THE VELLORE MUTINY

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I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and is entirely my own work.

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The Vellore mutiny of July 1806 occupies a rather enigmatic position in the history of British rule in India. It was a brief but extremely bloody episode. For a short time it appeared to threaten the military predominance of the East India Company in South India, yet the threat died away quickly. This thesis attempts to resolve some of the mysteries which have subsequently surrounded the mutiny.

Chapter I deals with the event itself. A detailed description is given of the events of 10 July 1806, drawing on first-hand accounts from a wide range of sources. The recapture of the fort by the British dragoons and the bloodshed which ensued is also discussed.

Chapter 2 deals with the military background to the mutiny, citing previous examples of breaches of allegiance to the Company army by its sepoys and dealing in detail with the rejection by the sepoys at Vellore of a new pattern of turban in May 1806, three months prior to the mutiny itself.

Chapter 3 examines the proceedings and findings of the three enquiries into the mutiny which were held by the authorities in Madras. Possible explanations for the different conclusions reached by these enquiries are discussed.

Chapter 4 analyses the strength of the arguments which sought to place the blame for the mutiny either on the sons of Tipu Sultan, imprisoned at Vellore, or on the introduction of new dress regulations into the army. Evidence is adduced to argue that the underlying cause of the mutiny lay in the overall conditions of service of the Indian troops.

Chapters 5 and 6 study the effects of the Vellore mutiny on the Madras government. The bitter division between the civil and military authorities over the causes of the mutiny is examined, as is the personal confrontation between the Governor, Lord William Bentinck, and the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Cradock.

In Chapter 7 the wide ranging effects and consequences of the mutiny are highlighted. Not only did the mutiny cause tremendous friction within the Madras government, it also deeply divided the Court of Directors in London and brought the debate on the ethics of missionary activity in India to the forefront of public attention.

Chapter 8 looks at the way in which the Vellore mutiny was interpreted by some of its contemporaries both in India and in Britain and traces the way in which much of the public conception of the mutiny came to be based on gossip and rumour rather than on fact.

In Chapter 9, attention is given to the historiography of the mutiny and it is argued that gossip and rumour also became built in to historical accounts of the mutiny. The effect of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 on interpretation of the Vellore mutiny is examined, along with the most recent contributions to its historiography.
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ILLUSTRATIONS

The sketches of Futteh Hyder, Moiz-ud-din and Mohi-ud-din on pages 114, 116 and 118 respectively are taken from F. Buchanan, A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, (London, 1807), Vol.1.

The plan of the Fortress of Vellore between pages 7 and 8 is copied from the Portland Collection, PwJb 264.
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ABBREVIATIONS

In compiling the Notes which accompany the main text the following abbreviations have been used:

IOL : India Office Library.
NLS : National Library of Scotland.
SRO : Scottish Records Office.
HMS : Home Miscellaneous Series; records held in IOL.
MSP : Madras Secret Proceedings; records held in IOL.
Minto : The Minto Collection, including the papers of the 1st Lord Minto, Governor-General of India from 1807-1813, held at NLS.
Portland : The Portland Papers held at the University of Nottingham, including the personal papers of Lord William Bentinck, Governor of Madras from 1803-1807.
Chapter 1: The Mutiny Begins:

We are resolved to fight and kill our officers.

... Rivers of blood shall flow and heaps of dead be carried out.¹
Early in the morning of 10 July 1806, at approximately quarter past two, a heavy and prolonged firing of musketry was heard within the walls of the fort of Vellore. Indian troops, employees of the British East India Company, had mutinied. They had begun to attack and kill the British officers attached to their battalions, as well as a detachment of British soldiers from His Majesty's 69th Regiment which happened to be stationed at Vellore.

Indian troops formed the basis of the East India Company's power and influence. They far outnumbered their British counterparts in the Company army. For example, at the time of this dramatic massacre there were some 383 British troops garrisoned at Vellore, as against at least 1500 Indian sepoys. Even this proportion of British to Indians was relatively high in comparison to the situation in the Madras Presidency as a whole. The total figures for the Madras army in 1806 were 55,050 sepoys and 7,900 British forces.

The sepoys were, in effect, mercenaries, men who followed the profession of arms. Many of them had served under more than one flag. The balance of power in South India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was uncertain and was frequently contested. From the 1780s, the great enemy to British expansionism had been the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan. The British had finally defeated and killed Tipu in 1799, at his major stronghold and capital, Seringapatam. By the time of the Vellore mutiny,
many of the Indian soldiers who had fought against the British in that battle had become absorbed into the ranks of the Company army.\textsuperscript{5}

The subjugation of the power of Mysore had been instrumental in increasing the strategic importance of Vellore to the British. Geographically, it linked the British power base in the east of the country, which stretched inland from Fort St George on the coast near Madras, with the new territories to the west in Mysore which had now come under British influence. Lying ninety miles west of Fort St George, Vellore was useful as a kind of staging-post from which Company interests in the area could gradually be developed. It was also important because it now became the new home for Tipu Sultan's family. After the victory at Seringapatam, the British brought Tipu's twelve sons and eight daughters to Vellore, along with an enormous retinue of other relatives and servants.\textsuperscript{6} The possibility of them working against the Company's interests by fomenting revolt or by attempting to re-establish the political power held by their father, was thus curtailed. The four eldest sons were believed to pose the greatest security risk, but the whole family was held in the fort itself. The other sons, or 'princes' as they were all termed by the British, were considered to represent a lesser threat, being very young. In 1806, all were still under the age of sixteen.

The prisoners in the fort were allowed a relatively comfortable existence. Substantial allowances were paid
to them so that they could maintain a lifestyle commensurate, to a degree at least, with their station in life. In their apartments, formerly occupied by the Nawab of Arcot, they were permitted to keep servants and a harem. They were also allowed to bring with them many valuable possessions from Seringapatam, and their living quarters were consequently not without an air of luxury.

On the other hand, the Princes were closely supervised. Guards were posted permanently at the entrance to each of the four separate apartments, in which they were confined. The British officer responsible for their security and welfare, Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott, saw to it that a number of his hirkarrah (informers) found their way into the Princes' retinue of servants.

The fort and town were visited by a British traveller in South India in 1800. He remarked:

*The present Fort is large and beautiful; and having been chosen for the residence of the family of the late Sultan of Mysore, is strongly garrisoned by English forces. The town, which belongs to the Nabob, is pretty large and well-built after the Hindu fashion. Above it are three small forts, which occupy the summit of a hill that overlooks the town, but only one of them has a supply of water.*

An officer in the Company army also emphasised the fort's imposing beauty:

*The Fort of Vellore, situated in a beautiful and most fertile valley, nearly surrounded by hills, and in some degree commanded by one, called Sazarow. . . . is one of the prettiest and most perfect specimens of native masonry to be met with in the East. It is about a mile in*
circumference, nearly circular, with an exceedingly broad and deep ditch, full of alligators, some of which are nearly eighteen feet long. It is built entirely of lime, cemented with chunam, a species of lime; a large fossebray encircles the works, which, with the ramparts, are everywhere surmounted with large blocks of granite, cut out to form the parapet, and so firmly resting on their bases as not to require any kind of fastening.

On the fateful morning of 10 July 1806, the fort was garrisoned by two battalions of Indian infantry, the 1st Battalion/1st Regiment and the 2nd Battalion/23rd Regiment, as well as by the detachment of H.M.69th. The total establishment of the two sepoy battalions amounted to 2,179 men and forty-three sardars (Indian officers). It is not possible, however, to say precisely how many of the men were in the fort at the time of the outbreak of the mutiny, since it was customary for most of the sepoys to sleep outside its walls. A field day had been planned for that day and permission had accordingly been granted to an unspecified number of men to sleep within the walls. One estimate put the number who had taken advantage of this opportunity at approximately 900. A number of British officers slept in the town, mainly those who had taken Indian wives or who had simply found superior accommodation to that offered by the officers' compound in the fort; but, these apart, the entire British force was in the fort when the gates were closed as usual at 10 o'clock on the night of 9 July 1806.
Graphic and often gripping accounts survive of events in the fort in the next twelve hours. In many cases the British awoke to nightmarish realities beyond their worst dreams. Many more were spared even the opportunity of waking. The gunfire which broke into that hour of deep repose took a heavy toll of British lives, particularly in the European barracks where the 69th were sleeping.

At first, confusion reigned amongst the soldiers. No-one knew who was doing the shooting, or from where it was being aimed, or what was the purpose behind it. The commanding officer of the fort, Colonel Fancourt, arose quickly from his bed. He went to the window of his writing room, which commanded a view of the main parade, and shouted out into the darkness, demanding to be told what was going on. Receiving no report, except for that of continued firing, he rushed downstairs. At the door, he was warned by the voice of a sepoy not to cross his threshold, as the Indian soldiers were mounting a murderous attack on all the Europeans. Back upstairs he hurried, tight-lipped and 'pale as ashes'. His anxious wife questioned him on what was happening, but he told her only to go to her room. Realising that something was seriously amiss, she complied with his instruction, pausing only to gather up her children and take them with her into the bedroom. It was to be the last time she would see her husband alive.
Colonel Fancourt now rapidly penned a note pleading for assistance from the nearest British military station at Arcot, sixteen miles to the west of Vellore. He again rushed downstairs to find a messenger to deliver the note; but he had barely stepped outside when he was shot and mortally wounded.

The sepoys were, in fact, concentrating their fire on two main targets. These were the European barracks and the officers' houses. Among the first to be killed, however, were those on duty at the main guard, which lay about half a mile away from the European barracks close to the main entrance to the fort. A corporal, one of only four men to survive out of the twenty-two who were posted there that night, later recorded that at about half-past two a sentry had called to him, saying that one or two shots had been heard from the direction of the European barracks. The corporal 'scarce had time to answer' when a party of sepoys rushed on him and the other British guards, firing their muskets and jabbing with their bayonets. The corporal believed that he survived only because he lay still and the sepoys took him for dead.

At the European barracks, meanwhile, all hell had broken out. From the windows a heavy fire was being poured in on the sleeping soldiers. Roused by this murderous onslaught, their efforts to avoid the firing can easily be imagined, though no comprehensive account of the scene within the barracks at this time has come to light.
Major Coates, commanding officer of the detachment of the 69th, later reported the version of events given him by the Sergeant of the Guard who was stationed outside the barracks when the shooting began:

Hearing a trampling of feet, he called to the sentry at the guard-house door about half-past two o'clock, expressing his astonishment that the patrol should pass that way. He has scarce spoke when a party of sepoys formed in front of the gate, and discharged a volley of musquetry on the guard, and in the barracks, by which several of the 69th fell. On the guard getting under arms the sepoys quitted that station, when an instantaneous and general attack was made upon the barracks. 19

The patrol that night should have been led by a British officer, Captain Miller, but, pleading an indisposition, he had passed that responsibility on to one of the sardars, a subidar of the 1st/1st. This officer had, in turn, passed the duty on to a junior officer, a jemidar, who had volunteered to stand in. 20

In the aftermath of the mutiny, enquiries revealed that this jemidar, Shaik Khassim, was one of the leading conspirators in the plan to kill the British. 21

Almost simultaneously with the attack on the European barracks, an assault was begun on the officers' quarters, which lay only a short distance away and was separated from the barracks by an enclosing wall. 22 The sepoys succeeded in keeping men and officers apart, thus reducing the possibility of concerted opposition. For their part, most of the officers spent the night besieged in their
houses, surrounded by hostile sepoys, and they were completely unable to gauge either the extent or the success of the uprising.

Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott, the officer in charge of the Mysore princes, at first misunderstood the purpose of the firing. Very shortly after the first shots had been heard, Lieutenant Coombs, Adjutant of the 23rd, came to the house which Marriott shared with two other officers - his brother Charles, a captain, and a Lieutenant Gunning - urgently seeking shelter. Coombs' own house had just been subjected to a tremendous volley of firing from the sepoys and had been set alight. He had escaped fortuitously through a back entrance. Coombs had assumed that this was a personal attack, inspired by his own particular unpopularity with the sepoys. Marriott later confessed:

At this time I was entirely ignorant of their having put any of the officers to death, and consequently apprehended no danger to myself except from the circumstance of having afforded protection to Lieutenant Coombs, who repeatedly exclaimed that it was he who had brought this upon me and that it was only him that they wanted, knowing himself obnoxious to them.

Marriott consequently hid Coombs in a bath. The true extent of the danger was, however, shortly revealed to him. At the front door of his house he was advised, by a sardar well known to him, on no account to approach the European barracks, as heavy firing was in progress. Any lingering doubts as to the intensity of the mutiny were removed at
about 5 a.m., when Marriott and his brother attempted to parley with the sepoys. Their efforts at mediation ended with Charles being shot in the hip. The wounded man was taken to a bedroom on the ground floor of the house. Soon after, a party of sepoys burst in and took possession of the ground floor. Thomas Marriott, Coombs and Gunning all retreated to the lower floor, surprisingly unpursued. They subsequently succeeded in making their escape through the back window, and successfully concealed themselves within the fort. Charles Marriott, meanwhile, lay wounded upstairs underneath a bed. He underwent a hair-raising ordeal:

I lay covered with a long pillow; and although two different parties came into the room, one headed by a bloody-minded Jemidar or Subidar, with a musket or bayonet quite black from firing and a sabre by his side, and although one rascal stooped down to pick up my cocked hat, which lay within a foot of my head, by God's gracious providence they did not find me out. I lay, as you will suppose, in momentary expectation of being lugged back and murdered, and you will no doubt agree with me that my escape was most miraculous.

