455: "Punjab: Administration." Cf., "India under Lord Dalhousie," in Blackwood's Magazine, Aug. 1856, p. 244. See Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India--Public Works," pp. 1112-13.

²⁴B.S.P. 1856, XLV, 107: "Dalhousie's Minute No. XIV." Also Arnold, British India II, 250-53. Cf., Obituary in the Annual Register for 1860 (London, 1861), pp. 408-9.

Punjab, as for the Empire of India. Lastly, it is the great outlet and channel for the land commerce and the import and export trade between India, Central Asia and the West. 25

Of all the works of public usefulness and improvement, which could be applied to an Indian province, works of irrigation introduced by Dalhousie were of greatest importance because of their contribution to the physical conditions of life for the Indian people. The two most notable irrigation works testifying to the Governor-General's desire for physical improvement were the Bari Doab Canal in the Punjab (1,200 miles),²⁶ and the great Ganges Canal--completed in 1854 after eight years of work and a huge expense. The entire main lines of the Ganges Canal (525 miles in length), constructed to serve the double purpose of irrigation and navigation, were designed and erected skillfully. Its total length surpassed "all the irrigation lines of Lombardy and Egypt together." James Thomason (Lieutenant Governor, North-Western Provinces, 1843-53) claimed that as a work "it stood unequalled in its class and character among the efforts of the civilized na-

²⁵"Second Punjab Report," p. 164, cited in Blackwood's Magazine, Aug. 1856, p. 244. Cf., B.S.P. 1854, LXIX, 455: "Punjab: Administration." By 1927, 50,000 miles of first class roads were laid, vide Spear, India, p. 97.

²⁶Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India, Irrigation: Punjab Canals," pp. 1117-18.

tions."²⁷ It is not easy to estimate the extent of the benefits which the silting influence of these and other smaller canals conferred upon millions by arresting the recurrence of the widespread desolation of famine and death as in 1837.²⁸ By 1882, the Bari Doab Canal alone silted the country "with a network of 1,200 miles of main and distributing channels," costing £1,500,000 and watering half-a-million of acres annually.²⁹ Again, a glance at the irrigation project of the Godavari River, would serve as a striking monument to the Governor-General's rule.³⁰

To Dalhousie, as to Bentinck, there was only one road to employment and promotion, and that was merit, and merit alone. This search for talent enabled him to lay the foundation of a band of trained civil engineers from England,

²⁷Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India: Ganges Canal," p. 1117. Also Baird, Private Letters p. 296, and Appendix G, pp. 436-37. Also "Our Indian Empire," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1856, pp. 652-53, and Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 419.

²⁸For a critical note on Dalhousie's Irrigation Project, see The Morning Chronicle (London), Dec. 22, 1860, p. 4. According to Parliamentary Intelligence, there was "as little protection from famine for want of irrigation to the great majority of people in 1856 as in 1848," vide The Times (London), May 20, 1856, p. 5.

²⁹Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 419, and Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 103.

³⁰B.S.P. 1852-53, LXIX, 233: "Irrigation: Godavari," The Godavari system has a total length of 2,500 miles, cited in Spear, India, p. 109.

who literally erected the material frame-work of Modern India.³¹ He supported Thomason's project for an Engineering College at Rurki and also aided in the establishment of engineering academies in the Presidencies of Calcutta,³² Bombay and Madras, to enable the country to have Civil Engineers of its own. In the face of stout opposition, Dalhousie insisted that "such benefactors as outstanding public engineers should be knighted."³³ Thus, to all appearances, to Lord Dalhousie belonged the distinction of having first given systematic development to the idea of public works.

In the span of four brief years, between July 1853 and July 1856, a sum of about nine million pounds sterling was spent on public works. These varied public works, in the period of their rapid growth, tended to bring greater revenue to the state. By improving the fertility of the country and opening roads for its produce, the irrigation works became so remunerative that they paid at rates of from 20 percent to 70 percent on the outlay. Thus, in course of a few years, these not only became an immediate source of profit to the state,

³¹ Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 190-91. Cf., Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 200-1. Dalhousie did not show favor even to the sons of his intimate friend in matters of employment, Baird, Private Letters, Intro., vii.

³² The Bengal Engineering College at Sibpore was founded in 1856.

³³ Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 418-19.

but also contributed to the prosperity of all of its citizens.³⁴

Dalhousie is regarded as the Father of the "Civilized Post Office in India." His earliest effort in this direction was to abolish the thoroughly inefficient postal organization, and to introduce the cheap half-anna (three-fourths pence) postage rate.³⁵ To make this feasible, the Governor-General had, first of all, to appoint a three-man Civilian Commission, consisting of Cecil Beadon, Sir John Campbell and Mountstuart Elphinstone, to investigate the operation of the Indian postal system.³⁶ The findings of this commission revealed the inordinately high rate of postage, which on a single letter was worth about three or four days' wages of a skilled Indian worker. Moreover, the forwarding or delaying of letters to their destination was dependent on the pleasure and will of a

³⁴"Our Indian Empire," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1856, p. 655. A very critical note about the success of the irrigation works may be traced in The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. However, by early 20th century, loan for execution of original public works had become a principle of the Indian Government, cf., Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 188-89.

³⁵ Introduction of the cheap postal system was "only a grand reformat second hand," vide Arnold, British India II, 257. This rate was about 3 farthings in 1854, and equal to half a penny in the 1890s, vide Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 202-3.

³⁶B.S.P. 1851, XLI, 197; "Post Office: Commission," Cf., Hansard, 3rd, CXXVI (1854-55), Dec. 14, 1854, "Post Office Commission Report," pp. 292-93. Baird, Private Letters, p. 119. Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 202-3. Cf., "Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), Dec. 21, 1860, p. 10.

corrupt set of subordinate officials in the country post offices. Often, the delivery of a letter to a villager required a personal fee of some kind. Dalhousie did away with these corrupt obstructions, and instituted in their stead a modern postal system, with a uniform half-anna postage for letters of half a tola (90 grains) and one anna (one and one-half pence) for newspapers--both rates carrying the mail from one end of the country to the other. By giving such a great impetus to the circulation of newspapers,³⁷ the new cheap postage actually helped in promoting a spirit of social and political consciousness among the people throughout the country.

Though the postal reform was criticized by a host of orthodox financiers of his day "as an act of sheer folly,"³⁸ nothing could prevent Dalhousie from pursuing his set course of action. Under the new system there came a simple system of postage stamps. Besides making the Post Office, which had been sapping the public revenue, a self-sufficient institution, Dalhousie converted it into a revenue earner. Not only wholesome administrative or financial results came off from this measure, but it produced an important impact on the so-

³⁷B.S.P., 1852-53, LXXVI, 1: "Postal Communication." See "First Returns Under Half-Anna Postage in India," vide The Times (London), Oct. 2, 1855, p. 8. Cf., Masani, India, p. 37. "Our Indian Empire" in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec., 1856, p. 656.

³⁸Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 204-6; Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 202-4.

cial life of the country as well. Before the postal innovation, the social life in the country had been stagnant and the people isolated. In this respect, the effect of the penny-postage (one-half anna) was perhaps more profound than that of the railways and telegraphs, so far as Indian society of the day was concerned. In the words of the Calcutta Review (1854), "The Post Office Commission alone, had Lord Dalhousie done nothing else, would suffice to place his name in the list of Anglo-Indian reformers alongside of Cornwallis."³⁹

The growth of Indian correspondence after Dalhousie's post office reform project may best be appreciated if postal statistics for three individual years are considered. The year prior to the introduction of the penny-post in 1854, hardly 19 million letters were posted in all India, with a portion of them being official correspondence. In 1860, this number went up to 47 million. By the 1890s, the regular post covered more than 70,000 miles, delivered about 300 million of letters a year⁴⁰ (most of which were derived from private, as distinguished from official, correspondence), gathered from more than 17,000 post offices and letter boxes. This was undoubtedly to prove an essential factor in bringing about national and social cohesion and, thus, promoting a bond of

³⁹Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 204. Also Arnold, British India II, 255-57.

⁴⁰Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 205.

unity on the sub-continent.

Educational Reforms and Wood's Despatch (1854)

The year 1854 marks a watershed in the story of the founding of a national education system for the country. Indeed, between 1848 and 1852, Dalhousie had made a thorough study of the different experimental methods of Public Instruction, then in operation.⁴¹ In 1851, the Governor-General willingly came forward and shouldered the financial responsibility for the establishment of a Girl's School in Calcutta (renamed Bethune School and College after its founder), when John Drinkwater Bethune (a member of the Governor-General's Council) died.⁴² In contrast with Lord Bentinck's period in office, the issue of female education made substantial progress during the early years of Dalhousie's Government, owing largely to the selfless efforts of the Indian reformer and educationist, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (generally known as "Vidyasagar") who is acknowledged as the pioneer in

⁴¹Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 205. Cf., Moreland and Chatterjee, Short History, pp. 351-65.

⁴²Cf., "Founding of a Hindu Female School," in The Illustrated London News, Jan. 4, 1851, p. 4. Also Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 418.

this sphere of activity.⁴³ It may be noted here that Vidyasagar was a renowned Sanskrit scholar and was the Principal of the Calcutta Sanskrit College from 1851 to 1858.

Lord Dalhousie personally had been conscious about the good work started by Bethune in introducing female education among the children of the respectable Hindus. For, he readily recognized that such education marked the beginning of a great revolution in the way of life and the habits of the Indian people. He believed that the degeneration of their female-folk had been due to rigid adherence by Hindus and Muslims to their ancient customs. The private efforts of Vidyasagar, reinforced by the Government's liberal attitude, went a long way towards eradicating illiteracy and in helping civilize the Indian community--of which female-folk formed a substantial proportion. Besides the Bethune School, six other female schools were set up around Calcutta about this period, Vidyasagar's hands could be seen in all these establishments.⁴⁴

In 1853, Dalhousie heartily recommended that the vernacular education system, associated with Mr. Thomason's name, should be extended to the North-Western Provinces (i.e. Agra and Oudh forming part of the modern United Provinces). In

⁴³Vidyasagar established over 40 girls' schools between 1855 and 1858, and also acted as the Inspector of Schools under the Directorate of Public Instruction, cf., O'Malley, Modern India, p. 456.

⁴⁴Dalhousie's letter, dated April 16, 1850, in Baird, Private Letters, p. 121.

1854, when proposals for educational reconstruction (including, of course, the vernacular education) came up before the Directors, the important issue of Indian Education was tackled in an all-comprehensive manner.⁴⁵

We know from our previous study that though "a small English-speaking class" had been eventually formed owing to Bentinck's initiative in this regard, this class did not necessarily prove to be, according to Macaulay's prediction, the interpreters of the West to India.⁴⁶ Again, Macaulay's "Filtration Theory," that dominated British attitudes and thought towards education for about two decades, became an extremely delicate issue prior to the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. The need for a rational education policy led to the drawing up of the Directors' Despatch (July 19, 1854), famous in history as Wood's Despatch, the authorship of which is generally ascribed to Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control.⁴⁷

A note of comparison between the education policy of Lord Bentinck's government and that of Lord Dalhousie's government may be briefly drawn in this context. The Education

⁴⁵Hansard, 3rd, CXXXVII (1855), March 5, 1855, "Education in India," pp. 79-82. Cf., Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 205-6 and also Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 379.

⁴⁶Spear, India, pp. 104-5; Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 313-16.

⁴⁷Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 207-8.

Resolution of Bentinck was chiefly based on Lord Macaulay's Minute, in which the latter had been aided by his chief. Similarly, the system of Indian state-controlled education, though not a direct achievement of Lord Dalhousie, was initiated and implemented by him during his Governor-Generalship. In framing the Education Despatch, Sir Charles Wood was greatly helped by the Governor-General, who made available the needed materials and thus shared indirect, but nevertheless important, role in this sort of National educational re-organization.⁴⁸

A sharp contrast distinguishes the Wood's Despatch from the Education Minute of the earlier period. Whereas the latter had dealt a death-blow to the system of Oriental education, by directing that all the educational funds "be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and sciences through the medium of English language,"⁴⁹ the Wood's Despatch, as an historic State Paper, permanently set at rest the long controversy between the rival groups supporting use of the English or the classical Indian languages. Eventually, it placed foundation of Indian vernacular education on a firm footing, with emphasis on the current vernacular languages of the country.

⁴⁸B.S.P. 1857-58, XLII, 339: "Education: Measures to carry out Despatch of 1854." Cf., "Education in India," in The Morning Chronicle (London), Aug. 5, 1854, p. 4.

⁴⁹"The Charter Act of 1813," Spear, India, p. 103.

This was possible because, shortly after Bentinck's Resolution and long before the publication of the Wood's Despatch in 1854, the government's attitude underwent a significant change when it directed that in all the government schools and colleges, cultivation of the vernacular languages should accompany that of the English language.⁵⁰ This explains why during Dalhousie's period the demand for knowledge and learning of the Western sciences had lessened, while popular vernacular learning made considerable progress. Dalhousie himself found that this State Paper was "far wider and more comprehensive than any the local or the Supreme Governments could have ventured to suggest."⁵¹

The large network of educational institutions that grew up as a result included the Hindu Pathshalas and the Muslim Madrassas (elementary schools) in local districts, which later in the century were brought under central governmental supervision. From this stage, in the academic hierarchy, dates the vernacular Grants-in-Aid institutions, and Anglo-Vernacular schools, the High Schools, the Affiliated Colleges (including the newly founded Civil Engineering College, now

⁵⁰"Our Indian Empire," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1856, p. 651. B.S.P. 1854, XLVII, 155; "Education: Despatch."

⁵¹"Our Indian Empire," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1856, p. 652. It seems curious that Dalhousie wrote later in the same year (October 1854) that "in his Despatches on Public Works and Education, Sir Charles Wood showed the shabbiest injustice to the Government of India, and aimed only at personal clap-trap," vide Baird, Private Letters, p. 324.

famous as the B. E. College at Sibpore, in West Bengal). To crown all, were the universities (examining-type of bodies organized on the London University Model) set up in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, within three years of Wood's Despatch, in 1857. Together, these provided for a complete system of instruction, supervised and controlled by the state.⁵² To Percival Spear, it appeared that the rising demand for English language (not so much for the sake of knowledge itself, as for its practical considerations) fully provided for by a system "the lines of which were laid down in that Despatch."⁵³

It is important to note that the Bombay Government had earlier acknowledged the relative importance of elementary education. As early as 1852, it had 233 vernacular schools with more than 11,000 students, as compared to 14 Government Colleges and English Schools with a student population of 2,000. The Bengal Government, on the other hand, had a network of 30 colleges with 5,000 students, but only 33 primary academies. In fact, "The Despatch of 1854 was a vindication of the Bombay Policy."⁵⁴

⁵²Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 206-7.

⁵³Spear, India, p. 105. Cf., Arnold, British India II, 321ff. Cf., Coupland, Britain, p. 28.

⁵⁴Hunter, Empire, pp. 482-84. See also Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 419.

In the perspective of the Education Despatch, the re-organization of the Indian educational system--which combined "the paternalist and liberal traditions"--may thus be legitimately recognized as a crowning act of consolidation by the Government of Lord Dalhousie.⁵⁵ The new forces, both intellectual and political, once set in motion, really acted as stimulating factors towards national unification. By the close of the 19th century, there operated under the new system of education a total of five universities and 133,000 schools and colleges, training up about 3,500,000 students drawn from all the varied religious communities in the country. The Project of Public Instruction, initiated by Sir Charles Wood and practically introduced into India by Lord Dalhousie, has continued to develop along the lines then laid down, by later British Indian administrators.⁵⁶

Lord Bentinck's administration was beset with serious economic short-comings, which compelled the Governor-General to resort to a policy of peace through retrenchment and reform. When Bentinck left India in 1835, the Company's treasury balance had been transformed from one of deficit (one million pounds) to one of surplus (two million pounds). Lord

⁵⁵ B.S.P. 1857-58, XLII, 339: "Education: Measures to carry out Despatch of 1854." See Stokes, India, p. 251.

⁵⁶ Hansard, 3rd, CXLVIII(1857-58), Feb. 19, 1858, "Education in India," pp. 1724-27. Cf., Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 208.

Dalhousie, however, who enjoyed four years of budget surplus between 1850 and 1853,⁵⁷ spent with such unprecedented liberality on the scheme of Public Works, that he was forced to take steps to assure continued fiscal solvency. In every department of his government, Dalhousie ensured efficiency through re-organization and acted very cautiously when he had to meet increasing expenses. During the period of 1848-56, the total revenue of the government of India increased from £24,500,000 to over £30,750,000, i.e., by about £6,250,000.⁵⁸ Of this amount over £2,000,000 were collected from the land revenue proceeds. The total expenses for Army and Civil Administration partially due to territorial expansion, but largely to increased Public Works, was more than met by this augmented revenue. As part of his scheme of re-organization, the Governor-General replaced the useless and inefficient boards, both in the Commissariat and the Public Works, by vigilant departments, each under a responsible chief.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Statistical abstract relating to British India, 22 No., dated, India Office, 7 Sept. 1888, pp. 310-13, cited in Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 210. Also consult, Hansard, 3rd, CXXXV (1854), Aug. 8. 1854, "East India Company's Revenue Accounts," pp. 1436-40.

⁵⁸ B.S.P. 1857 (Session II), XXIX, 13: "Revenues and Expenditure." For a caustic criticism about these expenses, see the Editorial in The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. Cf., Hunter, Dalhousie, p. 211. Also Coupland, Britain, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁹ B.S.P. 1854, XLVIII, 115: "Public Works: Commission."