Many such narrow escapes were experienced by the British in different parts of the fort. Mrs. Fancourt, wife of the fatally injured fort commandant, endured a night and morning of absolute terror. After remaining locked in her bedroom with her two children and servant for approximately two hours, she ventured to make her way through the hall to see if she could gain any news about what was happening in the fort. Seeing a shadowy
figure approach her from the verandah, she summoned up enough courage to ask who was there. It was in fact a Lieutenant who had been on guard duty. He told her that all his comrades had been murdered and that no European would survive the night. Her worst misgivings thus confirmed, Mrs Fancourt retreated to the sanctuary of her room. Shortly afterwards, however, a group of sepoys entered the house, 'cruelly butchered' the Lieutenant and, ransacking and looting as they went, approached the door of her bedroom. She later gave a detailed description of what then transpired:

I was struck with horror, knowing their next visit would be to my apartment. My children and three female servants were at this time lying on the mat just before a door which opened on to the back verandah, and which at the commencement of the mutiny seemed the safest place. As shots were fired at windows, we were obliged to move as far as possible from them. I observed to my ayah that the sepoys were in the hall and told her to move from the door. She took the children under my bed and begged me to go there also. I had no time to reply for the door we had just left was at that instant burst open. I got under the bed and was no sooner there than several shots were fired into the room but although the door was open nobody entered. I took up a ball which fell close to me under the bed, the children were screaming with terror at the fire and I expected our last hour was come, but, willing to make one effort to save my babes, I got from my hiding place and fled into a small adjoining room off the back stair-case. I opened the windows from which I only saw two housekeepers. I returned instantly to my bedroom and desiring my ayah to take my little babe in her arms, I took Charles St John in
my own, and opening the door off the back stairs, ran down as quick as possible. When we got to the bottom we found several sepoys on guard at the back of the house. I showed them my babes, and told my ayah to inform them they might take all we had if they would spare our lives. One of them desired us to sit down in the stable with the horses, another looked very surly but did not prevent our going there. Whilst we stayed in the stable I told my ayah I had my husband's watch and requested she would hide it for me. She dug up some earth with her fingers and threw it over the watch and put two or three broken chatties upon it. We had not been seated five minutes before we were ordered away by a third sepoy. He told us to go into the fowl house which had a bamboo front on it, and in consequence we were quite exposed to view until the same man brought us an old mat which we made use of by placing it before the door to hide ourselves and afterwards the same sepoy brought my little boy half a loaf of bread to satisfy his hunger. There I suppose I sat about three hours in the greatest agony of mind endeavouring to quiet my dear Charles whom I found it very difficult to pacify. He was so alarmed by the constant firing and cried sadly to go out several times. I saw the sepoys from my concealment taking out immense loads of our goods on their backs tied up in tablecloths and sheets... I know not how I was supported through the mercy of Providence. I fainted not, kept my senses thro' all the horrors of the night and morning. That I most dreaded to hear was of my husband's murder, and I really believe I should have braved death and searched for him on the Parade had not the situation of my babes withheld me from the rash attempt. 27

Another officer's wife had an almost identical experience to that of Mrs Fancourt. Mrs Murray was woken by 'a tremendous firing of musketry',28 and a number of shots passed through her bedroom. Her house
commanded a clear view of the European barracks and of the other officers' houses. She saw Lieutenant Coombs' home set on fire, and for a time she feared that the main arsenal would also be set alight by the flames, 'when every soul in the Fort must have perished'. She witnessed, too, the sepoys bringing up a six pound cannon and firing round after round of grape-shot into the barracks. She could see that the barracks were completely surrounded by sepoys and that all the houses in the compound were guarded. From time to time, cries of 'Ding, Ding, Vallekarah' (Death to the white men) could be heard, leaving her in no doubt as to the intention of the sepoys. At about four o'clock, a party of insurgents attacked the house. Her husband escaped through an upstairs window just in time to evade the bayonets of the fifteen or twenty sepoys who rushed inside. As at the Fancourts', the sepoys were apparently more concerned with plunder than with murder, and in fact they offered no violence to Mrs Murray or her children. However, her daughter, Franny, was so alarmed at their entrance that she jumped from the bedroom window into the compound below, 'a considerable height'. Fortunately, she escaped unhurt, and was shortly able to rejoin her mother. The whole family, with their servants, was now ushered out of the house and taken to a square within the sepoy barracks:

when I got within the square it was some comfort to see several native women who immediately came to us and showed great compassion... and ranged themselves in front to prevent the sepoys firing at us,
which many wished to do. A few less savage showed some remorse, told me to stay quiet and I should not be hurt. Some advised me to show my face, others to conceal it. In this situation I continued nearly six hours. My poor ayah, almost exhausted with begging my life, and trembling lest every fresh sepoy that saw us would fire the so often presented musket. But by this time life appeared to one of little value. The assurance that I received from the women that every European was killed and the Fort in possession of the insurgents, made me face these terrors with seeming composure. 29

The hostility of the sepoys towards Mrs Murray and her children remained confined to threats rather than actions, however, and this was consistent with the generally merciful treatment which the British wives and children received at the hands of the sepoys. There were only two recorded exceptions. In the first such incident, the child of a sergeant was shot in the leg. The child's mother, Mrs Potter, whose husband was on duty that night, had on first hearing the shooting hurried off with her children to the house of the Commissary, a civilian officer named Mann. 30 Seeking a more secure refuge, they had all then removed themselves to the home of the Conductor, Samuel Gill. Among Gill's responsibilities was the safe keeping of the keys to the ammunition store. At about 3 a.m. some sepoys arrived demanding these keys. They claimed that the fighting was caused by adherents of the Mysore princes mounting an attack on the sepoys and they alleged that Colonel Fancourt had authorised them to come and collect the keys. Gill, however, refused to hand them over and was immediately shot dead. There is something
almost of black comedy in the next sequence of events, albeit that for the participants it was all too deadly real. Mrs Potter turned to flee from Gill's murderers, but tripped and fell over her children. Mr Mann, in turn, fell over Mrs Potter and in doing so avoided a shot which would certainly have killed him. Mann scrambled to his feet and escaped from the house. This so incensed the sepoys that one of them immediately aimed a shot at Mrs Potter. Either his aim or his weapon was badly at fault, however, for the ball passed through the knee of one of her children. No further attempt was made to harm them. After staying some time in Gill's house, Mrs Potter took the children to a nearby storehouse and there they remained concealed throughout the rest of the morning. Mann's body, however, was later found near by.

In the second instance of violence towards women and children, a Lieutenant Ely and his young daughter were cut down by 'a long crooked sword' in front of the very eyes of Mrs Ely. It later transpired that this act, which was generally held by the British soldiers to have been one of the most appalling of the whole affair, may have been inspired by a motive of revenge on the part of the killer. It was certainly out of character with the general treatment afforded to the officers' relatives.

No such mercy was shown to the menfolk. The second in command of the fort was Lieutenant-Colonel McKerras, commanding officer of the 23rd Regiment. His death was witnessed by the son of a British sergeant, James Frost, who
worked as a writer in the Post Office. The boy himself claimed to have been spared by the sepoys only because he was 'country born' and had an Indian mother. His escape was perhaps doubly fortunate in that, when first observed by some sepoys, hiding in the Post Office, he was mistaken for the hated Lieutenant Coombs. Fortunately, his true identity was soon discovered and his account of that night survives:

I was sleeping at the Post Office when about quarter-past-two on the morning of the 10th, I heard a discharge of musquetry at the main guard. On coming out to see, I observed the sepoys running to and fro. At this time Lt Col McKerras had approached near the Post Office door, and asked the sentry in Moors what was this all about. The sentry replied, 'Nothing at all, Sir'. At this time Lt Col McKerras turned about towards a party on the right that were firing their musquetry. At which moment the sentry with whom he had been before discoursing, shot him. On which Lt Col McKerras sat down on the steps of the Post Office door, exclaiming, "Lord, Lord!", when the same sepoy came and killed him with his bayonet."

James Frost was then taken to the sepoy barracks, where he witnessed further killings:

Soon afterwards I saw Lieutenants Winchip and Jolly brought into the barracks. They were ordered to sit down. They entreated to be liberated, giving up at the same time their watches and all their valuables to the sepoys, and the sepoys told them to go to their quarters, and they rose up accordingly. At which time four or five Moormen belonging to the Palace, exclaimed, "As the Caffers are come into the barracks, suffer them not to go out again alive." On this one of them, but whether Lt Winchip or Jolly, I know not, was cut down by one of the Moormen. Seeing
which the sepoys pursued the other one that was going off and shot him. 34

Frost's own father was also killed. Sepoys broke into his house with a hatchet at about 6 a.m. and shot him. 35 The wife of another sergeant saw her husband killed at about the same time, when their house was also stormed. She and her daughter were both left unharmed. 36 The house occupied by Captain Miller and Lieutenants Tichbourne and Smart was also breached, and the three officers were put to death. Miller's servant, Permaul Naik, himself a sardar in the army, did his best to deflect the would-be assassins from their prey, by attempting to persuade them that the officers had fled. 37 The sepoys paid him no attention, however, and searched the house. Tichbourne and Smart died together. They had been hiding in a bath for some time. Smart saw a man from his own company enter the room. He stood up to identify himself, believing that they would now be safe. He was promptly shot through the head, and Tichbourne was dispatched simultaneously. 38 A British officer later recorded having seen their bodies 'just as they lay after the fatal deed - all huddled together in the bath, with their clothes half-burnt from the fire of the muskets'. 39

Another British officer, Major Armstrong of the 16th Regiment N.I., who had the misfortune to be passing through Vellore that night, on his way to Madras to embark on a period of home leave, also perished in the mutiny. He was apparently shot from the ramparts of the fort. An Indian servant saw two men pull him:
out of his Palankeen by the legs and
drag him towards the ditch of the Fort
to throw him in. The sepoys who had
shot the officer from the ramparts
called out to them to know if he was
dead. On their replying that there
was still life in him, the sepoys
desired them not to throw him into the
ditch, upon which they left him and
plundered the Palankeen. But another
man came and cut the officer on the
wrists. 40

Major Armstrong paid a heavy price for apparently ignoring
advice given him at the village where he had last broken
his journey. He had been urged not to travel to Vellore
as 'a disturbance would take place and . . . all the
Europeans in Vellore were to be put to death on that
night'. 41

III

By first light, at around 6 a.m., the fort was firmly
in the hands of the sepoys. The British force, heavily
outnumbered and taken completely by surprise, had sustained
heavy casualties. In the European barracks, more than
half of the detachment of the 69th were dead or seriously
wounded. Yet, given their hopeless tactical position,
it is perhaps surprising that as many as half of the men
were unhurt. Each trooper had only the regulation issue of
six rounds of ammunition with which to defend himself.
With the entrance and all the windows of the barracks
guarded by the sepoys, there were few opportunities to use
their weapons effectively. As for the officers, those who
had survived the night were either besieged in their houses,
or else had managed to conceal themselves in various hiding
places in the fort. The fortunes of the sepoys, however,
had reached their high point and now began a disastrous decline.

All that remained for the sepoys to do to accomplish a total victory was to mount a final deadly assault on the European barracks, and to root out the few remaining officers, more or less at their leisure. But the coup de grace was never delivered, and the prospect of hundreds of heavily armed Indian soldiers taking possession of a key fort in the middle of the Madras Presidency began to recede rapidly. The major factor in this failure appears to have been the behaviour of the sepoys themselves. At a time when they could have been finishing off the Europeans and making the fort secure, their attention turned increasingly towards plunder and looting. Instead of raising the drawbridge and closing all the outer gates of the fort, the doors and windows of the Paymaster's office were forced and the chests, containing 29,000 pagodas, were emptied and shared out. Instead of maintaining a full and thorough vigilance on the officers' quarters, large supplies of arrack were liberated from the godowns and freely sampled. Instead of going into the pettah and killing the British officers lodged there, pilau and betel were chewed in the gardens of the palace. The reasons for this indiscipline and negligence are bound up with the complex motivations of the sepoys involved in the mutiny, but their effects were to prove devastating to the success of the insurrection.

The firing within the fort had naturally aroused and
alarmed the British officers lodged in the town. Some had come to the main gates to find out what was going on. Colonel Forbes, commanding officer of the 1st/1st, had shots fired over his head. Along with a number of loyal sepoys and sardars, he elected to take refuge in one of the hill forts. He was later joined by some British officers and men, who had escaped from the main fort by climbing down ropes placed over the walls by some of the rebels in order to allow sepoys who had slept outside the fort to join their comrades in the fighting. Colonel Forbes appears to have made no attempt to send for aid, and warning of the mutiny was not sent to the nearest British garrison at Arcot until approximately 4.30 a.m. It was Major Coates, commanding officer of the 69th, who sent the signal. Coates later described his mortification at being unable to gain entrance to the fort to join his men:

sad as the occurrence was, it would have been a satisfaction could I have shared the fate of my brother soldiers; nor was it my fault, having with some officers of the 23rd Native Infantry made several ineffectual attempts to enter the gates of the garrison early in the morning.

It was one of those officers, Captain Stevenson, who galloped off to Arcot to summon the 19th Dragoons. Ironically, the Dragoons' commanding officer, Colonel Gillespie, was a personal friend of Colonel Fancourt and his wife, and he had set out from Arcot very early that morning to ride to Vellore to pay them a visit. Indeed,
only pressure of work had prevented him travelling the previous evening. Captain Stevenson therefore met Gillespie on the road and informed him of the perilous situation of the fort. Gillespie wasted no time in returning to Arcot to rouse the Dragoons.

The 19th Dragoons had already won for themselves the reputation of being the toughest corps in South India. They were renowned for the ruthlessness of their methods.\(^{49}\) Gillespie had only been posted to India in 1805, but his previous career had included many exploits of an extraordinary violent nature.\(^{50}\) In San Domingo, for example, whilst employed by French planters opposed to the revolt of slaves led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, he had once killed six men and seriously wounded two others in retaliation for their attempt to rob his servant. His small stature and mild expression completely belied his extremely violent nature.\(^{51}\) The mission on which he and his men were about to set out was to give full rein to their collective taste for bloodshed.

Gillespie quickly organised a detachment of the Dragoons to depart with him immediately for Vellore. The remainder of the corps, along with a battalion of the 7th Native Cavalry, were to follow as soon as possible, bringing up the light cannons known as 'galloper guns'. Only a skeleton force was to be left at Arcot to keep up a line of communications.

Yet before the relief force could even reach Vellore, an important development had taken place within the fort.\(^{52}\)
A group of eight officers, of whom the most senior was Captain Maclachlan, had been trapped in a house throughout the night. In common with the other British officers, they had been powerless to play anything but a passive role in the mutiny's dramatic course. At approximately 7 a.m., a party of sepoys decided to take their house by storm. The officers were left with no choice but to attempt to fight their way out. Had the concentration of the sepoys on their task been unwavering, it would surely have been impossible for the eight officers to force a path towards the European barracks. But, whether because the sepoys were more interested in looting the house or because there were simply not enough of them in the right place at the right time, this was exactly what happened. Once inside the barracks, the officers found 'a great number of men ... killed and wounded and the remainder quite disheartened'.

Encouraged by their success in managing to fight their way into the barracks, Captain Maclachlan now decided to organise a break-out from the barracks. It was resolved that all able-bodied survivors should attempt to force their way out of the building and on to the ramparts of the fort. The windows at the rear of the barracks were first completely knocked out and around 150 men then began rapidly to jump down and run for cover. Despite the poor organisation of the sepoys, there was still some opposition and their exit was made under fire.

A large number of men succeeded in reaching the ramparts.
There they were rallied by Captain Maclachlan. They immediately advanced to a nearby cavalier from where a determined group of sepoys were continuing to snipe at them. The cavalier was captured, but at the cost of the services of Maclachlan, who was badly wounded.\textsuperscript{54} The command now fell to Captain Barrow. Prompted by their rapidly diminishing supply of ball-cartridges, he decided that an attack on the grand magazine was the only course of action open to his force. As they made their way along the ramparts, Barrow, too, was hit and was unable to go on. The rest of the men continued undeterred towards the magazine. Passing the flagstaff, they observed that the flag of Mysore had been hoisted. One man climbed the staff in order to lower the enemy colours, but he was shot from some huts on the glacis on the outside of the fort. The main party now succeeded in reaching the magazine, only to find that the supply of cartridges had already been looted by the sepoys. As they started back towards the main gate, two men managed to capture the Mysore flag, an act for which they were later rewarded.\textsuperscript{55}

The remnants of the British force now took post in the bastions near to the main gate. Even allowing for the fact that the sepoys were not exhibiting any unity of purpose, their only realistic hope of survival now lay in the arrival of reinforcements. But in this hope they were not to be disappointed.

IV

The recapture of the fort by the Dragoons has frequently
been presented in a splendidly heroic and dramatic light. Colonel Gillespie has come to occupy the centre stage in this drama. Lavish praise has been heaped on his exploits, both by contemporaries and by historians. Even a popular writer of verse took up the theme, and Gillespie's deeds at Vellore became almost legendary. We are told of his arriving on his own at Vellore, having outstripped his men in the gallop from Arcot; of his being hauled up the walls by a chain of belts made by the survivors on the ramparts; of how he revived the morale of those survivors and led them on several bayonet charges against the gun-posts which most threatened their position; of how he descended once more on the arrival of the 'galloper guns' and fired the shot which blew open the main gate; of how he then re-mounted the ramparts and led a final charge which cleared the area around the gateway and allowed the Dragoons to enter the fort; and, finally, of how he led his men to overcome the resistance of the sepoys and win the day for the British.