Social and Humanitarian Aspects

In the midst of his other pre-occupations, Lord Dalhousie did not for a moment lose sight of the social and humanitarian aspects of a benevolent and paternal administration. For the first time, perhaps, in Indian annals, prisoners were put under Inspectors--a move initiated by Thomason under his jurisdiction (in the North-Western Provinces) and was subsequently introduced in other provinces under the Company's rule. Even the right of criminals to legal protection was admitted. The final extirpation of the "Meriah" abominations, prevalent among the Khonds of Central and Western India, took place during Dalhousie's administration. The killing of girl babies was a common practice among some of these primitive warlike tribes, where an unmarried woman (there were large numbers of such because of the dowries demanded at the time of marriage) was considered as unchaste.⁶⁰ This explains why the babies were sacrificed in the Holy Ganges.

The Religious Disabilities Act of 1850 characterized by Dalhousie as the "Hindu Black Act," recognized the civil rights of converts, especially of Hindus converted to Chris-

⁶⁰Cf., "Human Sacrifices and Infanticide in India," reviewed in the Edinburgh Review, Vol. 119 (April, 1864), pp. 197-209. Also Arnold, British India II, 302-12. Between 1837 and 1854, 1,506 Meriahs were rescued, vide Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 325, 419.

tianity, to their ancestral property.⁶¹ Ganenda Mohan Tagore (the son of Prosonno Coomar Tagore, an associate of Rammohun) who benefited under the provision of the Act is a shining example of a converted Christian beneficiary. The origin of the Act can be traced to the "Lex Loci" (Act for Liberty of Conscience) of 1845. According to the latter, liberty of conscience and protection of the converts, especially of the Christian converts, was guaranteed against any injury in respect of property or inheritance by reason of a change in religious belief.⁶² The underlying motive behind the measure might have been to achieve a more liberal situation, but the ulterior motive of the Government was to give benefits through the Act, mainly, to Indian converts to Christianity. Indirectly, however, the measure served as an incentive to conversion. It should be noted, that Alexander Duff, a famous missionary, led those who fought the battle for the Rights of Conscience, which Lord Bentinck, partially, and Lord Dalhousie and Lord John Lawrence, (Viceroy from 1864 to 1869) later completely secured to all classes.⁶³

⁶¹Cf., "Concept of Equality" in English Law, in Spear, India, pp. 106-7. Cf., Dalhousie's letter, dated April 16, 1850, cited in Baird, Private Letters, p. 118. See Masani, India, p. 40. Cf., "Indian Law of Inheritance," in The Times (London), 27 May, 1853. p. 2.

⁶²For a brief history of the origin of "Lex Loci," see Smith, Duff I, 251.

⁶³B.S.P. 1856, XLV, 107: "Lord Dalhousie's Minute, XIV, dated 28 Feb. 1856." Cf., "E. I. Co. and the Government of India," in The Morning Chronicle (London), Dec. 20, 1855, p. 5.

Likewise, to Dalhousie goes the credit of liberating Hindoo widows from their age-old grievous disabilities, by legalizing their marriages. This measure, Act XV of 1856, introduced by Sir John Peter Grant,⁶⁴ left the religious part of the question untouched and declared the remarriage of a widow to be legal.⁶⁵ The Act, however, did not come into operation at once. It was only as an outcome of sustained efforts, reinforced through "Appeals" to the Government in October of 1855, that it became applicable. In this regard, the educated Indian intelligentsia, headed by Vidyasagar, played a major role.⁶⁶ Just as Rammohun rendered able assistance to the Government of Lord Bentinck in the matter of abolition of Suttee, Vidyasagar came to the assistance of Lord Dalhousie's government, through his intimate knowledge of the Indian character and his scholarly ability to interpret Hindu Scriptural texts in regard to remarriage of widows.

⁶⁴For a brief sketch of Sir John Peter Grant, cf., Dictionary of Indian Biography, ed. C. E. Buckland (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Lim., 1906, republished by the Gale Research Co., Book Tower, Detroit, 1968), pp. 176-77.

⁶⁵Cf., "Hindoo Widow Remarriage," in the Hindoo Patriot (Calcutta) ed. Harish Mukerjee, Jan. 1, 1857, p. 5. See "Hindoo Widow Remarriage," in The Times (London), Jan. 14, 1856, p. 10. Also R. H. Patterson's "The Religions of India," in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1857, pp. 743-67. Reference may be made to the Bengal Memorial that protested against making Hindoo Widow marriage legal, vide Kaye, Sepoy War I, 188-90.

⁶⁶For a note on Vidyasagar, see "Hindoo Widow Remarriage," in the Hindoo Patriot (Calcutta) Jan. 1, 1857, p. 5. Cf., O'Malley, Modern India, p. 450 and C.H.B.E. V, 538.

It was upon Dalhousie, that the responsibility for rigorously applying the prohibitive clauses of the Suttee legislation of Lord Bentinck devolved. He extended the jurisdiction of Regulation XVII. (of December 4, 1829) to the native states.⁶⁷ Thus, the unfinished work of an earlier period was made complete. The progress towards the abolition of the Suttee, interesting as it is, reads like this: In 1829, the Suttee was abolished by law in the Company's territories; in 1840, it was liquidated by the Gaikwar of Baroda and by chiefs of several adjoining states; in 1846, it was done away with in Jaipore through the influence of Colonel John Ludlow; and 11 out of 18 Rajpoot states followed this example in the same year. In Sattara, it was abolished in 1846, though as a voluntary measure. In 1847, Lord Hardinge, then Governor-General declared that "Suttee, infanticide and slavery are prohibited throughout the territory forming the remotest Hindu principality of India (i.e. Kashmir)."⁶⁸ Dalhousie, however, carried this measure to its final and logical conclusion.

Special measures were resorted to for the suppression of Thuggee and Dacoity on the highways by the government of

⁶⁷Cf., Dalhousie's letter of April 16, 1850, in Baird Private Letters, p. 118. See "Suttee and Infanticide Prohibited Under Pain of Imprisonment and Confiscation of Property," in The Times (London), 21 Feb. 1848, p. 5. Also Arnold, British India II, 301, 312.

⁶⁸Hansard, 3rd, CXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India," p. 1126.

Dalhousie.⁶⁹ His work compares favorably with that of Bentinck in suppression of the Thuggee through the agency of Colonel (nicknamed "Thuggee") William Sleeman and Meadows Taylor during his government. Bentinck, however, did not alter the "Thanadari" system--with Indian "Darogos" in charge of every police district--but centered his activity upon the organization of a "flying squad" organized to deal effectively with the specific crimes of Thuggee and Dacoity. However, the crime of Thuggee was not totally removed by their actions. It persisted till the time of Dalhousie, who is credited with its final suppression in 1856.⁷⁰

Like Bentinck, Dalhousie, too, was an advocate of the free-trade and supported the laissez-faire economic principle. He successfully removed the imposts which had long hindered the flow of trade. As a measure of commercial importance, it contributed to the prosperity of the country. Taken together such measures, though directed primarily to protect and promote the interests of the English East India Company in India

⁶⁹"India Under Lord Dalhousie," in Blackwood's Magazine (Aug. 1856), p. 241. Also Arnold, British India II, 301.

⁷⁰The "Thug" also known as a "phansidar" or noose-holder, waylaid and murdered the by-passer before robbing him. A special department under Col. Sleeman was appointed to deal with this problem of law and order. Suppression of the "Thuggee" was a notable achievement of the Pre-Mutiny Era. Cf., Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 323-24. Also "India Under Lord Dalhousie," in Blackwood's Magazine, Aug. 1856, p. 241.

had a salutary and liberalizing effect on the lives of the Indian peoples and aided in their effort towards material and moral progress.

Before entering into a review of Dalhousie's responsibility for the Indian Mutiny of 1857, it is necessary to take note of the Charter Act of 1853. Like its predecessors--the Charter Acts of 1813 and of 1833--the Act of 1853 is of great constitutional importance. Coming at the regulated interval of twenty years, the Act of 1853 revised and improved the legislative organization ushered in by the previous Act. It was mainly based on a memorandum of Lord Dalhousie written in 1852.⁷¹ On this occasion, no time-limit was laid down for implementation as had been done in both 1813 and 1833.

By the new Act, the Presidency of Bengal, which had been under the direct administration of the Governors-General prior to this time, came under a separate Lieutenant Governor after 1854. Likewise, in 1853, Sir Charles Wood proposed, among other things, the introduction of open competition to recruit Indians for the Civil Service (formerly, the Covenanted Civil Service). Thus, instead of preparing Indians for self-government (for which task it was felt that they were not ready during the early 1850s), the British Government now

⁷¹ Stokes, India, p. 253. In 1853, a petition from the representatives--educated and wealthy, of 40 millions of Bengalees, was presented to the Parliament for removal of a number of their grievances. See Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), May 13, 1853, "Petition presented by Lord Albemarle," p. 298.

proposed educating some Indians for the Civil Service appointments. This proposal (for a few Indians to be high officials) found general concurrence both in Great Britain and India. Dalhousie also encouraged such a step.⁷² Despite such enlightened measures, the Act of 1853, suffered from a number of defects, the chief of which was, that it held too closely to ideas which four decades earlier had been considered "wise, far-sighted, liberal," and which even in 1833 "had been sound and progressive," but which by 1853, required revision, expansion and re-orientation. These were not made in 1853, or in 1858 when peaceful transfer of power was effected as the Company's Government relinquished its charge of Indian administration to the British Crown and Parliament.⁷³

⁷²Cf., Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India," p. 1158. Also see B.S.P. 1852-53, LXIX, 63: "Return Relating to the Covenanted and Uncovenanted Civil Servants of the E. I.Co." Bearce, British Attitudes, pp. 232-33.

⁷³B.S.P. 1856, XLV, 107ff.; "Dalhousie's Minute of Feb. 28, 1856." C.H.B.E. V, 171-72.

CHAPTER V

DALHOUSIE'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SEPOY REVOLT (1857)

Review of His Administrative Work

There is no denying the fact that the administration of Lord Dalhousie marks a memorable and bright chapter in the eventful history of British India. We have already seen the moments of its wars and triumphs.¹ But the greatest achievements of Dalhousie were in the sphere of strengthening and consolidation of the Empire through varied and enlightened measures of general welfare, in which respect he might be called a utilitarian as well.²

A study of Dalhousie's many-sided activities may be briefly outlined so as to find out where the fault lay. To begin with, Dalhousie had introduced in the Punjab the rule of law and justice, in place of wild rule of the sword and

¹C.H.B.E., V, 172-73. See Woodruff, The Founders, pp. 344-69. Cf., Obituary Notice on Lord Dalhousie in the Annual Register for 1860 (London 1861), p. 410. Hereinafter referred to as "Obituary on Dalhousie," Annual Register for 1860. "Papers relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies (1857-58)," in "India Under Lord Canning," vide Edinburgh Review, Vol. 117 (April 1863), pp. 229-40. Sen, Fifty-Seven, p. 39.

²Cf., "The Administration of Lord Dalhousie," in The Times (London), March 5, 1856, p. 8. Supra, pp. 6-7.

military violence.³ He felt it as the bounden duty of the Indian government--true to his imperial convictions to avail of every opportunity--conformably with justice, for bringing under British sway those states, the governments and the frontiers of which he personally endorsed and defended with arms.⁴ His policy of conquests by wars, and of annexations by invoking the "Doctrine of Lapse," extended the territorial jurisdiction of the Company's government by 150,000 square miles, with a population of more than 150 millions, and revenues of £18,000,000 per annum.⁵

Again, with a view to transforming the face of the country within less than a decade's time, by laying the basis of a tolerably adequate system of Indian education (through which the Government could recruit educated Indians to man different branches of its services), by commencing public works on a vast scale through an organized system and by easing the rigors and difficulties of communication and transport

³B.S.P. 1854, LXIX, 455: "Punjab: Administration."

⁴Cf., "The Administration of Lord Dalhousie," in The Times (London), March 5, 1856, p. 9. Consult B.S.P. 1852-53, XXVII, 1: "Indian Territories," first report of the Select Committee.

⁵B.S.P. 1857-58, XLII, 151: "Annexations." See "British India," in The Illustrated London News, Aug. 2, 1851, p. 163. Cf., "Annexation by Lapse," in Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 145-81. To the British public and its political leaders, the best justification for Imperial expansion in India was to accomplish liberal and humanitarian reforms, cf., Bearce, British Attitudes, p. 212. Cf., Sen, Fifty-Seven, p. 36-39.

through railways and telegraphs Lord Dalhousie did introduce a very bold experiment which tended to differ from the practices of his time. His religious experiments also exposed the government's administrative designs in a very shocking light to the general mass of the people.

According to Ramsay Muir, the Mutiny, for the outbreak of which the principles and the policy pursued by Lord Dalhousie are held responsible, was "no more than a tragic episode" grounded on "misunderstandings and meaningless fears." Its success might have turned back the hands of the clock, and India would have found herself once again in her Medieval Age.⁶ How far were the sentiments expressed above justified in the light of the later events? A review of the facts connected with the episode and the measures the Governor-General had proposed, almost by way of a prescient warning to the government of Britain and to the officials he left behind in India, is revealing.⁷

The Mutiny has been variously interpreted as a military rising, an attempt at recovery of their property and privileges by the dispossessed Hindu and Muslim princes and landowners--big and small (i.e. Talukdars), a bid to restore the Mughal Empire or as a Peasants' War. Doubtless, the out-

⁶Muir, British India, pp. 15-16.

⁷The climax was the "Annexation of Oudh," see The Morning Chronicle (London), March 20, 1856, p. 6. B.S.P. 1857-58, XLIV, (part 1), 1: "Mutiny." Sen, Fifty-Seven, p.176.

break did not take the form of a national rising, as it was largely localized in the Upper India regions and thus limited in scope and dimension. Likewise, it was badly organized.⁸ The regular administration functioned as usual south of the Narmada, and in large areas of Bengal and the Punjab. In addition, it should be made clear that mutinies in the Company's Army were no new phenomena.

Early Evidences of Mutiny

The earliest mutiny on record was in 1765-66, when a regiment of the new Bengal Army revolted; in 1806, another rising took place in Vellore,⁹ (for involvement in which Lord Bentinck had been called back) and shared, apparently, certain features, (i.e. forcible conversion to Christianity) with the Mutiny of 1857. In 1809, occurred the White Mutiny, when the European soldiers of the Company rose in arms. Again, the possibility of being sent overseas led to a mutiny of the High-caste Sepoys at Barrackpore during the first Burma War (1824-26). In 1844, two regiments mutinied on the Sikh frontier. Six years later (1850), the 66th Infantry rebelled, when the regiment was disbanded, after being crushed by the

⁸"Mutiny Was the Swan Song of the Old India," cf., Spear, Modern History, p. 271, and also Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 436.

⁹Cf., Hansard, 1st, IX (1807), April 20, 1807, "Mutiny at Vellore," pp. 496-97.

Indian Cavalry.¹⁰ In 1852, the 38th Regiment refused to go to Burma. These were plain statements of facts which, the Home Government, for reasons best known to them quietly ignored or did not take into account seriously.¹¹

The year 1857--the year of the "Great Military Insurrection," marked a turning-point in Indian history. It not only brought about a change in the Governmental set-up, which was the direct outcome of the Mutiny, but also transformed the entire outlook and attitude of that administration towards the people of the land.¹² Towards the close of Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship (early 1856), a widespread feeling of unrest was noticeable in different regions of India. His recently instituted experiments through social and administrative re-orientation, the costly thoroughness of his government (manifest especially in the re-organization of the Public Works Department), and infiltration of Western ideas and education sharply reacted into every section in the social fabric. In fact, a note from an officer in the Bengal army confirmed this fact when he wrote, "one of the chief causes of

¹⁰Cf., "Mutiny of the 66th Bengal Native Infantry," in The Times (London), 22 March 1850, p. 5.

¹¹Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 381, and also Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 437-48.

¹²B.S.P. 1857 (Session II), XXX, 1, 495: "Indian Mutiny." Also see Hansard, 3rd, CXLV (1857), June 9, 1857, "The Mutinies in India," pp. 1393-94. Cf., "The Great Military Insurrection in India," in The Observer (London), 2 Aug. 1857, p. 2.

the outbreak was the system of education, which had been of late introduced."¹³ Even the princes and the landed magnates became panic-stricken with the Governor-General's reformist activities. It is sometimes argued that both Lord Dalhousie and Henry Lawrence (Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab) wanted within the peninsula itself a free-peasantry under a Unitary Government--rather than a simple extension of the Company's frontiers.¹⁴ This argument is, however, open to critical analysis and judgment.

Policy of Absorption of Petty Estates

With such an objective in view, Dalhousie seized every available opportunity of absorbing the smaller subordinate states and depriving landholders with doubtful titles. The Governor-General achieved this objective through, first, his legal prerogative (in this case the "Doctrine of Lapse") by refusing the right of adoption to childless Hindu princes for purposes of succession, and thus took over Sattara, Jhansi, Nagpur (1854) and a few minor states. By this measure, Dal-

¹³ Hansard, 3rd, CXLVIII (1857-58), Feb. 19, 1858, "Education in India," pp. 1725-27. Cf., Lee-Warner, Dalhousie, II, 206 et. seq.