In most respects, the truth is rather different. It appears certain that the mutiny had virtually collapsed by the time Gillespie arrived. Furthermore, close examination of the Colonel's own letters, which were written within a very short time of the recapture of the fort and which offer a most detailed account of the events of the recapture, throws considerable doubt on the extent of his personal contribution to the success of his force. Other eye-witness accounts also suggest that Gillespie
came to the centre of the action only when the gory business began of wreaking a terrible vengeance on all Indians captured inside the fort, or on those rounded up in the surrounding countryside while attempting to flee.

When Gillespie and the detachment of the Dragoons arrived at the fort, at about 8.30 a.m., they found two outer sets of gates already open. Some of the survivors of the 69th managed to get down and open a third set, but the fourth, innermost and strongest, was too well covered by a number of sepoy gun-posts to allow any attempt to open them by hand.

At this point, there is a discrepancy in Gillespie's accounts of his actions. The first account he gave, in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief written within hours of the recapture, states simply, 'I was obliged to await the arrival of the guns of the 19th'. However, three days later, he wrote:

> Whilst waiting the arrival of my main body with the Gallopers, I ascended the wall myself... I was on the point of advancing (to obtain ammunition)... when the guns appeared and probably saved us many lives.

Yet a third account attributed to Gillespie is characteristic of the 'heroic' version of events:

> I found a pair of colours... on the wall, which I seized, assembled as many of the 69th as I could see, gave a loud shriek, and at their head, under a tremendous fire, took possession of a cavalier of three guns.
The authenticity of this third letter is highly suspect. It is quoted in an account of the mutiny given in a regimental history,\(^6\) which contains other inaccuracies, and which gives no date, place or citation for the letter. It is perhaps most interesting for its contribution to the acceptance of an historical myth.

It is not certain, therefore, whether Gillespie ascended the ramparts while waiting for the guns. The confusion in his authentic correspondence could be attributable to the excitement of the day, causing him to forget the precise sequence of events and to confuse one piece of action with another; or it could possibly be attributed to a piece of deliberate exaggeration on the Colonel's part, in the second version, aimed at glorifying his own role. In any case, both versions indicate that he did not lead the 69th against the sepoys before the arrival of the guns.

On the arrival of the guns, Gillespie's first account of 10 July continues, 'I instantly applied both guns to the Gateway, mounted the ramparts myself with the assistance of a rope and headed the brave remains of the 69th'.\(^6\) The second version, of 13 July, goes into more detail about the actual firing of the guns, and praises Lieutenant Blakiston for his skill in breaching the gates with the first shot.\(^6\) This is not a serious discrepancy, since, as commanding officer, Gillespie was still entitled to say that he himself 'applied the guns'.
In what followed, however, there is considerable contradiction and, apparently, considerable exaggeration. The account of 10 July relates that, after the gates had been blown open, Gillespie mounted the ramparts and joined the remnants of the 69th:

No sooner had I ascended the gateway . . . than the 19th Dragoons entered and advanced under a most tremendous fire from the palace, where the insurgents had taken shelter.

By the 13 July, this had developed into:

I instantly headed the 69th Regiment and rushing down the ramparts charged the sepoys who were flying in all directions. We were followed and indeed in a moment passed by the 19th.

The regimental history has Gillespie stating that it was 'imprudent to allow the cavalry to charge' at first, since 'the great square and palace were full of men to dispute our entrance'. According to this account, the Colonel and the depleted remnants of the 69th cleared the square completely to allow the safe entrance of the Dragoons.

There are two points here which need some clarification. The first again concerns Gillespie's own part in the action. Was he being falsely modest in his letter of 10 July, or exaggerating a little on 13 July? This is really very difficult to assess and is in any case of minor importance. It is interesting to note that Lieutenant Blakiston refers to Gillespie being ridden over by a horse of one of the Dragoons and severely bruised, which suggests that he was somewhere in the thick of the action, but that he
literally got in the way of the main force. His enthusiasm for a fight may have carried him into a position where he was not aiding the British cause.

Of more significance is the question of how much opposition the Dragoons faced from the sepoys. Gillespie's assurances that a 'most tremendous fire' was in progress, from the guns of the mutineers, appears highly suspect. Strong indications that the mutiny was on the point of collapse have to be taken into account. The failure to secure the outer gates is a particularly significant omission on the part of the sepoys. It argues either that the intention to keep possession of the fort was never strongly held, or that the organisation was so woeful that even so obvious a step had been overlooked. It is possible, of course, that a determined group of die-hards united in a last stand, but, in view of the general lack of discipline shown throughout the night by the sepoys, this is far from certain. In the circumstances, it would be surprising if a cohesive opposition to the entry of the Dragoons had been maintained. Moreover, Gillespie himself asserted that the sepoys were 'flying in all directions', which is hardly consistent with maintaining a heavy fire. What surely clinches the matter, however, and what proves that the 'tremendous fire' was an exaggeration on the part of Gillespie, is simply that only one of the Dragoons was killed in the recapture of the fort, and only three others wounded. If 'tremendous fire' there indeed was, it must also have been tremendously inaccurate fire. What is more,
it must have subsided very rapidly indeed, since Gillespie assured the Commander-in-Chief on 10 July that 'in about ten minutes the Fort was completely in our possession.'\textsuperscript{72} Even in the generally more dramatic version of 13 July, this had extended to no more than a quarter of an hour.\textsuperscript{73}

Had the sepoys been fully committed to keeping possession of the fort, there is no possibility that a single squadron of Dragoons, even reinforced by a detachment of cavalry, could have recaptured it. The defenders would have been able to pick off the horsemen at will.

V

Whatever doubts must remain as to the exact course of events during the recapture of the fort, there is no doubt that, once inside, the 19th Dragoons indulged themselves in a terrible slaughter. Literally hundreds of sepoys were put to the sword. Colonel Gillespie actively encouraged his men in their excesses and indeed himself took a leading part.

Captain Marriott, having survived his hip injury and his narrow escape underneath the bed, emerged from his hiding place in time to witness the Dragoons in action:

A little after 10 o'clock the 19th Dragoons and the 7th Regiment cavalry and details arrived from Arcot, on the gallop, forced the gates with the assistance of the Europeans at the top and never was joy equal to ours when we saw the Parade covered with Dragoons and troopers. They soon drove the rascals from one post to another, and having placed parties round the Fort outside, cut off the retreat of a great many of them, charged on the ramparts, driving them over the ditch or into it,
and then the infantry commenced a search for the remainder. 74

Lieutenant Keighley of the 19th Dragoons was also able to observe Gillespie's methods at close quarters:

Colonel Gillespie immediately took prompt and decisive action. The Princes being all secured, he removed them to separate places, putting them in charge of the Dragoons, two men in the room with each and four outside the doors. Such sepoys as were taken at that time were about forty in number; these he ordered to be tied to each other and being near the fives court, the guard of the 19th loaded with grape and fired on them at the distance of about thirty yards. Twenty more who were secured soon after shared a similar fate. 75

Blakiston reckoned the numbers dispatched by Gillespie's orders in this manner at 'upwards of a hundred'. 76 In his memoirs, he conceded that the exhilaration of re-taking the fort had led the relief force to act in an extremely brutal manner. He found it 'a difficult matter to approve the deed'. 77

To the British, trapped in the fort all night, the arrival of the Dragoons was the answer to their prayers. Mrs Fancourt described the moments when her despair turned into hope:

At last I heard distinctly the horses of the 19th on the drawbridge and the Hurra repeated aloud. Then I hoped everything, and presently after heard them enter the Fort. An officer rode in and called for me by name but I could not answer or move. 78

Overcoming her stunned emotions, however, she ventured out from the hen-house where she had spent the past few hours, and her concern immediately turned to the fate of her
husband:

Again I heard my name repeated and saw an officer in a red jacket who I thought looked like my husband. I sprang forward to meet him. It was Mr McLean. He told me he was alive. Colonel Gillespie then joined us and both gave the same assurance. They took me upstairs and placed me on a chair giving me wine and water to drink. When the agitation of my mind was a little calmed, they told me Colonel Fancourt was wounded tho' not dangerously, and that he must be kept quiet. About an hour after I was told by the surgeon of the 19th my husband was in danger but that worse wounds had been cured: they were flesh wounds and the balls had not lodged. Hope still made me think he would survive. I would not even ask to see him, thinking the sight of me would agitate him too much.

Alas I found too late there was no hope of him from the first for he breathed his last about four o'clock the same evening: thank God he died easily. His death was happy I am fully satisfied, for he lived religiously and met his death in the faithful discharge of his duty. 79

Mrs Murray was much more fortunate in being reunited with her husband, but she also went through an anxious period of waiting before she knew he had survived:

Some of the Dragoons' officers rode up to the door and assured me we were safe. I learned some of our officers were living and soon after Captain Marriott and Mr Dean came to me, but [her husband] was not to be found, and the anguish I endured till he came home is not to be described. He was so much agitated, bruised and burnt by the sun as scarcely to be known. The moment I saw him I forgot all I had suffered and looked with indifference at the ravages the mutineers had made in and about the house, and the loss of almost every valuable we possessed. 80
The scene in the fort that day was one of utter carnage. British troopers, still unrestrained by their officers, continued to add to the pile of corpses. Mrs Murray, despite her awful experiences, was unable to harden her heart entirely to the fate of the sepoys:

the vengeance taken on the ferocious murderers was, tho' necessary for our preservation, dreadful to behold. During that awful day how many souls did I see and hear sent into eternity with all their sins upon their heads and their hands stained with European blood. 81

Captain Marriott saw Lieutenant Blakiston hunt relentlessly through the pagoda for concealed sepoys and, without ceremony, run them through with his sword. Marriott's description, written two days after the mutiny, testifies eloquently to the dominant spirit of revenge:

The Europeans have been hunting for any of the mutineers who may have hid themselves these past two days, and every son of a bitch that has been found they either pistol'd or bayonet'd . . . One fellow, finding no chance for his life, although he salaamed and begged in a most piteous manner . . . jumped from the pagoda about fifty feet high and was dashed to pieces . . . . Such a fall I never saw in my life. Head over heels, heels over head, dashing his limbs, head and all, against every projecting part of the pagoda. There has been no mercy shown to any of them, if we can except those in the guard who are destined for a more severe fate . . . Near seven hundred have been killed inside and outside and the work of death has only stopped this morning. I never in my life experienced such horrid, horrid sentiments and scenes. All the garrison lascars were employed with platform carts carrying out the
dead natives yesterday, and they have not yet finished their work. It is possible to be precise only about losses on the British side in the mutiny. Twelve military officers and three civilian officials were killed. Of the rank and file, a return received at Madras on 12 July, two days after the event, indicated that the 69th Regiment had lost 76 men and that a further 88 were wounded, 'most of them mortally'. The 19th Dragoons had one further fatality and three wounded. Writing to Sir John Cradock on the day after that return had been submitted, Colonel Gillespie was 'concerned to add... ten or twelve Europeans' to the death-toll. However, it appears over all that the slim chances of recovery given to most of the wounded was unduly pessimistic, for the final figure of British losses, including officers, was 130.

As to Indian casualties, no such precision is possible. Estimates only were made as to the numbers killed, in much the same way as a victorious army would not trouble to count the casualties suffered by its enemy. Many of the sepoys perished outside the fort, some no doubt in places where their bodies would never again be found. What also militated against an accurate return being made was the sheer scale of the losses sustained by the sepoys. However, estimates from British officers enable some idea to be gained of the total casualties. The return received at Madras on 12 July assessed the figure at between five and six hundred. Gillespie's letter of the same date
expressed his 'satisfaction to say that near two hundred sepoys have since been found dead', giving a total estimate of between seven and eight hundred. Captain Marriott, also writing on 12 July, claimed that 'near seven hundred' bodies of sepoys had been carried out of the fort, and Blakiston put the figure at 'upwards of 800'.

One further source is of help in establishing an accurate figure. A return of 16 September 1806, indicating the strength of the two battalions involved in the mutiny, included a heading for those 'missing since the 10th of July of whom many were killed and many made prisoners in various parts of the country'. The 1st/1st Regiment Native Infantry had 240 men in this category, and the 2nd/23rd had 641. This means that a total of 881 were either missing or dead. The return also stated that 'about 150' of the 2nd/23rd were actually 'prisoners in various parts of the country', which would leave approximately 730 men unaccounted for. It is also necessary to subtract a certain proportion of the 240 men of the 1st/1st, as prisoners. If it was the same proportion as the 2nd/23rd, the total figure would be reduced to around 670. Some must have escaped entirely in the aftermath, but there is no way of knowing how many. Given that the three officers quoted above all estimated over 650 sepoys to have been killed, it appears likely that the actual figure was indeed very close to that number.

As the retributive killings finally came to an end on
12 July, the British were left with the urgent task of resolving the perplexing question of what had caused this appalling display of disloyalty on the part of the sepoys.
NOTES to Chapter I

1 MSP Vol.25, f.4312, Remark attributed to Mohammed Jaffer, a leading conspirator in the mutiny, by Rustoon Ally Shah, fakir, witness at the enquiry held by Colonel Forbes and Lieutenant Coombs into the origins of the mutiny.


5 MSP Vol.30, f.1839 Report of Commission assembled at Vellore to investigate the cases of the prisoners who were engaged in the Mutiny at Vellore, 3 July 1807.


7 Ibid.

8 NLS Minto 11571, Persian Letters. Mohummed Gaseen to Colonel Richardson, 8 June 1808, asking reparation for many valuable items which he claimed were stolen from him by the 19th Dragoons at the time of the Vellore mutiny, including furniture, carpets and silverware.


12 HMS Vol.509, pp.243-244, Minute of Sir John Cradock to Madras Council, 16 September 1806.


14 Ibid.

15 The commandant's quarters lay between the European barracks and the main gate. See 'c' in plan of fort between pp. 7 and 8.

16 NLS Walker of Bowland 13684, ff.44-49, Amelia Fancourt's written account of the mutiny.


18 Ibid.


21 Ibid.

22 See 'A' in plan of fort.


24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.
A young officer with the careless-
ness too common with young men in
India, was amusing himself with
sporting, and not perceiving any-
thing around him but black men and
trees, he did not take great pains
to call out and shot an infant
belonging to a wedded pair. He was
seized however and at least so
noticed as to be complained of to
the Regiment; but as the military
men here are extremely averse to
all judicial proceedings, instead
of sending the officer down to take
a public trial, they first held,
what I am told they had no right to
do, a court martial to ascertain
whether or not he ought to be sent
before a grand jury, and decided he
ought not as he did not sport with
a design to kill the child. The
parents of the child however were
much dissatisfied with this easy
way of dismissing a man whom they
considered as the murderer of their
child. I do not know the name of
this officer but in the darkness of
the night at this fatal time[ during
the mutiny], the parent of this
infant met a young man, a lieutenant
Ely, and his wife, with her child in
her arms, and mistaking him for the
young officer who had shot his child,
he killed him before his wife's face,
and then taking the child from her
arms, shot it, crying "blood for
blood".
Charles Armstrong, a Major in the service of the Honourable East India Company, while journeying to Madras in the immediate hope of returning to his native country, he was barbarously murdered near this place on 10th July 1806. Possessing unbounded benevolence and every quality of the soldier he was endeared to the army in which he served and had acquired numerous friends. The monument is humble, but the record is true.