¹⁴ For a critical note on Dalhousie's expansionist policy, see The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. Cf., Hansard, 3rd, CXLV (1857), June 11, 1857, "Administration of Bengal," pp. 1587-92. See Arnold, British India II, 107.

housie not only struck terror in the hearts of the native princes throughout India with the fearful prospect of a thorough-going centralization, but also dealt a cruel blow at the basis of the Hindu religion itself, and took away from Hindu law its most tender legislation.¹⁵

Secondly, the Inam Commission of Bombay (1852-57), appointed to enquire into the soundness or otherwise of the titles of landlords, confiscated about 20,000 estates in the Deccan alone, and about three-fifths of land in the whole country. In substance, the tenor of Dalhousie's policy of integrating the smaller states (which appeared to him as "anachronisms") might be justified in theory, but his action was too hasty, and, at the same time, too drastic. Devoid of popular sympathy and support, Dalhousie's government soon found itself in trouble. On the one side, the inherent orthodoxy and timeworn loyalties were engendered by racial animosity, while on the other hand, single instances of gross injustice resulting from the magnitude of these operations combined with language and legal complexities and general illiteracy. All of these factors were ignored by the Government of the day, with dire consequences. Already bitterness towards foreign rule persisted among society in general. Annexation of Oudh

¹⁵B.S.P., 1857-58, XLII, 151: "Annexations."
Also consult "Dalhousie's Rule," in The Times (London), April 18, 1856, p. 1. See Jackson, Dalhousie's Administration, pp. 5-43. Also Arnold, British India II, 107.

by a proclamation (Feb. 1856), on the eve of Dalhousie's retirement, deepened the antagonism of the people and prepared the ground for resistance. Though the Governor-General was initially opposed to the outright annexation of the territory of Oudh (vide his Minute of June 18, 1855), he ultimately had to obey the High Command's directive. Still Dalhousie was foresighted enough not to leave any official record of his determination to disarm Oudh.¹⁶

This course of dynastic and territorial annexations was viewed generally with dismay by a seemingly large number of princes and landlords and their retainers. Obviously, from this displaced, and thus, discontented group, active conspiracy against the Government was hatched up, and some even assumed the leadership as the Mutiny broke out. Notable among these leaders were Ahmad Ullah (of Faizabad), Nana Sahib (deprived of his father's pension benefits), Tantia Topi, the Rani of Jhansi, Firoz Shah (a relation and parasite of the

¹⁶ Signing of the Oudh Proclamation towards the close of his reign (June 1855) served as Dalhousie's Waterloo--crowning feat of annexation, vide Kaye, Sepoy War I, 142-43, 322-24. B.S.P. 1856, XLV, 659: "Oudh." For the text of this Proclamation re: "Annexation of Oudh," see The Times (London), 19 March, 1856, p. 8. Infra, Appendix 2, pp. 123-24, cited from a critical report in The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. Cf., Boulger, Bentinck, p. 139. Consult Dalhousie's letter dated Feb. 12, 1858, in Baird, Private Letters, pp. 401-2. For criticism of Dalhousie's Oudh policy, cf., Hansard, 3rd, CXLVlll (1857-58), Feb. 16, 1858, "Annexation of Oude," pp. 1477-84. Sen, Fifty-Seven, p. 176.

Mughal Emperor).¹⁷ Thus, the issue of self-interest was paramount in all these instances.

Grievances of all Descriptions

Compared to this side of the story, we find that on the other side a large section of the people were smarting under a host of grievances of various descriptions. As early as 1849, within a year of the Governor-General's term in office, John Bethune made an attempt, urged by Lord Dalhousie himself, to bring about parity in the system of judicial administration through a bill that would have (if enacted) finally enabled Indian judges to try the British-born subjects (or Europeans), who had so far been subjected to the jurisdiction of the Calcutta Criminal Courts only, at the Provincial Courts hereafter. Owing to a united European opposition to this measure, the so-called "Black Act"¹⁸ had to be withdrawn. The people, whose political consciousness was roused by this measure, became convinced quickly of the need for unity, while opposing an organized government, and assured about the chances of its eventual success. This spirit of protest against in-

¹⁷B.S.P. 1857 (Session II), XXX, 1,495; "Indian Mutiny." Cf., "The Men of the Indian Mutinies," in the Fraser's Magazine, June 1858, pp. 686-90.

¹⁸See "Anti-Black Act Agitation in Bengal," in The Times (London), 23 March, 1850, p. 5. Cf., Baird, Private Letters, p. 119.

justice led to assertiveness and promoted united action from this time forward, thus, giving Indian politics a new purpose and direction, especially when the country was on the threshold of revolutionary changes.

Likewise, notice should be taken of the following changes in order to appreciate their bearing on subsequent events of history in the shape of the Mutiny vis-a-vis Dalhousie's role in bringing them about. These, in brief, were:¹⁹ (1) the higher castes, particularly the Brahmins, were haunted by a threat to their social-standing from the importation of the new culture and civilization; (2) the government appeared to be bent on converting people to Christianity; (3) the newly introduced secular education, both for boys and girls, undermined the influence of the Priests; (4) to some sections--possessing orthodoxy and superstition--inventions, such as railways and electric telegraphs, indicated the occult power of the British; (5) irrigation projects were thought of as defiling the sacred Ganges; (6) cast system suddenly fell through in factories, in railway coaches and in common messing system in the prisons; (7) missionary efforts at evangelization lent

¹⁹Kaye, Sepoy War I, 194-95. Cf., Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 441-42. For a brief review of the changes during Dalhousie's government of eight years, consult Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 379.

belief to popular panic and suspicion;²⁰ (8) rigorous application of the Suttee prohibition through reinforced legislation aroused orthodox fear and disdain;²¹ (9) in the name of "equality in law," protection of the civil rights of converts from the fold of Hinduism through Religious Disabilities Act (1850) and, to crown all, (10) lastly, legalization of Hindu widow remarriage (1856) removed legal impediments to undesirable, and hence, unholy unions, and reacted adversely on the contemporary conservatism.²² The latter acts, in particular, were taken as violating the traditional Hindu law of inheritance and suggested the Government's proneness to tamper with the civil laws of the Hindus.

Again, from a psychological point of view, the aristocrat Muslims nurtured a spirit of bitterness towards the British government for toppling the ruling Mughal House at

²⁰"Conversion of Hindoos," in The Times (London), Nov. 26, 1849, p. 5. Also see C.H.B.E. V, 173. In its editorial, The Observer sounded a note of caution to the government as to "be careful enough not to excite any apprehension in the native mind" about the imposition of Christianity, cf., The Observer (London), Oct. 11, 1857, p. 4.

²¹"Suttee and Infanticide Prohibited Under Pain of Imprisonment and Confiscation of Property," in The Times (London), 21 Feb. 1848, p. 5. Cf. Sen, Fifty-Seven, p. 5.

²²Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 364-65. Cf., The Bengal Memorial protesting against the introduction of the relevant legislation, in Kaye, Sepoy War I, 188-90. The Widow Remarriage Act was passed in July 1856, during Lord Canning's administration, though Dalhousie had initiated the process that led to it.

Delhi and, as a last stroke, absorbing Oudh within its territorial orbit. But what added insult to injury was the government's policy of favoring the Hindus with English education and government services, and a growing indifference towards the Muslims and their interests. It should be mentioned in this context, that both the Hindus and the Muslims fought unitedly against the British in the Sepoy War, after which the British government fostered a policy of playing one community against the other. Since 1857, the Hindus and Muslims considered themselves as separate nations. The logical long-range outcome of this was the division of the Indian sub-continent into two parts--Hindustan and Pakistan (August 1947).

During Dalhousie's regime, both the Hindus and the Muslims, for understandable reasons, assumed an attitude of hostility towards his government which, they believed, had lowered the flash-point to such an extent, that any compromise was unthinkable.²³ Some of the arguments advanced in the above lines dated from even before Dalhousie's arrival in the country. But, undoubtedly, Dalhousie's administrative measures aggravated the crisis. It was, however, the Sepoy soldiers, who for so long had assisted the government in its triumphs and successes--and not so much the disorganized and dis-

²³Cf., "The Great Military Insurrection in India," in The Observer (London), 2 Aug. 1857, p. 2. Also Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 379. Annexation of Oudh did produce some ill-feeling among the Sepoys, and contributed to the tragedy, cf., Kaye, Sepoy War I, 345-46. Cf., "Obituary on Dalhousie" in the Annual Register for 1860, p. 409. Sen, Fifty-Seven, p. 69.

sident social groups in the country--who engineered the armed mutiny against the foreign government,²⁴ and gave the movement some show of a "force."

Bengal Escaped the Impact

It is interesting to review why Bengal and the Bengalees--subjected to Western influence early in the 19th century--alone were left unaffected by a crisis like the Outbreak of 1857. The quarter century preceding the occurrence of the Mutiny (i.e. from the early 1830s) was marked by an increasing security of life and properties and freedom from oppressions and encroachments of powerful neighbors. Establishment of law courts and suppression of Dacoity, during the period under review, in which both Lord Bentinck and Lord Dalhousie had a great hand, offered greater assurance of safety than before. Along with these material advantages, introduction of English education and its rapid growth in the country fostered a bond of unity between the new generation of educated Bengalees and their alien political superiors. Eventually, the transfer of administrative authority from the Company to the Crown and Parliament, in August 1858, made these forces stronger and better organized and engendered a new sense of loyalty to the

²⁴T. James, "Indian Mutiny," in the Quarterly Review (London), Oct. 1857, pp. 534-70. See Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 443.

English Rulers, both among the elite and the masses. This was the reason why the Mutiny did not touch the Bengalees at all. On the other hand, its suppression and the prospect of a strong, well established government was greeted with delight by them. For instance, leaders like P. K. Tagore, Debendranath Tagore, K. C. Mitra, Ramgopal Ghosh, and others, opposed the Sepoy Revolt (1857) in defence of their socio-economic interests created under the British Regime in Bengal.²⁵

Dalhousie's Arrangements Reviewed

Historical impartiality requires that we should also look into the arrangements which, by way of precaution, Dalhousie had long before suggested the Home Authorities to take in the event of an armed rising among the Native Sepoys of the Company.²⁶ In fact, none was perhaps more conscious of the onerous responsibility of defending the newly-acquired territories and the Company's frontiers than Dalhousie himself.

²⁵B. C. Pal, Naba Yuger Bangla (in Bengali), Calcutta: Yuga Yatri Prakashan, 1964), pp. 224-26. See Hansard, 3rd, CXLV (1857), June 11, 1857, "Administration of Bengal," pp. 1587-92. Cf., S. B. Chaudhuri, Theories of the Indian Mutiny (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukherjee, 1965), pp. 123-26. Also see, "India Under Lord Dalhousie," Minute reviewed in the Edinburgh Review, Vol. 117, Jan. 1863, pp. 1-22.

²⁶B.S.P. 1857-58, XLII, 517: "Army: Lord Dalhousie's Despatches." For a vindication of Dalhousie's imperial policy and measures, see Jackson, Dalhousie's Administration, pp. 162-69.

Upon Dalhousie's assumption of the Governor-Generalship in 1848, he found an establishment of 24 battalions of European Infantry; when he left the government in early 1856, the establishment comprised 33 battalions. In fact, Dalhousie raised the European Infantry in India actually by 37 percent.²⁷

As safety measures against a possible insurrection of the troops, Dalhousie at first removed them from the coastal regions and relocated them in North-Western India. With the opening of railroads and electric telegraphs, the Governor-General's arrangements actually augmented the striking capacity of the forces under his control at sensitive and vulnerable points. Above everything else, Dalhousie was bent on reducing the numerical strength of the Regular Native Army and restoring an equipoise between the British and Indian forces in the country. Apprehending the possible perils from the strength of the Native Army, which stood at 233,000 men²⁸ at the end of his rule, the Governor-General outlined four measures to deal with the problem. First, he resorted to judicious distribution and breaking up of the masses of the Regular Native soldiers; secondly, raising the Gurkha or Hill regiments and urging an increase in their number; thirdly, and

²⁷Cf., Dalhousie's letter of Feb. 24, 1858, in Baird, Private Letters, pp. 406-7.

²⁸For a detailed statistics of the European and Indian military personnel, see "The Indian Army," in The Observer (London), Sept. 7, 1857, p. 5. Cf., Hunter, Dalhousie pp. 212-13.

this was perhaps the most significant measure, the formation of a new Irregular Force in the Punjab under a different system and discipline of its own; and lastly, though not the least important, developing a safe counterpoise to the Regular Native Army. Dalhousie protested against the removal of European Regiments from India, and proposed, instead, a further increase of at least two, and preferably, four battalions in their strength.²⁹ Unfortunately for the Government and for India as well, his protests were ignored and the proposals fell on deaf ears.

Two factors tended to make the British position in India rather delicate and vulnerable. Despite a prior Parliamentary sanction (Bill of 1853) to raise the number of local European Regiments in India from 12,000 to 20,000 men, the Home Government could make an addition of only three regiments to that stationary force--during Dalhousie's administration. What was more vital, despite Dalhousie's opposition, the Home Government resorted to a fatal process of depletion, by withdrawing in 1854 two British regiments from the available

²⁹"The Indian Army," The Observer (London), Sept. 7 1857, p. 5. The said article substantiates Lord Dalhousie's version in this regard. Cf., Hansard, 3rd, CXXVIII (1853), "Company's European Troops (India) Bill," p. 1201. Dalhousie got no credit for appreciating the magnitude of the impending danger, vide, Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 272.

strength of the European forces in India, primarily because of the Crimean War.³⁰ This step, as later events proved, cost the Government dearly in 1857, when the inevitable did happen. For one, Dalhousie was quite vocal in declaring that the British existence in India, not to speak of its supremacy, depended greatly on the numerical superiority of the British troops. The Governor-General's representation to the effect that conquests and annexations of territories, since 1834, and especially those during his period of government, had made imperative the maintenance of an increased number of European regiments on the one hand, and reduction of the strength of both cavalry and infantry of the Regular Native Army³¹ on the other, shows his probable awareness of an impending danger. Ironically, it was the Native Army that wrought disaster for the government in 1857.

After the outbreak of the Mutiny, Dalhousie in a private letter (Feb. 24, 1858) wrote: "I admit that in 1856, I did not foresee a general mutiny of the Bengal Army I had the guarantee of a hundred years fidelity before me, and

³⁰ Hansard, 3rd, CXXIX (1853), Aug. 1, 1853, "Government of India Bill," pp. 1044-45. In early 1857, there were only 31 battalions of which 22 Royal (short of 2,000 men), and nine Company's made a total of 27,000, vide, Baird, Private Letters, p. 405. See Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 213-14.

³¹ B.S.F. 1857-58, XLII, 517: "Army: Lord Dalhousie's Despatches." For detailed statistics of the European and Indian Armies, see The Observer (London), 7 Sept. 1857, p. 5.

there were no symptoms of unfaithfulness."³² But the fact remains that his last important official act in India was the incorporation of nine military minutes in his Farewell Minute of February 28, 1856,³³ which stated in unambiguous terms the military alterations necessary for the safety and maintenance of the Company's possessions.³⁴ These minutes, because of their relevance and importance in the Indian administrative context were immediately despatched to the Court of Directors. But, these, too, failed to attract adequate attention, either of the Home Government or of the Indian authorities.³⁵

Mention should be made of the last solemn warning ("almost too prescient forebodings") of Dalhousie given prior to his departure from India in February 1856. In it the Gov-

³²Dalhousie's letter dated 24 Feb. 1858 to friend Mr. G. Couper, cited in Baird, Private Letters, p. 406. Cf., Jackson, Dalhousie's Administration, pp. 169-70. The Mutiny was not the outcome of his acts, but the penalty of his forgetfulness about the Bengal Army, cf., Arnold, British India, II, 387.

³³B.S.P. 1856, XLV, 107: "Lord Dalhousie: Minute." Feb. 26, 1856. Cf., "Obituary on Lord Dalhousie," in the Annual Register for 1860, pp. 408-9.

³⁴B.S.P. 1852-53, XXIX, 1: "Indian Territories: 6th Report of the Select Committee. At the end of Dalhousie's period, native troops numbered about 233,000, while the British troops numbered less than 46,000, vide C.H.B.E. V, 172.

³⁵B.S.P. 1857-58, XLII, 517: "Army: Lord Dalhousie's Despatches." For a detailed review of these nine military minutes, cf., Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 218, 220-21, 223. Lee-Warner thinks that if the Authorities had listened to Dalhousie's proposals, the Sepoy Revolt might have been avoided. cf., Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 258.

ernor-General said:

No prudent man, having any knowledge of Eastern Affairs, would ever venture to predict a prolonged continuance of peace in India. . . . We should do what is right without fear of consequences. To fear God and to have no other fear is a maxim of religion, but the truth of it and the wisdom of it are proved day by day in politics. 36

Perhaps, it was this rigid adherence to his principle and his "unimaginative" character³⁷ which undermined Indian traditions and sentiments, that could be traced in every sphere of his activity as the Governor-General. In essence, he did not care to move with the people he governed, but went ahead of them. In some essential respects, Dalhousie's administration, with its short-comings, resembled that of Joseph II's--the enlightened despot of Austria in the 18th century. None can deny, that Dalhousie's papers, minutes, speeches and dialogues had a shaping influence on the minds of the Englishmen and the English-educated Indians of his time. But, the reality of the matter remains that on the other side there were the millions, whom the Governor-General's state documents did never reach, and upon some of them, especially upon the Bengal Army, the series of conquests and annexations, huge public works of astounding power, together with numerous well-intentioned but

³⁶ Sir Charles Beard quoted in Hunter, Dalhousie, pp. 223-25.