The 19th figured prominently in the Third and Fourth Mysore Wars, for example. See Dodwell, op.cit., Vol. V, and J.W. Fortescue, History of the British Army, (London, 1910), Vol. VI. Fortescue describes them as 'the terrible old soldiers of the Nineteenth'. (p.46).


When Gillespie was later introduced to George III, the King is reputed to have remarked, 'Eh, eh, what, what ... is this the little man that killed the brigands?'. Dictionary of National Biography, (Oxford, 1960), Vol. VII.

P. Samuelraj, op.cit., p.124, has attempted a chronology of the recapture of the fort. This is not a simple task, since there are conflicting reports of the exact times at which the different events occurred. The arrival of the news of the mutiny, at Arcot, does indeed appear to have been at 6.00 a.m., and Gillespie's arrival at the fort must have been well after 8 a.m., and not 'at half-past seven', as he insists in one of his letters (NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, f.201, Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 13 July 1806). Since the survivors of the 69th had already mustered at the gateway when Gillespie arrived, it is necessary to establish at what time the officers forced their way into the European barracks and led the break-out. Samuelraj suggests 7 a.m., but leading witnesses contradict this. Assistant Surgeon Dean states that the officers left their place of refuge, 'about 8 a.m.', and this is corroborated by Lt-Col Marriott, who testified that 'about eight o'clock I heard the sepoys say the Europeans had got out of the barracks'. He continued, 'about half an hour afterwards they passed the word that the Regiment of cavalry ... had arrived'. Dean confirms that only a short time elapsed before they knew that aid was on the way. He and the other survivors 'retired to the gateway and soon saw the approach of the cavalry'. Gillespie therefore arrived not before 8.30 a.m. If it is asked why he should have taken two and a half hours to cover the sixteen miles from Arcot, it should be remembered that he was already some part of the way to Vellore to visit Col Fancourt when he received the news of the insurrection. He therefore had to first return to Arcot to rouse a relief force. An approximate chronology might accordingly read:

6.00 a.m. : Gillespie receives news, and returns to Arcot.
6.30 a.m. : Gillespie and detachment of Dragoons set out for Vellore.
8.00 a.m. : Officers reach barracks, lead survivors onto ramparts, and
8.30 a.m. : assemble at gateway.
Between
8.30 a.m. : Arrival of Gillespie and Dragoons.
9.00 a.m.
9.30 a.m. : Arrival of main force from Arcot, with the 'galloper guns'.
9.45 a.m. : Main gate blown open by first shot.
10.00 a.m. : Fort recaptured.


53 HMS Vol.508, f.239, Evidence of Asst. Surgeon Dean to the Commission of Enquiry, 27 July 1806.
54 Captain Maclachlan lost a leg as a result of this injury.
55 Sergeant McManus received £18, Private Bottom £7.
56 For Example, Sir John Cradock was of the opinion that Colonel Gillespie had 'not only saved the lives of the remaining inhabitants from immediate massacre, but averted from this Presidency evil consequences incalculable'. HMS Vol.507, f.224, Cradock to Bentinck, Vellore, 14 July 1806.
58 These inaccuracies and others are to be found in the accounts of the mutiny in the works listed under Note 57.
59 See chronology under Note 51.
60 NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, f.153. Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 10 July 1806.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid. f.201, Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 13 July 1806.
64 Ibid.
65 NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, f.153. Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 10 July 1806.
66 Ibid. f.201, Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 13 July 1806.
67 Ibid. f.153, Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 10 July 1806.
68 Ibid. f.201, Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 13 July 1806.
69 Whitehorne, op.cit., p.72.
Blakiston, op.cit., p.294.

NLS Minto 11322. Return of killed and wounded at Vellore mutiny.

NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, f.153. Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 10 July 1806.

Ibid. Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 13 July 1806.

NLS Walker of Bowland, 13684, ff.66-68. Captain Marriott to ?, Vellore, 12 July 1806.

IOL Pittman and Skelton papers, Eur E 334/23.

Lt Keighley to ?, Vellore, 10 July 1806.

Blakiston, op.cit., p.295, has another eye-witness account of this incident. Wakeham, op.cit., p.111, and W.F. Butler, A Narrative of Historical Events connected with the Sixty-Ninth Regiment, pp.44-45 have exaggerated accounts.

Blakiston, op.cit., p.295.

Ibid.

NLS Walker of Bowland 13684, ff.44-49. Amelia Fancourt's account of the mutiny.

Ibid.

NLS Abbotsford Collection : Blackwood Papers, MS 913, ff. 97-100. Mrs. Murray to Sir Walter Scott, n.d.

Ibid.

NLS Walker of Bowland 13684, ff.66-68. Captain Marriott to ?, Vellore, 12 July 1806.

MSP Vol.19, f.779. The officers who died were:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Corps</th>
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<tr>
<td>Col Fancourt</td>
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<td>2/23 N.I.</td>
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<td>Captain Willison</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Winchip</td>
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<td>Lt Jolly</td>
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<td>Capt Miller</td>
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<td>Lt O'Reilly</td>
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<td>Lt Tichbourne</td>
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<td>Lt Ely</td>
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<td>H.M.69th</td>
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<td>Lt Popham</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td>Military Paymaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Mann</td>
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<td>Dept. Commissary of Stores</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Armstrong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Gill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conductor of Ordinance</td>
</tr>
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Ibid.

NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, f.183. Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 12 July 1806.


MSP Vol.19, f.779.

NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, f.183. Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 12 July 1806.

Ibid., 13684, ff.66-68. Captain Marriott to ?, Vellore, 12 July 1806.

Blakiston, op.cit., p.229.

Chapter 2: Loyalty and Discontent

in the Madras Army:

What is come over the Army at Fort St George? What are we to believe? . . . . Surely the brave fellows who went through the difficulties and dangers of the Mahratta campaign cannot have broken their allegiance? I can never believe it till I shall see it proved in the clearest possible manner.
I

The scale and ferocity of the Vellore Mutiny was without precedent in the history of the Madras Army. By 1806, the East India Company had been employing Indian troops on a large scale for over fifty years, since defeating the French in South India in the middle of the eighteenth century. In that time there had been a number of serious cases of indiscipline on the part of the sepoys, but there had been nothing remotely resembling an attempt to massacre an entire European garrison.

The Governor of Madras, Lord William Bentinck, was therefore fully entitled to describe the mutiny as 'one of the most extraordinary and important events that have happened in our history'. Having seldom seriously questioned the loyalty of the Indian troops in the past, the British were totally unprepared for the tremendous intensity of the uprising at Vellore.

II

In 1800, only six years before the Mutiny at Vellore, the sepoys had undergone some of the hardest campaigning in their history. Arthur Wellesley's campaign against Doondiah Waug, a polygar, who refused to submit to British authority and who commanded a large force of followers, had proved harsh and demanding. Hard marches and severe conditions were the norm as Wellesley attempted to combat the guerilla tactics employed by Doondiah. Much of the fighting took place during the rainy season, and the
relentless monsoon took a heavy toll of the health of the sepoy battalions. Unlike their European officers, the sepoys were not provided with shelter. ⁵

Similarly, in Wellesley's later campaign against the Mahrattas, which culminated in his famous victory at Assaye, the Indian troops were subjected to poor conditions and extremely fierce fighting. ⁶ It was even suggested that Wellesley had ordered wounded sepoys to be shot rather than retard the progress of his army. ⁷ At no time, however, did the loyalty of the sepoys waver.

The Company's military authorities had long been favourably impressed with the general character and service of the sepoys. After the Second Mysore War, a senior British officer was moved to extol the virtues of the men who served in the Madras battalions. He regarded their discipline as 'infinitely superior to that of the other Indian establishment' and generally believed them 'hardy little men' who 'undergo severe duty with Cheerfulness'. ⁸ A few years later, Thomas Munro, an influential administrator, gave it as his opinion that the sepoys were the very basis on which depended 'the preservation of our Empire in this country'. ⁹ He argued that sepoys were far more useful than European troops since the vast baggage trains required by the Europeans greatly reduced their mobility and effectiveness. By comparison, the sepoys could move quickly and lightly. ¹⁰

General Harris, Commander-in-chief of the Madras army from 1796 to 1800, also believed that the sepoys were able
to withstand 'the pressure of military hardships with fortitude, and to manifest at all times a firm adherence to the service';\textsuperscript{11} and Lord Clive prefaced the announcement of a rare increase of pay for the Indian troops with the following tribute:

The Right Honourable the Governor in Council reflecting on the series of important services rendered by the sepoys on the establishment of Fort St George, has been impressed with a deep sense of the gallantry and fidelity so generally displayed by them. ... and his Lordship reflects with pride on the frequent instances in which he has been able to reward the distinguished merit of individuals.\textsuperscript{12}

There had, of course, been periodic mutinies but, in general, the number of troops involved had been small, their actions limited, and their motives clear. In most cases, there had been an identifiable provocation from the military authorities. One such example had come at the end of the First Mysore War against Hyder Ali, in 1769. The morale of the sepoys had reached a very low ebb as a result of their being left many months in arrears of pay. It was rumoured amongst the British in Madras that a general mutiny was a distinct possibility. In practice, all that occurred, however, was a refusal on the part of the sepoys to obey their officers' orders until their grievance was settled. One military observer declared that the attention of the men to their duty during the dispute remained unimpaired; they even continued with regular drill, though allowing their European officers only to be spectators.\textsuperscript{13}
The most serious mutiny prior to Vellore had occurred in 1781, during the Second Mysore War. Eight companies of Madras Infantry, along with other sepoys from the Bengal Army, refused to go by ship from Vizagapatam to Madras, on the grounds that their castes would be violated by sea-travel. Three European officers who attempted to enforce the order were killed. The Indian troops marched off inland, either to join Hyder Ali's army or to disperse into the countryside.

At the end of this war, further discontent had broken out, this time over the negligent attitude of the Madras government towards paying the men. It was rumoured that some of the sepoys were so deprived of money and rations that they were forced to sell their children into slavery in order to feed themselves. When peace was concluded, the Madras government was more than twelve months behind with its payments to the sepoys. Despite this, no form of violence was offered by the Indian troops to their European officers, although it appears that many never received their dues. A British officer recorded:

At Trichinopoly among the Black Troops, something still more cruel has happened. They discharged above 1000 men who have served the whole war, and had 18 months arrears due, without paying them a shilling: a scrap of paper, worth little, and in their eyes nothing, was all they got . . . the wretches were starving.

The attachment of the sepoys to the Company despite such harsh conditions came to be taken for granted by many British military officers, although it was well
known that the numerical superiority of the Indian troops was such that they could have put an end to the British presence in South India at any time they chose. Some officers observed that the men displayed particular loyalty to their own regiments and regarded their oath of allegiance as a sacred bond. Other officers appear to have held racialist views on the matter. They believed Indians in general felt themselves inferior to Europeans and were thus prepared to serve the Company without question. In any event, the loyalty of the sepoys encouraged complacency amongst the British, a state of mind which was to be savagely exposed and temporarily destroyed at Vellore.

Two major factors should perhaps be considered in assessing the reasons for the apparently unshakeable loyalty displayed by the sepoys. In the first place, the Company provided a pension for every soldier on reaching retirement or on being invalided out of the service. In a poor and heavily populated rural society this small measure of security, amounting to half-pay, was likely to be highly prized. The ordinary sepoy did not earn enough to be able to save money during his active service, and the prospect of a regular income during his retirement must have been attractive. Once in the service, therefore, there was some incentive for him to remain loyal and serve out his time.

Secondly, the East India Company was simply by far the largest employer of troops in South India. The
gradual decline and collapse of the power of Mysore meant that men wishing to follow the profession of arms had very little choice but to serve with the East India Company. A series of wars and campaigns throughout the second half of the eighteenth century had created a large body of men who were accustomed to earning their living through military service. Without travelling hundreds of miles in a perhaps fruitless quest to join the armies of the Mahrattas or of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the ordinary sepoy had little prospect of finding an alternative employer. This may have led the Company to mistake a simple desire to maintain status and income for a particular loyalty to the Company service.

Certainly, there was little in the general conditions of their service to account for the gallantry and fidelity of the sepoys. At seven rupees a month, their pay was just over half that earned by European privates in the King's regiments stationed in India, and was less than was paid by Tipu Sultan, for example. Moreover, even this meagre recompense frequently fell into arrears, in peacetime as well as during war. Whilst the Company made a practice of almost always paying the British troops on time, the sepoys were generally kept several months behind.

In addition, a harsh disciplinary code was imposed upon the Indian troops. There were frequent floggings for minor offences and desertion was punishable by death. This was in line, of course, with the practice in the
British army, but was more severe than the discipline to which their service in princely armies had accustomed the sepoys. The sepoys suffered the additional burden of speaking a different language from the officers whose orders they were expected to obey without question.

It was in this realm of communications between the British and the sepoys that the sardars played their most important role. In effect, it was the job of these Indian officers to relay orders to the men and to see that they were complied with. In the mid-eighteenth century the status of the sardar had been relatively high. Considerable responsibility had rested on him in regard to organising the sepoys, both in war and peace. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, this had changed, and the lowest ranking European non-commissioned officer exercised more authority than the highest ranking subidar. As a result, the sardars were unable to represent effectively any grievances which the sepoys might have in respect of their orders. Sardars could be easily demoted by European officers angry at having their orders questioned.

The Madras army was consequently no place for an Indian with strict views on caste and religion. Since 1783 it had been the avowed policy of the military authorities to mix castes in every battalion. Brahmins and pariahs alike were expected to stand shoulder to shoulder in the ranks, with no account taken of the huge gulf which divided them socially. In the lines, some
provision was made to allow separate cooking facilities for different castes, but in general the Company policy was that caste had no place in the day to day running of an efficient army. Inevitably, orders were from time to time issued which proved offensive to the sepoys' way of life. In such cases the inability of the sardars to make an influential intervention tended to exacerbate the situation.

One such instance has a particular bearing on the outbreak of the Vellore Mutiny and demands close examination. In November 1805, a new pattern of turban had been prescribed for the sepoys by order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras army, Sir John Cradock. His staff officers, Colonel Agnew and Major Pierce, had instigated the change because they considered the previous pattern to be cumbersome and impractical, 'requiring one hand of a soldier to keep it upon his head, when he moved at a more accelerated pace than the ordinary step'. Cradock had chosen the new pattern from three models made up for his inspection. With its introduction, the former practice of allowing some scope to the sepoys battalions in their choice of headgear was brought to an end. The order stated:

Scaled patterns of the turband will be furnished to corps and the Commander-in-Chief forbids any deviation whatever from those patterns as established . . . either in their fashion of trimmings or in their dimensions or weight.

Some months passed whilst the process of making up
and distributing the new pattern of turban got under way; but as soon as it was introduced there were objections from the sepoys. The most serious opposition to the new style of headgear was encountered amongst the Indian troops garrisoned at Vellore.

At morning parade on 6 May 1806, Captain Moore of the grenadier company of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Regiment, ordered his men to remove their turbans and to hand them in to the stores to be made up into the new pattern. The sepoys refused to comply with the order. Moore dismissed the men and demanded an explanation of this behaviour from the sardars. It was pointed out to him that the men were averse to the proposed new shape of the turban. They feared that its alleged resemblance to the cap worn by the Portuguese drummers in the army would lead to them being mistaken for Christians. Their castes were thus threatened and also their rights and status in their own villages.