³⁷ Kaye's verdict as to Dalhousie's "unimaginative" character is refuted by Jackson. For this aspect, cf., Kaye, Sepoy War I, 356-57, and Jackson, Dalhousie's Administration pp. 177-78.

nevertheless, hastily executed reforms,³⁸ as discussed in their proper context, reacted so adversely that there could hardly be any doubt about the possible outcome.³⁹

In a private letter the ex-Governor-General wrote, almost immediately after the outbreak:

The paucity of European officers, though a great evil, does not seem to me to form any cause for the disaffection. . . . I conceive that the reason alleged, viz., the new cartridges--is enough to account for what has happened, senseless as it may appear to Europeans. [While aware of the ever-alive religious jealousy of the Indians, especially the Hindus, Dalhousie admitted] . . . Of late, the course of legislation, and some acts of administration, though quite proper in themselves, have been calculated to arouse that jealousy to greater keenness than usual. . . . the cartridges, coming on the back of these acts, were enough to fire the train. 40

³⁸For a critical assessment of Dalhousie's administration, see The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. Cf., A fairly detailed review of Dalhousie's Minute XIV in a leading article on "India," in The Times (London), June 16, 1856, p. 9.

³⁹"Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), Dec. 21, 1860, p. 10. Also editorial on Dalhousie's administration, in The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4.

⁴⁰For this very interesting letter dated June 2, 1857, see Baird, Private Letters, pp. 379-80. Cf., Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 377.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Estimate and Evaluation of the Administrations of both Bentinck and Dalhousie

From the foregoing study it appears that both Governor-General Lord Bentinck, and his successor Lord Dalhousie, were something more than mere political successes. Bentinck went out to India to take up his prize assignment fortified by the approval of the British public and confidence of the Company's Directors at a time when "liberalism" had become the watch-word in the political life of his country. When he returned home early in 1835, after discharging gallantly the public obligations and responsibilities as the Governor-General of India for seven-year period, he was hailed as the "Architect of Peace and Reform in India."¹

With Bentinck's retirement from the Indian political scene, however, the experiment in liberalism suffered a temporary set-back, especially with the advent of Lord Auckland (1836-42), Lord Ellenborough (1842-44), and Lord Hardinge (1844-48), when British Imperialism raised its ominous head

¹ Supra, Chapter III, pp. 19-58.

once again, to the detriment of the national search for an identity.

Lord Bentinck

In the first instance, both Bentinck and Macaulay (Law member in his council) rightly understood that efforts necessary to prepare Indians for self-government might bear fruition through education, thus, assuring intellectual and political advance. Lord Ellenborough did not approve of such enlightened measures for obvious reasons.² Bentinck's seven-year rule shines in unusual brilliance between Lord Amherst's First Burma War (1824-26) and Lord Auckland's uncalled for Afghan adventure (1839-42) and appears as eloquent testimony to the British ideal of liberalism in Indian politics. By resorting to necessary measures of economy, by introducing the long-felt and needed reforms, and by admitting Indians to a share, and hence, future discipline in self-government, Bentinck has carved for himself a permanent place in the annals of British India. It should be remembered, however, that the English East-India Company which approved of these various welfare measures, and expedited their implementation deserves

²Hansard, 3rd, CXXV (1853), April 7, 1853, "Affairs of India," pp. 706-13. Cf., "Indian Affairs," The Times (London), April 9, 1853, p. 5.

no less merit and commendation.³

Bentinck's political craftsmanship won for him merited encomium from leaders of liberal thought and conviction. To Macaulay, responsible for the famous Education Minute,⁴ the Governor-General stood for "eminent prudence, integrity and benevolence." Justifiably to Bentinck's approach to the problems of his day, a utilitarian as he was, "the end of government was in the happiness of the governed."⁵ For one, the statesman's understanding of the Indian situation--in all its ramifications--was somewhat unique. His zest for utilitarian reform has found memorable expression in the following statement, made prior to his departure from India. Said he, as he felt:

Examine the whole scheme of this Indian system, and you will find the same result: poverty, inferiority and degradation in every shape. For all these evils, Knowledge! Knowledge!! Knowledge!!! is the universal cure. 6

It may be said without fear of exaggeration that with education as the basic apparatus, Bentinck's benevolent projects bordered on liberal humanism and gradually paved the

³Boulger, Bentinck, p. 129.

⁴Infra, Appendix I for Macaulay's Education Minute (Feb. 2, 1835), pp. 120-22. Also Sharp, Selections, (part I) pp. 107-117.

⁵Boulger, Bentinck, p. 203. Cf., "Benefits of British Rule in India," in the Westminster Review, Vol. 78, p. 112.

⁶Marshman, Life and Times I, 493.

way for the introduction of civil rights for Indians and ultimately, self-government. Again, with Macaulay and Metcalfe (Liberator of the Indian Press) as his worthy lieutenants,⁷ modern law code along with the maxim of "equality before the law," on the one hand, and liberty of the Indian Press on the other, became the guide-lines for the emerging nationhood.⁸ It may, thus, be asserted that the seeds of liberalism which were implanted during Bentinck's term of office as Chief Executive (1828-35), began to assume gigantic proportions with the progress of time. It cannot be gainsaid, therefore, that through his varied measures of reform and regeneration, Lord Bentinck was instrumental in giving shape to the eventual florescence of Modern India. With Bentinck, as with Dalhousie, the key to the good and ordered administration lay in centralization, but this in no way detracted from the merit of his liberal utilitarian philosophy,⁹ which acted as his beacon light and brought India nearer to her cherished goal of liberation from foreign control.

⁷Supra, pp. 44-47, 56-57.

⁸Beatrice Pitney Lamb, India--A World in Transition, (3rd ed.; London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), pp. 53-72.

⁹For the version of utilitarian "interference" as conceived of by Lord Bentinck, cf., Stokes, India, pp. 174-75.

Lord Dalhousie

By birth and schooling authoritarian and conservative, Dalhousie was perhaps wedded to the abstract truth that government, legislation, education, customs and traditions as well as manners of England were superior to the government, legislation, education, customs and manners of India.¹⁰ In 1848, he found, quite in keeping with his belief and conviction, that politically, socially and economically, India had been in a melting pot. So, the Governor-General addressed himself to the task of the moment. Roughly speaking, the first four years of his eight-year term of administration (1848-56) were spent mostly in conquests and annexations¹¹ with a view to ensuring political ascendancy of the Company's government.¹² Bentinck, as alluded to earlier, had made some "peaceful" annexations¹³ -- the sole object of which was to give to the inhabitants of those territories the benefits of a civilized administration and in those cases the plea for annexations having been the misgovernment or the anti-British at-

¹⁰Kaye, Sepoy War I, p. 354. Also see Stokes, India, p. 248. A conservative though, Dalhousie's opinions were more in accord with the measures advocated by the Whigs, rather than the Tories, cf., Baird, Private Letters, p. 410.

¹¹B.S.F. 1857-58, XLII, 151; "Annexations." Supra, p. 91.

¹²Supra, 59-61.

¹³Supra, Chapter II, Note 11.

titude of the Indian ruling princes. However, Bentinck's annexations, compared to Dalhousie's systematic and organized approach in this regard, appeared far less dazzling in character and scope.

Mention must be made of the fact that the so-called "Doctrine of Lapse,"¹⁴ which gained such notoriety at the hands of Lord Dalhousie, came in the shape of the Directors' despatch during the closing period of Lord Bentinck's government. The latter was, however, prudent enough to put aside that directive during his last days in India. Reference in this context may be made to the principle and policy of "Non-Intervention,"¹⁵ which the Company's government was expected to pursue in their relation to the Indian states after the passage of the Pitt's India Act (1784). It must be remembered, however, that it was rather the interpretation of the principle of "Non-Intervention" by different Governors-General that determined the real attitude of the imperialist agents of Britain in India.¹⁶

Lord Dalhousie, on a more vigorous scale, extended Lord Bentinck's views as the system of English education had

¹⁴Kaye, Sepoy War I, 69-96. For a fairly detailed discussion on this issue, see Jackson, Dalhousie's Administration, pp. 5-43. Also supra, Chapter IV, Note 4.

¹⁵C.H.B.E. IV, 194-95, 203-4.

¹⁶Supra, pp. 90-92.

taken deep roots after 1834, and believed that Indians could rise to a position where they would govern themselves.¹⁷ This is evident from the fact that while setting up a Central Legislative Assembly with the object of extending the benefits of legislation throughout British India, Dalhousie urged that the British Parliament empower him to nominate a few Indian members to his Legislative Council. Though nothing tangible resulted from this move,¹⁸ the Governor-General definitely took a bold step in the right direction, and in a way, anticipated Lord Ripon's experiment in local self-government reform (1882) and Lord Dufferin's (1884-88) work that culminated in the Indian Council's Act (1892).¹⁹

Dalhousie may also be credited, like his predecessor reformer Bentinck, with a major role in the laying of the grand foundation of the New India--traceable through the reform and reconstruction of the railways, and of the other public works, such as roads, bridges and canals, especially for irrigation and navigation purposes, of uniform and cheap post-

¹⁷The issue of streamlining the Civil Services had occupied the Governor-General's mind, vide The Times (London) Jan. 18, 1855, p. 5. Cf., T. Walter Wallbank, India--A Survey of the Heritage and Growth of Indian Nationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1948), pp. 24-28. See Bearce, British Attitudes, pp. 232-33.