Captain Moore went off and reported the matter to the regiment's commanding officer, Colonel Darley. The non-commissioned Indian officers of the company were immediately called before the Colonel. He questioned them as to whether there was any substance to the men's objections. Two havildars said that there was nothing wrong with the new pattern, but two others said they would not wear it, 'whatever the consequences'. The naiks of the company also refused to wear the new turban.

In a mood of mounting anger at this open defiance of
orders, Colonel Darley stripped the dissenting sardars of their rank. He then called in the senior Indian officers, a subidar and a jemidar. Both these men, one a Muslim and the other a Rajput, said there was nothing objectionable in the new shape. They agreed to follow Darley's orders to submit their turbans for immediate adjustment to the prescribed pattern.31

Seeing the example of their seniors, the havildars and naiks who had initially refused to comply changed their minds and also submitted their turbans. The sepoys of the grenadier company were then called in, one by one, and ordered to hand in their turbans. The serious consequences that would follow any continued show of defiance were explained to them. But, out of thirty-nine men, twenty-one stood fast in their rejection of the new pattern and were immediately arrested.32

That afternoon, a group of sepoys gathered near the prison where their comrades were confined and carried on shouted conversations with the prisoners. Colonel Darley's attention was drawn to this — as he considered — undesirable assembly. His temper now hotter than ever, the Colonel stormed over to the prison and remonstrated with the sepoys to return forthwith to their barracks. Seeing no immediate response to his command, he drew his sword and attacked one of the sepoys with the flat part of the blade. The weapon snapped, but the men began to disperse and a potentially highly explosive situation was temporarily defused.33
At evening parade, there was more trouble. Men from a number of different companies refused to wear their belts and sidearms in protest against the events of the day. Darley was determined to show them that his orders could not be flouted. Believing that the sardars were doing nothing to persuade the men to adhere to their duty and that they themselves might be at the root of the trouble, he demoted the subidar and jemidar of the grenadier company to the ranks. He then reported this further example of indiscipline to the fort commandant, Colonel Fancourt. 34

Fancourt had, in fact, already attempted to take a conciliatory approach towards the sepoys' dislike of the new turban. He had written to the Adjutant-General in Madras, Colonel Agnew, explaining the strength of the sepoys' feelings on the matter and requesting that its introduction be suspended pending further enquiries into its suitability. 35 He approached the refusal of the men to wear their proper uniform in a similar spirit. Overruling Darley's demotion of the commissioned officers, Fancourt went in person to the sepoy barracks to request the men to return to their former obedience. In this he was apparently successful since at morning parade next day all companies of the battalion gave up their turbans for adjustment without further complaint. 36

One further incident occurred. At evening parade that same day, as the men were being dismissed, a general cry went up of 'dhoot, dhoot', a term usually used to
drive away dogs. Colonel Darley, who was himself present at the parade, ordered the men to fall in once more and demanded that the sardars should produce those responsible for starting this seemingly derisive outburst. No culprits were brought forward, however, and after some time Darley was forced to dismiss the men.37

This incident had little significance other than to underline the tension that existed between the sepoys and their European officers. The atmosphere could not have been improved when Colonel Fancourt received a reply to his letter to the Adjutant General. This insisted that the enforcement of the new turban should go ahead. Moreover, it ordered that the demotion of the havildars and naiks, who had originally refused to obey the order to hand in their turbans, should stand.38

While the twenty-one sepoys who had refused the turban were marched off to Fort St George for trial, Sir John Cradock arrived at Vellore to supervise in person an enquiry into the whole episode. A Court of Inquiry was established which sought not only to uncover the exact nature of the unrest, but also to examine whether any real grounds for dissatisfaction with the new turban existed. Lieutenant-Colonels McKerras, of the 2nd/23rd, Forbes, of the 1st/1st, and Marriott, Paymaster of Stipends, were appointed to serve on the court.39

The proceedings centred around Colonel Darley's allegations that the sardars had stirred up trouble amongst the men. But for their investigation, he claimed,
no complaint against the turban would ever have been heard. He said he had been told by one of the demoted havildars that a Subidar, Sheik Imam, had been instrumental in spreading a rumour that the new pattern of turban violated caste and religion. When the havildar in question was called before the Court, however, he failed to convince the presiding officers of his honesty.

In its conclusions, the Court characterised his testimony as 'contradictory of itself and brought forward in a most suspicious manner'. Sheik Imam hotly denied the charge and asserted that he was being made the victim of the personal jealousy of junior officers who were attempting to blacken his name so that he would lose his rank. Moreover, he unequivocally rejected the idea that there was any religious objection to the turban; and in this he was supported by other sardars of high caste.

The Court found that there was no case against the sardars. It decided that the acts of insubordination:

- originated in the jealous and lively prejudices of the natives in any matter respecting dress, which in this country is so intimately connected with caste and religion, acting on the weak minds of illiterate and uninformed men.

As a result, no major change was recommended in the shape of the new turban.

At Fort St George, however, all twenty-one prisoners were found guilty of insubordination and of 'irregular, unsoldierlike and disrespectful' behaviour. In view of the fact that the sepoys could, in theory, have faced
capital punishment for their refusal to obey orders, this was a relatively mild verdict. They were all given the opportunity to apologise for their action in rejecting the turban, and to give a pledge that in future they would follow unquestioningly the orders of their superior officers. Nineteen of the men complied and were returned to their regiment. The two others, Sheik Abdul Rymen, a Muslim, and Ananteram, a Hindu, maintained their objections to the turban, claiming that it did indeed insult their religions. They consequently met with the wrath of the Court. They were sentenced to receive nine hundred lashes 'with a cat of nine tails on their bare backs', and they were dismissed from the service of the Company as 'turbulent and unworthy subjects'. The Judge-Advocate drew particular attention to:

the persevering obstinacy of the prisoners who, when called on to make their defence, instead of evincing any sign of contrition, stepped forward and boldly asserted that wearing the new turban would be an infringement on the observance of their caste, and that consequently they could not wear it... the Court has been compelled to award them a severe and exemplary punishment.

III

In addition to Vellore, serious opposition to the turban was also met at Wallajahbad where sepoys were jeered by a crowd of onlookers when they wore the new style of headgear for the first time. Taunts of 'hat wearers' were derisively directed at them, suggesting
that it was not only in the army that the new turban was seen as the equivalent of adopting Christianity. Although the European officers took steps to disperse the crowd, seven sepoys subsequently refused to wear the turban and for a time another major incident seemed likely. However, the situation was tactfully handled by the officers. They were able to persuade the men to withdraw their objections and to accept the new pattern of turban. 

Nonetheless, Colonel Harcourt, commanding officer at Wallajahbad, was alarmed. On 13 June, he expressed his fears to Colonel Agnew:

I have received information which leads me to expect we may experience further objections on the part of the native troops at this cantonment on the subject of the new turbans . . . . The grounds upon which my opinion has been formed are first that the Jemidar of the Grenadier Company of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Regiment (who first wore the new turban and has since continued to appear in it) has been repeatedly insulted and abused and dirt has been thrown at him; several of the Grenadier Company, (who also wore the new turban and who have been called by the insubordinate the 1st Topies Native Infantry) have experienced similar treatment but as these acts have taken place after it was dark the offenders have managed to elude all attempts to seize them. 48

At this point, Harcourt sent a Subidar, Venkata Naik, to Madras to be dismissed from the service. This sardar was believed by his commanding officer to be wielding an undesirable influence over the sepoys by encouraging them to display opposition to the turban.
Having no specific evidence on which a court martial might convict the man, however, Harcourt took the unusual step of applying directly to the headquarters of the army for his dismissal. This was approved. Although no further incidents of this kind took place, Harcourt's action was symptomatic of the uncertainty and unease over the introduction of the new turban which tormented the military authorities throughout June and the beginning of July, 1806.

Sir John Cradock was ill-equipped to deal with the situation. The Commander-in-Chief had suffered from poor health almost from the day of his arrival in Madras in December 1804. Within a few weeks, indeed, he had contemplated resigning on health grounds and returning to Britain. This was only one of a number of problems which beset him. He had failed to establish a good relationship with the civil government in Madras, despite having concessions made to him by Lord William Bentinck on such issues as control of military patronage and proposed reductions in the army. He was also at loggerheads with the Court of Directors of the East India Company over the right which he claimed, and which they disputed, to draw two salaries, one as Commander-in-Chief and the other as a member of the Madras Council. In effect, although he had striven to maintain a degree of personal friendship with Lord William Bentinck, Cradock believed himself assailed on all sides. He viewed the affair over the turban as yet another example of his ill-fortune in India.
In practice, the Commander-in-Chief was faced with the choice of either suspending the introduction of the new turban or of enforcing it. If he chose the former he would risk being seen to submit to the demands of the Indian troops, thus perhaps encouraging them in future to dispute military authority. If, on the other hand, he persevered with its enforcement, there was a hope that such a display of unshakeable determination would convince the men that opposition was hopeless. A number of battalions had, in any case, accepted the pattern without a murmur of protest.\textsuperscript{52} At the same time he ran the risk of increased opposition.

Cradock certainly believed that the matter should be closely monitored. He had the battalion which had refused the turban at Vellore transferred to Madras, and he urged Colonel Agnew to watch 'with double vigilance, and view with distrust the conduct of the Native Commissioned officers, who certainly if not guilty of instigation, yet by no means exerted themselves to crush the spirit of insubordination.'\textsuperscript{53} Cradock's anxiety was increased by a letter from the Auditor-General of the army, Colonel Brunton, a man with long experience of service in India. Brunton warned Cradock that 'many things of serious moment have originated in trifles' and he counselled that serious consideration should be given to the sepoys' complaints 'since native troops are absolutely and indispensably necessary'.\textsuperscript{54}
On 17 June, Cradock wrote to Bentinck from Nundydroog, where he was staying for health reasons, confessing 'because I am at a distance, I feel somewhat uneasy about this cursed turban business'.\textsuperscript{55} He was also at pains to point out that Colonel Agnew and Major Pierce were 'the parents of the new turban'.\textsuperscript{56} By 29 June, the Commander-in-Chief's worries over the subject had increased still further. By then he considered it necessary to swallow his military pride and to seek sanction for the continued enforcement of the turban from the Madras Council:

I must have recourse to your Lordship's judgement and that of the Council to relieve me from great anxiety and embarrassment upon the subject of the turbands . . . . I have the strongest reasons to suppose that almost universal objection arises against the turband.\textsuperscript{57}

Being thus unexpectedly asked to comment on a matter of internal military discipline, the Council confined itself in reply to restating the general principles on which the army had always run. It was deemed 'advisable that the alternative of yielding to the clamour arising from an unfounded prejudice should if possible be avoided'.\textsuperscript{58} The Council also recommended that a general order should be published to the army with the aim of re-assuring the sepoys that no slight to their religion was intended by the new shape of turban. The following draft was suggested:
It will be in every instance the wish of the Rt. Hon. the Governor in Council to evince a sacred regard for the religious principles of the native troops as well as all other inhabitants of this country; but in the present case it appears after the strictest enquiry and according to natives of the highest caste, that the opposition which has been experienced in the late change of turban is destitute of any foundation in either the law or usage of the Mohammedan or Hindu religions, and any person who may persevere in that opposition cannot in consequence fail to be subjected to the severest penalties of military discipline. 

If this order was meant as a genuine attempt to conciliate the sepoys, it was extraordinarily heavy-handed. Not only did it presume to lecture the men on the principles of their own religions, but it also promised heavy punishments for any who dared to reject the government's interpretation of their religious laws.

The order was not published, however. Cradock had been reluctant from the beginning to consult the civil government on the matter and he remained reluctant to accept their advice. In the week between his requesting government sanction for continued enforcement and his receiving a reply, there had been no further complaints against the turban. The Commander-in-Chief had also received encouraging news from Colonel Darley who was with the mutinous battalion at Madras. Darley claimed to foresee no problems in having 'the remaining companies in the new turban in the course of the next month'.

Cradock was sufficiently fortified by these circumstances to believe that he may have allowed his
misgivings on the subject to have got out of proportion.

On 7 July, he assured the Council:

Under this view, it may be judicious to postpone the publication of the order, either to let the subject fall to the ground as no longer the interposition of Government is required, or to assess the issue as your Lordship may determine by future events. 61

Cradock also took the opportunity to justify to the Council his momentary loss of confidence in his own judgement:

I will confess that by the present communication with Government, I have gained the object I had in view, which was to receive from them an unreserved opinion as to the propriety of full coercion should it prove necessary, but which, situated as this country is, buried in the absurdities of caste and prejudice dear to them as existence, I was fearful to take any step without expert knowledge and the sanction of Government. 62

Writing in private to Bentinck on the following day, less than forty-eight hours before the explosion at Vellore, the Commander-in-Chief was still chiefly concerned with preserving his reputation. He criticised Agnew and Pierce for 'blindly carrying a most delicate matter too far', and complained; 'Unluckily I am now committed with Colonel Agnew and Major Pierce, the situation above all others I wished to avoid... but I must get out of the scrape with as much dignity as I can'. 63 When musket fire broke the stillness of the early morning at Vellore on 10 July, the 'scrape' in which Cradock found himself suddenly
threatened to take on a far deeper significance. The investigations into the causes of the mutiny, however, were to prove complex and contentious.
NOTES to Chapter 2

2 For a detailed account of the early history of the Madras army see W.J. Wilson, History of the Madras Army, (Madras, 1882-87), Vol. I-IV.
3 Portland PwJb 727 Bentinck to Cradock, Fort St George, 12 July 1806.
4 Portland PwJb 687 Major J. Haslewood, 'Narrative of the Origin and Causes of the Disaffection of the Native Troops upon the Madras Establishment and also of those which occasioned the Mutiny of Vellore', n.d. f.8.
5 Ibid. f.9.
6 Ibid. f.10.
7 Minto 11322 Translation of a list of grievances transmitted from the Subsidiary Force at Hyderabad. Para. 16 reads:

We all abandoned our wives and children and marched with General Wellesley to the Mahratta country; at that junction a number of sepoys were wounded in the actions fought with the Mahrattas; of the wounded many would have recovered but General Wellesley ordered them to be shot by muskets, what propriety was there in General Wellesley ordering sepoys to be shot by muskets who had been wounded while fighting the Company's battles? General Wellesley having obtained a name through the assistance of black men has gone to his own country and the families of the poor sepoys whom he ordered to be shot are destitute and wretched.

8 HMS Vol.84 f.952 Officer in H.M. 98th Reg. commenting after 2nd Mysore War.
10 Ibid.
12 Wilson, op.cit., Vol. III, p.89.
13 Portland PwJb 687 Haslewood, 'Narrative', f.9.
15 Ibid.
16 Portland PwJb 687 Haslewood, 'Narrative', f.10.
17 Letter from an un-named officer which was forwarded to King George III, Madras, 14 Oct. 1784. Quoted in V. Harlow, Founding of the Second British Empire (London, 1952), p.191 n.
21 Minto 11322 Translation of a List of grievances, para.20.
22 Wilson, op.cit., Vol.II, p.103.
23 Minto 11322 f.113 Minute of Sir John Cradock, Madras, 23 Oct. 1806.
26 HMS Vol. 507 f.451 Pierce to Cradock, Madras, 22 July. 1806.
28 This account of the unrest in the sepoy army at Vellore in May 1806 is based on the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry at Vellore in May 1806 and of the Court Martial of prisoners at Madras in June 1806. These records can be found in HMS Vol.507, ff. 15-139, and IOL Military Proceedings, Range 255, Vol.72 ff. 4096-4242.
29 IOL Military Proceedings, Range 255, Vol.72, f.4117 Evidence of Captain Moore to Court of Inquiry 18 May 1806.
30 Ibid. f.4106 Evidence of Colonel Darley.
31 Ibid. f.4108.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid. f.4150 Evidence of Jemidar Adjutant Meir Golomally.
34 Ibid. f.4110 Evidence of Col Darley.
37 Ibid.
38 HMS Vol.507 ff.5-6. Cradock to Agnew n.d. (forwarded to Fancourt at Vellore).
40 Ibid. f.4201 Report of the Court of Inquiry.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 HMS Vol. 507 f.107 Verdict of Court Martial at Fort St George, 12 June 1806.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid. f.3 Harcourt to Agnew, Wallajahbad, 13 June 1806.
49 Ibid.
50 Portland PwJb 12, f.5 Cradock to Lord William Bentinck, Madras, 10 Jan. 1805.
51 See J Cradock, Sketch of the Situation of Sir John Cradock Resulting from his having accepted the Appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the East India Company's Forces at Madras in 1804, (London, 1808), pp.4-7.
52 NSP Vol.19 June-July 1806 Cradock to Madras Govt Nundydroog, 7 July 1806. See also NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 Cradock's minute 21 Sept. 1806.
53 HMS Vol.507 f.7 Cradock to Agnew, Nundydroog, 10 June 1806.
54 SRO Hannay Collection : Brunton Papers GD 214/673
Brunton to Cradock, Venkatgherry, 28 June 1806.
55 Portland PwJb 12, f.115 Cradock to Bentinck, 17 June 1806.
56 Ibid.
57 HMS Vol.507, f.147 Cradock to Governor-in-Council, Nundydroog, 29 June 1806.
58 Ibid. f.151 Governor-in-Council to Cradock, Fort St George, 4 July 1806.
59 Ibid.
60 MSP Vol.19, June-July 1806 Darley to Cradock, Madras, 3 July 1806.
61 MSP Vol.19, June-July 1806 Cradock to Madras Govt, Nundydroog, 7 July 1806.
62 Ibid.
63 Portland PwJb 12, f.126 Cradock to Bentinck, Nundydroog, 8 July 1806.
Chapter 3: A Question of Blame:

The Authorities Investigate.
I

Three separate enquiries were held in Madras into the causes of the Vellore Mutiny. Two of these were internal military investigations conducted exclusively by military officers. The third was under the auspices of the civil government of Madras. The first military Court of Inquiry was convened in the immediate aftermath of the revolt; the second began some three months later. The civil enquiry, which included military as well as civil officials, was sandwiched between its military counterparts. While the conclusions of the two military enquiries were in broad agreement, those of the civil enquiry differed significantly.

II

On 11 July, while the bodies of the victims were still being removed from the fort at Vellore, Colonel Gillespie established a military Court of Inquiry. He appointed to its head Lieutenant-Colonel Kennedy of the 19th Dragoons. Gillespie was evidently anxious to resolve speedily the confusion and uncertainty which surrounded the causes of the revolt. His own correspondence betrayed from the first a predisposition to implicate the Mysore princes in the planning and execution of the revolt. For example, on 12 July, he wrote to Sir John Cradock, 'If a man is to judge from physiognomy, the Prince Moiz-ud-din's countenance most decidedly convicts him. I visited him early this morning.
He and his whole family had been the whole night at prayers, a thing most unusual. On the same day, he informed Colonel Harcourt:

From the concurrent testimony of a number of respectable native evidences... it appears in such strong colours as almost to amount to positive proof that almost every Mussulman in Vellore and its vicinity has been concerned in the late horrible massacre; and that the whole was carried on at the instigation of Moiz-ud-din... for the purpose of enabling him to make his escape to Mysore, where it seems he expected to be joined by a numerous train of followers.

Harcourt himself arrived at Vellore on 12 July and quickly demonstrated a similar zeal and determination to convict Moiz-ud-din. He informed the Madras Council that 'it appears to be already sufficiently proved from circumstances that have come to light this morning that at least one of the Princes, Moiz-ud-din, was the instigator of the 10th at Vellore'. On 13 July, he recommended to the Council that the princes be removed from Vellore. Significantly, however, he conceded that the weight of evidence against them was small and made little attempt to conceal the extent to which he was prejudging the issue:

It may appear that I am hardly authorised in recommending this measure by the extent of criminality which as yet appears against them on the face of the Proceedings of the Committee, but I am satisfied their guilt will daily be more apparent and that the further proceedings of the Committee, which I shall have the honour of transmitting to you daily, will justify me.
The evidence on which Gillespie and Harcourt were basing their indictment of the Mysore family and the local Muslim population owed more to rumour than to hard fact. Since the British had been taken so completely by surprise by the mutiny, it was on Indian troops and servants that they relied for their information. Yet the majority of those had either fled from the fort when Gillespie's dragoons had arrived, or had been slaughtered. The few prisoners that had been taken were in fear for their lives and were probably prepared to give any testimony which they felt might improve their chances of survival. It was certainly not an atmosphere in which an even-handed judicial inquiry was likely to thrive.

In the first few days following the mutiny, rumours circulated in the town of Vellore to the effect that the entire sepoy establishment of the Madras army was actively engaged in an attempt to overthrow the British. It was said that fighting was taking place in a number of different military stations. Although Colonel Gillespie knew from contact with other British garrisons that this was untrue, he was nonetheless 'kept in agitation from the various reports that have been made of insurrections'. The Colonel chose a characteristic method of attempting to restore calm. On 12 July, a proclamation was sent to the inhabitants of the town, warning them that if such rumours continued 'the guns will be immediately turned upon them, and the 19th ordered to cut them up'. He was sufficiently wary of the rumours, however, to request
Colonel Harcourt, who was approaching from Wallajahabad with reinforcements, to leave his sepoys at a safe distance from the fort. Gillespie further insisted that 'no black soldier will remain within the walls this night'. Although he made no mention of it, it is likely that Gillespie was also aware that the mere sight of so many hundreds of their comrades lying dead around the fort could have incited the relief force to rebellion.

Naturally, severe tension existed between the British soldiers and the sepoys who had survived the mutiny. It appears that discipline amongst the British troops had virtually broken down. The diarist, William Hickey, at that time resident in Calcutta, was informed of:

Unconquerable animosity... in the minds of the European private soldiers against the whole body of sepoys, which antipathy showed itself in numerous instances, especially so in the survivors of the 69th Regiment, who from the time of the Vellore insurrection almost daily and in cold blood put to death the sepoys whom they casually fell in with, several of whom were thus murdered in the public roads and in open daylight. Nay, so far was the animosity carried that some of the poor creatures were massacred whilst standing sentry or performing other parts of military duty. This mistaken cruelty was practised against men who had remained firm and steady in their attachment to the British nation and who had positively refused to join in the mutiny.

Major Blakiston, to whose skill with the 'galloper guns' the relief force had owed its entry into the fort,
considered that 'it is much to be feared that many innocent sepoys suffered on this occasion'. Further evidence that the British troops were out of control is contained in an appeal for reimbursement, written some months after the event, by one of the younger Mysore princes, Mohummud Gaseen:

At the time of the mutiny at Vellore when the Regiment of Light Dragoons arrived to the relief of the garrison, my wardrobe, which for want of room in the Muhal Sera, was kept in an outer apartment, was plundered by the men of that Regiment in the very presence of Colonel Marriott and notwithstanding his prohibition to the contrary . . . . On my representing to Colonel Marriott and to Colonel Gillespie . . . . what had taken place, they both assured me that they would take an account of the property of which I had been plundered by mistake, and that they had no doubt that Government would reimburse me for the loss. 12

In fact Mohummud Gaseen and his brothers, particularly the four eldest, Putteh Hyder, Abdul Khalik, Mehi-ud-din and Moiz-ud-din, were probably fortunate to escape with their lives, let alone their property. It was on the princes that the burden of suspicion for engineering the mutiny initially fell. Many of the sepoys involved in the mutiny had taken up post in the vicinity of the palace. It was from there that much of the firing against the 69th had been directed. Hickey recorded that, according to his information, it was only with the utmost difficulty that the party who had immediate charge of Tippoo's sons could prevent the infuriated soldiers from breaking into the house in which
they were lodged and putting the whole to death'.

If that is true, then it was perhaps only the timely intercession of Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott, the officer responsible for the princes' security, that saved them. Shortly after the arrival of the relief force from Arcot, there was a confrontation between Marriott and Gillespie. Gillespie demanded to be taken to where the princes were. As he later testified:

Colonel Marriott hesitated, I conceive supposing it was my intention to have let loose the troops upon the Princes, assuring me at the same time that he believed the Princes to have been ignorant of everything that had passed.  

Although Marriott did eventually lead Gillespie to the palace, it is clear that his mistrust of the Colonel's intentions caused him to conceal his own suspicions concerning the princes. It is surely this that accounts for a discrepancy in reports of the mutiny received at Fort St George. Gillespie's first dispatch informed Lord William Bentinck that 'I have myself seen one of the Princes, and Colonel Marriott, who is saved, tells me they are all innocent, but I myself fear they are not altogether free from blame'. But Marriott himself, also writing within hours of the suppression of the mutiny, apparently felt able to reveal to the Governor opinions he had kept from Gillespie:

The Princes are all safe but having very strong reasons to think that Moiz-ud-din was particularly active in planning as well as in enforcing the murderous attempt, I have placed him under double sentry of your
Lordship's Bodyguard. The sepoys had a flag of the Mysore family. One of my Hirkarrahas declares he saw it brought out of Moiz-ud-din's house.16

Yet the evidence against the princes was slim and circumstantial. The British present at Vellore were not able immediately to identify, with any certainty, the causes of the revolt. A letter written by Marriott's brother, Charles, on 12 July, amply illustrates the confusion that reigned. In one paragraph, he informed his correspondent that 'one of the Princes, Moiz-ud-din, is in confinement and I hope will be hanged' but in the next he averred:

We cannot discover any cause for this dreadful mutiny. There are about thirty prisoners in the guard . . . . They say they do not know why they began firing. Some say they hated Coombs, the Adjutant of the 23rd for his severity. Others say it was on account of their having too much drill and duty; and others again say that the Nabob (Moiz-ud-din) would give them five pagodas per month and twenty rupees for every European head.17

When the Court of Inquiry got under way a stableman of Moiz-ud-din's testified that he had seen confidants of the prince at secret meetings with sepoys inside the stables, several weeks before the outbreak of the mutiny.18 A sepoy asserted that representatives of the palace had been attempting for some time to stir up unrest among the sepoys over recent changes in their uniforms. They had allegedly tried to implant the idea that the British had a secret plan to convert the Indian army to Christianity.19
Another witness spoke of meetings amongst Indian troops in which it was resolved to resist any such attack on their religions. It was said that solemn oaths had been sworn to bind the sepoys to this resolution. The introduction of the new pattern of turban had been seen in a particularly sinister light, it was suggested, and the palace servants had also allegedly insisted that it was no coincidence that the turnscrew used in loading muskets was in the shape of a crucifix.

The Court of Inquiry also heard evidence that emphasised the role of Prince Moiz-ud-din during the events of the mutiny itself. The wife of a British sergeant had seen a sepoy in conversation with a person 'very handsomely dressed in a gold turban', whom she took to be one of the princes. A number of other witnesses said that palace servants had distributed pilau, betel and water to the men involved in the insurrection and that Moiz-ud-din himself had been present at this time. A naik of the 1st/1st spoke of his surprise at being awoken at 2.00 a.m. on that morning and being ordered to fall in by a sardar. One of his comrades had told him that the princes were ready to lead a revolt against the British. The sepoys were to be well rewarded if they contributed to its success.

The son of a prominent general in Tipu Sultan's army was also held to have taken a prominent role in the mutiny. This young man, Seid Hussein, was alleged to have positioned the six-pounders which were fired into the
European barracks. It was further suggested that Moiz-ud-din had urged him to lead a party of men to take possession of one of the nearby hill forts. Moreover, according to this account, Moiz-ud-din had stated that if the hill fort was successfully captured and if the body of Colonel Marriott was brought to him, he would parade around the town of Vellore in triumph. 24

Yet, the fact that Moiz-ud-din had had contact with the mutineers during the events of the night did not in itself prove that he had masterminded or brought about the revolt, as Gillespie and Harcourt wished to infer. One witness gave evidence which pointed in a different direction. He recalled that one of the sepoys most active in the mutiny had shouted at the window of one of the princes' apartments, claiming to have three hundred men ready for him. The prince, however, had replied, 'Go, go, you fools, there is not enough of you. Do you think I will accompany such a party?'. 25

The evidence gathered by the Court of Inquiry was far from comprehensive. It was only on 14 July that a Proclamation was issued appealing to those sepoys who had fled from the Dragoons to return to their duties and assist with the enquiry. 26 By the following day, however, when no account could yet have been taken from any returning sepoys, the Court considered itself in a position to conclude that the mutiny had arisen from 'one or more of the Mysore princes corrupting the allegiance of the sepoys and using them to attempt to restore a
Mohammedan government to South India'. The investigation was to continue so that the guilty individuals could be identified, but the Court clearly believed that the basic question of what had caused the mutiny had been resolved.

At Fort St George, the proceedings of the military enquiry received an extremely frosty reception from the Madras government. On 17 July, Lord William Bentinck suspended the Court of Inquiry, complaining that the 'marked opinion' expressed by the Court 'has left us without the means of judging of the depth or of the extent of the plot asserted to exist'. The Governor was also concerned at the haste with which the investigations were being conducted. He emphasised the importance of letting 'punishment proceed from the steady operation of law and justice, rather than from the feelings of anger and hatred'.

Bentinck refused Harcourt's request to remove the Mysore princes from Vellore. He replaced the Court of Inquiry with a Commission of Enquiry composed of 'old and respectable civil and military officers, unconnected with the unfortunate transactions, distant from the scene of action'. Bentinck further professed himself 'not disposed to be credulous to great danger arising from internal intrigues unconnected with our troops', and as a final rebuff to the findings of the military investigations, the Governor withheld comment on what he considered the likely causes of the mutiny until the new enquiry had been
completed. He professed himself 'at full liberty at a future period of making such remarks upon the letters of the Commander-in-Chief and the reports of others upon which I may not concur in opinion'.

Behind the Governor's rejection of the Court of Inquiry's verdicts lay a mounting suspicion that the military authorities had attempted to gloss over the harmful effects of the introduction of the new pattern of turban. Bentinck was coming to believe that the purpose of the military inquiry in rapidly reaching its conclusions was to avoid the heavy burden of blame for the catastrophic loss of life at Vellore. He suspected that the princes were being unfairly condemned, particularly as it had transpired that the new pattern of turban had not been the sole grievance amongst the sepoys against their military regulations.

III

A new code of regulations had been introduced to the sepoy army in March 1806. Included in the code was a highly controversial paragraph:

A soldier shall not cut his hair but by order of the Captain or Officer Commanding the Company who when it requires to be cut will see that it is done exactly Regimental.