¹⁸Cf., Lee-Warner, Dalhousie II, 232. Cf., C.H.B.E. V, 170. See Appendix H. in Baird, Private Letters, pp. 437-38.

¹⁹Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, pp. 470-71, 582.

age and electric telegraphs, and of the introduction of a system of Public Instruction.²⁰ To the Governor-General, the many separate Indian states appeared as "anachronisms," and thus encouraged him to work towards bringing the whole of India under a modern unitary system of government. Secondly, Dalhousie favored the re-organization of such a compact territory as a viable political and economic unit through the development of a network of modern communications. To him, "uniformity of management and unity of authority" as manifest in the working of the Telegraphs and the Public Works Department, became the guiding maxim.²¹ This principle may well be characterized as an important yardstick of his utilitarianism.²² It seems to be an irony of history that as Bentinck's benevolent rule was followed by a period of aggressive and reactionary government, Dalhousie's rule too was succeeded by a period of disaster for which, of course, unlike Bentinck, Dalhousie himself is held partially responsible. Perhaps, the only charge that could be brought against Dalhousie's reforming drive was that "he moved too fast," and was much in advance

²⁰Hansard, 3rd, CXXVII (1853), June 3, 1853, "Government of India," pp. 1115-17, 1184-89. For Dalhousie's measures of internal consolidation, cf., Bearce, British Attitudes, pp. 220-22.

²¹Stokes, India, pp. 249-51. Cf., the editorial on Dalhousie's Administration in The Times (London), March 20, 1856, p. 8. Also "India," ibid., 16 June, 1856, p. 9.

²²Stokes, India, p. 250-51.

of his day,²³ His motive of serving and furthering the people and the country's cause, while keeping in view the interests of his own government, should not be underestimated. It can hardly be denied, however, that the promise which Dalhousie's administration gave rise to suffered a cruel setback at the hands of the Indian Mutiny of 1857--comparable in many ways to the Reconstruction Era following the American Civil War.²⁴

Nevertheless, the Era of Dalhousie's "progressive" administration shines brightly when studied in comparison to the periods of Lord Hardinge (1844-48) and Lord Canning (1856-62). The year of the Mutiny, and the event itself, are looked upon as forming a watershed in the story of India's growth, after which a new administration of the British Crown and Parliament took over the direct responsibility of the government of India from the East India Company.²⁵ Thus, Dalhousie's rule may fittingly be remembered as marking the twilight of the Company's administration in India--a century later, af-

²³"Death of Dalhousie," in The Times (London), 21 Dec. 1860, p. 10. Kaye, Sepoy War I, 354. Cf., the critical views of The Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. According to Bearce, applying liberal policies to an Indian population not prepared for these, and to segments of British population which did not welcome such liberalism in India was fraught with real difficulty, vide Bearce, British Attitudes, p. 178.

²⁴Thompson and Garratt, British Rule in India, p. 418.

²⁵Kaye, Sepoy War I, 354-55.

ter the Battle of Plassey which had previously acted as a stimulant for change.

The fundamental factor in both Lord Bentinck and Lord Dalhousie's policies was centralization, but it was, to all appearances and beliefs, benevolent and paternal in both cases.²⁶ Summing up the end result of Dalhousie's rule, Sir Edwin Arnold wrote "We are making a people in India, where hitherto there have been a hundred tribes, but no people."²⁷

In conclusion, it would be fitting to add that as a result of their enlightened and well-meaning administration, both these Governors-General, consciously or unconsciously, sowed the seeds of a brighter and more prosperous India, and helped promote Indian efforts towards national unity and solidarity, which in the long run made National Independence a reality. Both of these enlightened British Indian statesmen may thus be rightly regarded as the architects and cultural ambassadors of the Age of Reform.

²⁶Perhaps, it was the craze for over-centralization as evident in Lord Dalhousie's attitude towards his Indian government--sharply contrasted with Lord Bentinck's attitude in this respect--that was criticized by the contemporary Morning Chronicle (London), 22 Dec. 1860, p. 4. Paternalism in due course made for a unitary form of government, with no separation of powers, cf., Stokes, India, p. 144.

²⁷Arnold, British India II, 388. Also "Summary of the Principal Events of Lord Dalhousie's Viceroyalty," in The Times (London), April 18, 1856, p. 1.

APPENDIX I

ENGLISH v. SANSKRIT AS A VEHICLE FOR TEACHING

. . . It is argued, or rather taken for granted, that by literature, the Parliament can have meant only Arabic and Sanskrit literature, that they never would have given the honourable appellation of "a learned native" to a native who was familiar with the poetry of Milton, the metaphysics of Locke, and the physics of Newton; but that they meant to designate by that name only such persons as might have studied in the sacred books of the Hindus all the uses of kusa-grass and all the mysteries of absorption into the Deity. This does not appear to be a very satisfactory interpretation. To take a parallel case; suppose that the Pasha of Egypt . . . were to appropriate a sum for the purpose of "reviving and promoting literature and encouraging learned natives of Egypt," would anybody infer that he meant the youth of his Pashalic to give years to the study of Hieroglyphics, to search into all the doctrines disguised under the fable of Osiris, and to ascertain with all possible accuracy the ritual with which cats and onions were anciently adored?

. . . All parties seem to be agreed on one point, that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither literary nor scientific information,

and are moreover so poor and rude that until they are enriched from some other quarter it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them. . . . I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. . . . I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia . . . when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England.

. . . In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East. It is the language of two great European communities which are rising, the one in the south of Africa, the other in Australasia; communities which are every year becoming more important and more closely connected with our Indian Empire . . .

The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages in which by universal confession there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared with our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which by universal confession whenever they differ from those of Europe differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronise sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at the public expense medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding-school, history abounding with Kings thirty feet high and reigns 30,000 years long, and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter. . .

To sum up what I have said, I think it clear that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied; that we are free to employ our funds as we choose; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing; that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic; that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic; that neither as the languages of law nor as the languages of religion have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement; that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed.¹

¹Sharp, Selections, (Part 1), Excerpts from a Minute by T. B. Macaulay, 2 Feb. 1835, pp. 107-117.

APPENDIX II

When Lord Dalhousie annexed Oude, the suppression of the fact that this treaty was annulled on our side--in fact, we went on receiving our advantages from it while we had secretly recorded our resolve not to abide by it--was present to his mind, and he wrote to the Resident. Remember this is no history of distant times or of Italian fraud in the middle ages: here are the words of a Right Honourable English Statesman, (Oude Blue-book, pp. 239-40)

The effect of this reserve and want of full communication (suppression of the fact of annulment) is embarrassing to-day. It is the more embarrassing that the cancelled instrument was still included in a volume of treaties, which was published in 1845 by the authority of Government. There is no better way of encountering the difficulty than by meeting it full in the face. If the King should allude to the treaty of 1837, and should ask why, if further measures are necessary in relation to the administration of Oude, the large powers which are given to the British Government by the said treaty should not now be put in force, his Majesty must be informed that the treaty has had no existence since it was communicated to the Court of Directors, by whom it was wholly annulled. His Majesty will be reminded that the Court of Lucknow was informed at the time that certain articles of the treaty of 1837, by which the payment of an additional military force was imposed upon the King, were to be set aside. It must be presumed that it was not thought necessary at that time to make any communication to his Majesty regarding those articles of the treaty which were not of immediate operation, and that a subsequent communication was inadvertently neglected. The Resident will be at liberty to state that the Governor-General in Council regrets that any such neglect should have taken place, even inadvertently.

The case of fraud is so plain in Lord Dalhousie's own words that no comment is necessary. Since Lord Clive cheated

OMICHUND by showing him a false and forged copy of a treaty, no such deliberate dishonesty was done in India.^{1*}

¹The foregoing is reproduced from an editorial in The Morning Chronicle (London), Dec. 22, 1860, p. 4.

*Dalhousie himself was perhaps well-aware of the government's weakness in suppressing the fact of disallowance of the Treaty of 1837 from the King of Oudh. This was made clear when he wrote in 1858: "The Treaty of 1837 authorized us to take Oudh under our government. What mattered it to King or people, when we took it in 1856, whether we took it by the Treaty of 1837 or by the strong hand? . . . It was of no moment whether the Oude people believed the Treaty of 1837 was in force or not, for in any case the result was the same, viz., the assumption of the government by us." vide letter dated, Malta, January 6, 1858 cited in Baird, Private Letters, p. 393.

If the foregoing lines indicate anything, it is the stark and naked imperialist attitude of the man. (D.K.C.)

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