It is ordered by the regulations that a Native soldier shall not mark his face to denote his caste or wear Ear Rings when dressed in his uniform and it is further directed that at all parades and upon all duties every soldier of the Battalion shall be clean shaved on the chin.
It is directed also that uniformity shall as far as is practicable be preserved in regard to the quantity and shape of the hair upon the upper lip.  

These additional constraints had been badly received by the Indian troops and, in at least two cases, British commanding officers had refrained from implementing these regulations from fear of antagonising their men. When Bentinck discovered the existence of this paragraph shortly after the mutiny, he professed himself appalled by the implications of such regulations for the sepoys. He feared that they openly and wantonly transgressed the principles of Hindu and Muslim alike and affirmed that 'there is just ground for the alarm and feelings of the sepoys'. The regulations, Bentinck felt, carried with them a strong challenge to the religious principles of the Indian troops:

Placing myself in the position of a sepoy I should certainly feel prodigious distrust and doubt of the intentions of these orders. It would be natural for more enlightened people than the sepoys to reason in this manner. "They first take away the external marks of our castes and religious distinctions. They then desire to change our dress and assimilate the turbands to the cap of the Portuguese Drummers. They mean next to make us Christians".

In the proposed draft order concerning the enforcement of the new pattern of turban which he and his Council had sent to Cradock immediately before the mutiny, Bentinck had, of course, shown no such insight into the nature of the sepoys' grievances. To a degree, therefore, he was
being wise after the event. Nonetheless, he was patently of the opinion that proscription of caste marks and ear-rings and the imposition of uniformity of facial hair in the sepoy army were unnecessary and dangerous measures. Bentinck made it clear that he held the military authorities responsible for the introduction of what he considered highly injudicious measures.36

In fact, the introduction of such controversial regulations into the general usage of the army called into question the whole procedure for approving the military code. In theory, every new regulation had to receive official sanction from the civil government. In practice, it had become accepted that when a code of regulations was sent to Fort St George for the Governor's approval, new items should be marked with red ink so that they could be easily recognised. Thus when the Commander-in-Chief parried Bentinck's criticisms of the regulations by pointing out that they had been officially approved, Bentinck angrily replied that these orders had not been marked in the customary fashion. He insisted that 'the perusal of near one hundred and fifty folio sheets of regimental orders about drill, discipline and dress, already asserted to be in usage and sanctioned, could not have been required of me and formed no part of my duty'.37

Cradock attempted to deflect the responsibility for this oversight away from himself and on to his staff officers, but they were equally anxious to prove that they
had acted correctly. Major Pierce, the deputy Adjutant-General, argued that it was his duty to mark only those regulations which 'were not based upon existing orders'. He had seen nothing controversial in orders that he felt did nothing more than formalise practices already widely adhered to within the army. For example, Pierce claimed that he could not recollect 'to ever have seen ... a native soldier on duty with his face marked or with large rings in his ears'. What is certain is that the poor communications between the military and civil authorities contributed substantially to the passing of regulations which were at best controversial and at worst downright inflammatory.

Bentinck was more than ever convinced by the dispute between Cradock and Pierce that injudicious military regulations lay at the root of the sepoys' discontent, and therefore at the root of the mutiny. On 17 July, his Council rescinded the order introducing the changes in dress. In Cradock's eyes this was tantamount to acknowledging that the regulations had caused the revolt. Although he did not oppose their repeal he continued to insist that:

Hateful, weak and impolitic as the order is, and strongly as I wish that the author of it. . . should receive the severest censure, yet still I do not believe that it has had the ill effect that might have been expected.

Cradock was reluctant, too, to concede ground over the turban. On 12 July, the Commander-in-Chief had
announced to the army that those corps which had shown reluctance to conform to the new pattern should be free to retain the old model. Those who had uncomplainingly accepted the new pattern, on the other hand, should be encouraged to continue to wear it. The Council, however, considered this measure inadequate. It was thought inappropriate to offer the Indian troops any measure of choice in the matter. The Council therefore pressed Cradock to modify his views. Outnumbered by three to one by civil officers, Cradock was unable to prevent a total withdrawal of the turban. He did, however, record his views in a private minute, setting out his reasons for demurring from the majority view. The Mysore princes, Cradock maintained, were responsible for the mutiny. He believed that the military Court of Inquiry had fully demonstrated this. The sole significance of the turban in his view was that it had been used by the princes to undermine the loyalty of the sepoys. Consequently, he argued, 'the turban, unconnected with artifice or machination, weighs not a straw in the state of the present agitation'.

The Governor was equally confident, however, that with the support of his Council the blame for the mutiny would be placed where he genuinely believed it to lie, that is within the army itself. Thus when, on 17 July, he received an offer of resignation from Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott, Bentinck refused absolutely to accept it. Not only did he consider it 'not required by the circumstances you have stated', but 'such an act on your
part would be eagerly seized and construed into a self-
confession of your own remissness and want of vigilance.'

This private communication with Marriott clearly
demonstrates that the Governor believed himself engaged
in a vital political battle with the army. Being fully
aware of the delicacy of his political situation following
the appalling bloodshed at Vellore, Bentinck was determined
to avoid any action which might strengthen the military
case against the princes. He was also very hopeful that
his newly established enquiry into the mutiny would prove
beyond doubt that his opinions on the causes of the mutiny
were correct.

IV

The Commission of Enquiry appointed by the government
sat for the first time on 22 July 1806. Its task was
to conduct an investigation into the causes of the mutiny
and to discover the origin of the sepoys' discontent.
Punishment was to be a secondary consideration. The
major aim was to learn from past mistakes and to re-
establish good relations with the Indian troops.
Bentinck was strongly of the opinion that:

Too many unfortunate brave soldiers
both European and native have lost
their lives and I wish that all those
who have not actually been guilty of
murder should be forgiven and all
past transactions to be forgotten.

On the first day of the Enquiry, there was an
astounding revelation. Lieutenant-Colonel Forbes,
commanding officer of the 1st/1st, admitted that he had
been warned in advance that a mutiny was planned amongst the sepoys. Forbes had chosen to ignore the warning, however, having been led to believe that his informant was mentally unbalanced. This informant had been a sepoy by the name of Mustapha Beg, a man from Forbes' own battalion. Late at night on 17 June, three weeks before the mutiny had broken out, Beg had come to Forbes' house in the pettah demanding to see the Colonel. Forbes' attendant had attempted to turn him away, but the disturbance woke the Colonel and brought him to the door to find out what was going on. Beg told Forbes that there was a plot afoot in the battalion to put to death the British officers and soldiers.

Taken aback by the dramatic and secretive nature of Beg's revelations, the Colonel was at first unsure what to do. He decided to appoint senior sardars to look into Mustapha Beg's allegations and to decide whether there was any substance to them. The next morning the officers made their report to Forbes. Their verdict was that Beg had invented the whole story. They pointed out that he had been previously imprisoned for drunkenness and suggested that he was a thoroughly unreliable soldier. Moreover, the sardars professed themselves highly insulted that Begg should suggest their battalion was capable of such treachery. They requested that he should be blown away from a gun. Forbes refused to take such an extreme measure but he nonetheless had Beg put in irons. Remorsefully, Forbes informed the
Commission that the sardars involved in this incident had apparently subsequently played leading roles in the mutiny. 50

During the fighting, Mustapha Beg had succeeded in escaping from the fort. He returned in time to present his own evidence to the Commission of Enquiry, yet this did not prove as enlightening as might have been expected. He testified that three weeks before the mutiny he had been approached by four sepoys from his battalion who had told him that there was going to be a massacre of the Europeans because of the enforcement of the new turbans. Beg claimed to have been scared by this information. He had discussed it with his family who had persuaded him to go and see Colonel Forbes. He denied all knowledge of any involvement by the Mysore princes in either the planning or the execution of the insurrection, and professed himself unable to cast any further light on the affair. 51

As the Commission's enquiries continued, however, it became apparent that there had been some degree of participation by the inhabitants of the palace in the events of 10 July. As with similar evidence taken by the military Court of Inquiry, the picture that emerged was rather muddled. A servant responsible for helping Moiz-ud-din arrange his finances reported being told by the prince to 'keep up his spirits' since 'I shall be out in a few days'. 52 A number of other witnesses confirmed the findings of the military inquiry concerning the
suspicious behaviour of Moiz-ud-din during the mutiny itself. They too had seen palace servants distributing water and betel to those participating in the mutiny.\textsuperscript{53}

On 25 July, Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott appeared before the Commission.\textsuperscript{54} As the officer responsible for the security of the Mysore princes, Marriott was a key witness. He conceded that there had been a number of suspicious circumstances surrounding the behaviour of Moiz-ud-din immediately prior to the mutiny. The prince had asked Marriott to allow him a \textit{murdannah}. This involved allowing all the male servants to pass the night in Moiz-ud-din's quarters. It was generally practised only during periods of fasting when food could only be taken during the hours of darkness. Moreover, the prince had asked for his cousin, Hyder Hussain Khan, to be permitted to spend the nights of 8 and 9 July with him. A third circumstance which Marriott thought worthy of note was that Moiz-ud-din had asked permission to buy a horse which had taken his fancy. All these requests Marriott had refused. He had, however, allowed the prince to examine the horse. The same animal was later found saddled outside Moiz-ud-din's apartment when the fort was relieved by the Dragoons after the mutiny.

Yet Marriott considered these pieces of evidence to be circumstantial, and capable of innocent explanation. The wedding of one of Moiz-ud-din's sisters was being celebrated in the days immediately before the mutiny and the Lieutenant-Colonel considered this sufficient reason
for the prince's demands. Indeed, Marriott went on to repudiate his earlier suspicion of Moiz-ud-din. His letter to Bentinck condemning the prince, he now asserted, had been written 'on a momentary impulse'. The fact that the flag of Mysore had apparently been given to the mutineers by the palace had made him jump to conclusions which he now believed to be unwarranted. He had at first been under the impression that the flag had been made specially for the mutiny, whereas as far as he could now ascertain it was an old emblem which had been in the possession of Moiz-ud-din for some time. Moreover, Marriott's spies within the princes' retinues had told him that it was Jemaul-ud-din, Moiz-ud-din's adopted brother, who had arranged for the distribution of betel to the mutineers and not the prince himself. They also alleged that Jemaul-ud-din and another palace servant had met in secret with about twenty sepoys some three weeks before the outbreak of the mutiny.

The Commission of Enquiry was rocked by Marriott's revelations. This retraction of his former opinion concerning Moiz-ud-din astonished the Commissioners. Questioned further, Marriott denied ever telling Colonel Gillespie that all the princes were innocent. Rather he had assured Gillespie that it was impossible that all twelve of them could have acted together in the affair due to 'the great hatred and animosity which subsisted among them'. Overall, far from casting new light on the causes of the mutiny and clearing up the part played
by the princes, Marriott's evidence tended to confuse and complicate the issue. Moreover, the fact that Marriott's own personal reputation was closely bound up with that of the princes made his testimony seem somewhat suspect.

Yet Marriott professed himself convinced that the real cause of the revolt lay with the introduction of the new turban. In so doing, he aligned himself with Bentinck's interpretation of the mutiny. For this he was able to cite corroborative evidence. He pointed to the experience of Mrs Pritchard, wife of a British sergeant, who had been confined under sepoy guard during the mutiny and who spoke their 'Moors' language fluently. She had heard the sepoys refer to the turban as the only source of their discontent. Marriott also drew attention to the case of Captain Willison, who had apparently found the sepoys' original dislike of the new pattern of turban rather amusing. He had had a turban made up for himself of the same pattern and had sported it provocatively from time to time around the fort. Before meeting a particularly savage death at their hands during the mutiny, Willison had been reproached by the sepoys for his behaviour. Finally, there had been the advice that Marriott had received from the mother of one of the younger princes. Some weeks before the mutiny had taken place, she had warned him not to press ahead with the enforcement of the new pattern as it would disgrace the men. After the mutiny, she had exclaimed to him 'Marriott Sahib, did I not tell you what would be the consequence of making the sepoys disaffected'.
On 28 July, with a comprehensive picture of the causes of the mutiny still proving elusive, the Commission took evidence from a sepoy of the 1st/1st, Shaik Nutter. He testified to having been approached two days before the mutiny by three sardars, Shaik Adam, Shaik Cassim Rymen and Shaik Hoosein. These officers, all Muslims, had told him that the Europeans 'are going to make us wear hats, by which we shall be degraded into Pariahs. We must hoist the standard of the Faith - we must put to death all the officers and the Europeans and re-establish Tippoo's government and hoist his colours'. Shaik Nutter had then been initiated into the conspiracy by drinking milk and touching the Koran. He claimed that the milk had acted as a charm on him so that he was completely unable to divulge what had passed between him and the officers to anyone, 'not even my own mother'. When the mutiny had commenced early on the morning of 10 July, he said that it had been Shaik Adam who had taken the leading part in organising the sepoys:

a little past two, the Subidar Shaik Adam and Hoosain Homed Jemidar opened the stores, brought out ball cartridges, made the sepoys fall in and distributed them amongst them — they then told off the sepoys into Divisions and commenced the action first at the Barracks and immediately after at the main guard.

For all his detailed knowledge of the events prior to the mutiny, Shaik Nutter was unable or unwilling to shed
any light on the involvement of the princes in the conspiracy. His testimony instead confirmed what Shaik Ahmed had related to the military inquiry, in suggesting that the conspiracy had been amongst the sardars.

While the Enquiry was thus engaged in trying to sift through pieces of contradictory evidence, the military officers who had been involved in the Court of Inquiry attempted to press their own findings on the Commission. A statement was taken from a sardar named Shaik Khassim who had been condemned to death by the Court of Inquiry for his part in the mutiny. Shaik Khassim's confession deeply implicated the palace in the revolt and particularly named Moiz-ud-din as the leading conspirator. Colonel Forbes and Lieutenant Coombs passed the confession to the Commission for their consideration. 64

According to Khassim, there had been severe tension amongst the sepoy establishment at Vellore ever since the troubles over the turban in May. When the mutinous Battalion, the 214th, had been marched off to Madras under escort at the beginning of June, the men of the 1st/1st had considered attacking the escort and freeing their comrades. 65 Ironically, the British troopers of the 19th Dragoons had even jeered at the men of the 1st/1st for not going to the aid of their fellow countrymen. When the 2nd/23rd arrived at Vellore to replace the disgraced Battalion, little time had been lost in forming an alliance between the discontented elements of the 1st/1st and the least loyal of the 2nd/23rd.
Shaik Khassim claimed to have followed the advice of a senior officer in the 1st/1st, Jemidar Shaik Dewan, who was utterly opposed to the new pattern of turban. He had allegedly told Khassim, 'Death is better than to wear this turban and three or four of us will kill the rest if they wear it. I never will, but will myself kill several, and then go away from the battalion'.

Khassim further asserted that the opposition of the sepoys to the turban had been fomented and intensified by the efforts of palace servants. He suggested that frequent meetings and conversations had been held between representatives of the palace and discontented sepoys and sardars. Shaik Adam was also named in Khassim's evidence as the major driving force behind the sepoys' unrest. Meetings had reputedly been held at his house, and it was rumoured that Prince Moiz-ud-din had promised that if the sepoys could take the fort from the British and hold it for eight days, ten thousand men would arrive from outlying areas to lend their support to the re-establishment of a Mohammedan government in the country.

Khassim's confession also stated that the actual outbreak of mutiny had been twice set for earlier dates, but that last-minute postponements had each time been forced on the mutineers. In the event, its outbreak on 10 July was allegedly premature. It had apparently been planned for 14 July, but a drunken Jemidar, Shaik Hussein, had precipitated the outbreak, by openly broadcasting the intentions of his fellow conspirators. As a result,
sympathisers in the pettah and the palace were taken by surprise and the cohesion of the mutiny was less than it might otherwise have been. Finally, Khassim claimed that nearly all the sardars in Vellore knew in advance that a major uprising was planned against the British.68

On 6 August, the Commissioners visited the palace in an effort to persuade the princes, who had refused to answer any questions on the mutiny, to be more co-operative. Without exception, the sons of Tipu continued to deny all knowledge of the affair.69 Nor did new testimony do anything to resolve the inconclusive nature of the evidence. Moortee, a sepoy of the 1st/1st, testified that he had seen Prince Abdul Khalick appear briefly at the door of his apartment and ask the sepoys what was going on. On being informed that a mutiny was in progress, he had merely replied 'very well', and returned inside immediately. The same witness claimed to have seen Moiz-ud-din distributing betel to the sepoys. He said that Subidar Shaik Adam had approached the prince and asked him to stop the distribution since all the troops were required to be at their posts if the mutiny was to be successful.70

Moiz-ud-din's horsekeeper, Ibrahim, testified that it was the sepoys and not the prince who had ordered him to saddle the horse which was later found outside the prince's apartment.71 Another witness had seen the Mysore flag taken away from Moiz-ud-din's apartment by two palace servants and approximately thirty sepoys. A conversation was alleged to have taken place between
the sepoys and Moiz-ud-din. When asked to supply a flag, he was said to have simply replied, 'Where am I to find colours, go and get them wherever you can.'

But a different version of events at this time was supplied by a eunuch of the palace, who claimed that Moiz-ud-din had been robbed of the emblem and had not given it up voluntarily:

four sepoys came to his house and two remained on the outside and two entered the room where they received male visitors, and opened the box wherein the flag was kept with other cloths, and took the flag out and also the other cloths. I then asked why he kept a drawn crease in his hand? He replied the sepoys were rushing into the house and to prevent them penetrating to the women's apartments he had thus armed himself.

VI

By this stage of the Enquiry it was becoming evident that the more testimony that was taken, the less certain became the precise role played by the princes in the revolt. Insights into other aspects of the mutiny continued to be gained, however.

Astonishingly, it transpired that Lieutenant-Colonel Forbes' refusal to listen to Mustapha Beg's warning of the impending outbreak had not been the only instance of a British officer turning away the opportunity of detecting the conspiracy to mutiny before it actually exploded. A Eurasian widow by the name of Mrs Burke, who lived in the pettah at Vellore, had approached Colonel Fancourt some
weeks before the mutiny and reported to him seditious conversations amongst sepoys which she claimed to have overheard. These strongly suggested that a major rising against the British was planned. Colonel Fancourt, however, ignored her advice on the rather prurient grounds that he considered her to live an immoral life and was therefore unworthy of his trust. Ironically, Fancourt had been, of course, one of the first to die when the mutiny did break out.

Mrs Pritchard, the surgeon's wife whom Marriott had quoted in his evidence, herself testified to the disgust which she believed many sepoys felt for the new turban. She had witnessed a European officer being killed near to the sepoy barracks where she was being kept prisoner. After the deed had been done, 'one of the sepoys put his hat upon the point of his firelock and bayonet, and after flourishing it about some time, threw it down and trod upon it with seeming exultation'. In addition, after the fort had been recaptured by the Dragoons, she returned to her house and found that the hats belonging both to herself and her husband had been mutilated. Their Portuguese maid later informed her that the sepoys had said that the fighting was on account of their being made to wear *topis* and cut off their whiskers.

James Frost, the young writer at the Post Office who witnessed much of the bloodshed of the night, saw Lieutenant-Colonel McKerras' body being abused by some of the Indian troops. It had been spat upon and the sepoys
had shouted 'It was you who made us wear this topi'.

Lieutenant Coombs told the Commission that McKerras had in fact been very worried by the sepoys' reaction to their changed uniform. He had insisted that the new dress regulations concerning the caste marks, ear-rings and whiskers should be suspended. He told Coombs that 'he would rather lose his commission than enforce it, as he conceived it would be productive of great dissatisfaction'. Coombs, however, was of the opinion that the men had none-theless found out about the proposed regulations and thought them highly offensive.

The Commission's investigations also revealed that by no means all of the sepoys at Vellore had been warned in advance that a mutiny was imminent. It was evident that, after the firing had begun, many had been faced with the difficult decision of whether or not to join. A guard at the palace on the night of the mutiny described to the Commission the dilemma which had confronted him when he had been told of the impending outbreak of mutiny.

[Myself] and Ramjonny, sepoy, were posted at Futteh Hyder's gate. Ramjonny told [me] there was going to be a fight. He said "I know it to be the case and we are going to kill all the Europeans". [I] said to Ramjonny, "will anyone survive that kills Europeans?". Ramjonny replied "have we not the gates, stores and batteries at our command?". [I] persisted that nevertheless none that killed Europeans would survive . . . [I] said that it would be better to die fighting for the Company, as their families would in that case be provided for.
On 7 August, Shaik Nutter returned to the Commission of Enquiry and reversed his previous assertions that the princes had played no part in the mutiny. He now testified that the palace had been instrumental in planning the whole affair. His new version of events matched closely the written confession of Shaik Khassim. It is not known why Shaik Nutter changed his testimony. It seems likely that the offer of a free pardon for a full and complete account of the conspiracy played an important part. Whether this revised version of his evidence was closer to the truth it is impossible to know. He now named Moiz-ud-din as the instigator of the affair and claimed that the princes' servants had been instrumental in fomenting the revolt.

This abrupt about-turn by a key witness was characteristic of the problems that beset the Commission of Enquiry. When the Commission delivered its report on 23 August, it was unable to do more than reflect the confused and often paradoxical evidence that had been presented to it. Referring to Shaik Nutter's testimony, the Commission considered this 'the only material information we have been able to procure of any actual communications with the palace previous to the mutiny'. But the report also referred to the 'peculiar circumstances' under which Shaik Nutter had changed his account, and made it perfectly clear that it considered his evidence far from satisfactory. More controversially, the Commission
refused to acknowledge Shaik Khassim's 'confession'. It was considered to be not 'of a nature proper to be recorded on the proceedings of a Commission ordered to examine witnesses on oath'. It is unclear whether this was merely a legal argument, with the fact that the testimony had not been given directly to the Commission ruling it out of order; or whether it was a simple statement that it was not possible to rely on the evidence of men already condemned to death; or whether it carried the implication that evidence given out of court to two military officers was not to be depended upon. The Commission may have suspected the officers in question of falsifying the evidence. Whatever the reasons, this rejection of evidence undoubtedly infuriated the military authorities.

Overall, on the question of the involvement of the princes in the mutiny, the report was non-committal. It observed that 'schemes of power and ambition would naturally occur to those who had been born to enjoy them'. Indeed, the report deemed that it had been firmly established that one or more of the princes had given encouragement to the sepoys during the course of the mutiny, believing this 'sufficiently confirmed by the general result of the evidence, although not very distinctly spoken to by many of the witnesses'. The increase in the Muslim population of Vellore immediately before the mutiny was also mentioned in the report but so too was the fact that a sister of the princes was being married at that time,
which might have explained such an increase. 85

The only firm conclusion arrived at by the Commission concerned the introduction of the turban and the new dress regulations. The report emphasised the belief of the Commission that these innovations had provided the basic cause of the mutiny and that any actions on the part of the princes and their servants to foment revolt would have been fruitless without the favourable climate for mutiny which these regulations had induced:

The article of dress is both with the Hindoos and the Mohomedans an indication of their caste and a badge of their respective distinctions and place in society, and when it is recollected how obstinately the Indians of all descriptions adhere to their customs and with what difficulty the natives were brought to adopt many parts of their present military dress it will not appear surprising that some of the late innovations in that respect were offensive to their feelings. 86

Yet even this statement was diluted by what followed in the report. Apparently confused by all the contradictory evidence which it had had to examine, the Commission proceeded to contradict itself in its own report:

Under other circumstances, the turban etc. might have proved offensive to the sepoys but when we look back to some former insurrections and remember . . . the civility with which the men distinguished their officers and the point of honour which they seemed to feel in doing so, we cannot but think that the outrages on the late occasion are of foreign growth and could only have been inspired by a barbarous enemy. 87

By any standards, the report of the Commission of Enquiry was an unsatisfactory document. It did nothing to
clarify the causes of the mutiny and it failed to unite the authorities in Madras.

Though the Commission was now adjourned, fresh evidence concerning the mutiny continued to arrive at Madras during September and October. This mainly took the form of statements taken from sepoys who had fled from Vellore at the time of the mutiny and had subsequently been recaptured in outlying parts of the Presidency. Colonel Campbell, the Commanding officer of the Southern Division of the Madras Army, supervised the interrogation of many such prisoners. He considered most of their statements to be 'fabricated for the purpose: and all tending not to criminate themselves'. One deposition taken from a havildar, Esoph Cawn, was believed by Campbell to carry more weight than the others; Cawn being the 'most intelligent' of those captured. This havildar claimed to have known of the plan to mutiny for a month before the outbreak, along with all the other sardars. He said that the incident in which Mustapha Bag had been imprisoned had discouraged him and many others from informing the European officers of what was to take place. According to Cawn, it had been disgust at the introduction of the new turban that had caused the mutiny, allied to the particular severity of Lieutenant Coombs. Cawn claimed that no other corps of the army was involved. At no time had he expected any help from outwith Vellore to carry out the plan, and, when he entered into the conspiracy, 'I had my death in
view and cared and thought of nothing'. Originally it had been planned only to kill Coombs, but this had developed into a plan to massacre all the Europeans. Nonetheless, when he was sworn in to the conspiracy, he believed that one of the sons of Tipu had been present at the ceremony. During the course of the mutiny he claimed to have seen a personage, whom 'everyone said was a Prince' calling out, 'Fire away, now is your time. I will give you money and pilau'.

VIII

Cawn's allegations helped to keep alive the whole debate over the causes of the mutiny, and, in November 1806, further impetus was given to the argument by the appearance of a new report on the affair. Colonel Forbes and Lieutenant Coombs had been appointed by Colonel Harcourt, at the instigation of the Madras Council, to assess the varying degrees of culpability of the prisoners held at the fort following the mutiny. In this they had been unsuccessful. They professed themselves unable to make reliable distinctions between the differing extents to which individuals had been involved in the events of 10 July. Out of their enquiries they produced, however, a new and apparently more detailed account of the events leading up to the mutiny. Forbes and Coombs cited evidence which had not emerged at either the military Court of Inquiry or at the civil Commission of Enquiry. The major conclusion of their report was that the mutiny had been inspired by:
a conspiracy so formidable and daring in its nature, aiming at no less an object than subverting the British authority and erecting upon its ruins.94

This was broadly in agreement with the findings of the military Court of Enquiry, but the testimony adduced to back up the conclusion broke new ground. In the first place, evidence was taken from Jemaul-ud-din, the foster brother of Prince Moiz-ud-din. He claimed to have been approached by a sepoy of the 1st/1st in May, shortly before the refusal of the sepoys at Vellore to accept the new pattern of turban. Jemaul testified that a sepoy had told him that the battalion 'would rather die than wear them . . . this is the time to hoist the flag of the Faith and establish the Mussulman Government'.95

Jemaul claimed that he had initially kept this proposal to himself, judging it wiser not to inform Moiz-ud-din of the sepoys' sentiments until matters had become clearer. Nonetheless, he had encouraged the sepoys to believe that the princes were sympathetic to the sepoys desire to re-establish Mohamedan rule. He said that he had met representatives of the discontented battalion on a number of occasions and claimed to have been present at oath-swearing ceremonies when sepoys were initiated into the secret conspiracy. Jemaul testified that he 'carried on a feigned intercourse, and all the communications I made to the sepoys in the name of the Princes came solely from myself'. He had told a sardar named Imam Khan that the princes had said the sepoys 'are the people who are to fight and die, we shall act just as
you please and as circumstances turn out'.

Jemaul's testimony went on to say that he had informed Moiz-ud-din of the conspiracy on 23 or 24 June, the date for which the mutiny was originally fixed. The prince was at first suspicious that the whole thing was a 'trick', engineered, perhaps, by one of his brothers to bring him into disgrace. Although the mutiny was delayed, since it was not possible to assemble sufficient sepoys in the fort on that night, Jemaul said that he had managed to persuade Moiz-ud-din that there was indeed substance to the plans of the sepoys. Moiz-ud-din had remained unconvinced that there was much that he or his brothers could do to encourage the sepoys, remarking that: 'We are Mussulmen it is true, but we are prisoners, we have no troops, no country, no money and no arms and only a few servants and dependants, what can we do?'.

On the night of the mutiny, Jemaul alleged, Imam Khan had approached him to ask whether Moiz-ud-din and Mohi-ud-din were prepared to take over the leadership of the sepoys. Jemaul had answered:

My master Moiz-ud-din says two doors in one house, or two swords in one scabbard will never answer. Do not make use of both our names, Moiz-ud-din and Mohi-ud-din. Take one of us but not both.

To encourage the sepoys, however, Jemaul had drafted letters in Moiz-ud-din's name to send to the poligars at Venkatgherry, Callastry and Gurrumcondah, in the Ceded Districts.
Thus Jemaul's evidence strongly suggested that the leading sepoys in the mutiny had as their main objective the restoration of a Mahomedan government. However, it also played down the part played by the princes themselves. Jemaul claimed to have shielded them from the full details of the plot until it was at an advanced stage. Other evidence brought forward by the Forbes-Coombs enquiry supported such a view. For example, a fakir named Rustoon Ally Shah claimed to have been told that, after the fort had been recaptured, Moiz-ud-din had told a sepoy:

I have committed one fault. In my father's time an old torn flag was put into the trunk. I have taken it out and given it to the sepoys. What punishment I shall receive from the Company for this I do not know. 99

The report also furnished fresh detailed evidence about the nature of the conspiracy undertaken by the sepoys. A sepoy of the 1st/1st, Mahomed Jaffer, was identified as 'decidedly the principal', and the 'first to excite ideas of revolt'.100 This sepoy had supposedly served with Tipu Sultan until his defeat at Seringapatam. He had subsequently managed to join the Company army. The report described him as a 'learned man' who tutored a number of young sepoys in the Islamic faith. The influence of Mahomed Jaffer in convincing the battalion that it was necessary to throw off their allegiance was paramount, according to Forbes and Coombs. Only after the 2nd/23rd had arrived to replace the disgraced 2nd/4th (who had originally refused the turban) was Mahomed Jaffer succeeded by Shaik Adam of the 2/23rd. It was alleged that
Adam was the man of action that the planning and execution of the mutiny required. 101

A sepoy alleged that during the fighting, Mahomed Jaffer had been at pains to emphasise the true cause of the mutiny:

They will all think we are fighting for the turband. "No" - pointing to the Mysore flag which was flying, "Tis that we are fighting for, that and our faith". 102

A number of other leading conspirators were identified by the Forbes-Coombs report. The majority were sardars and all were Mohamedans. A sepoy named Jaffer Beg was said to have acted with Iman Khan as a go-between in the communications with Jemaul-ud-din. Shaik Nutter, whose evidence to the Commission of Enquiry had proved so controversial, was identified as having been one of the most active during the mutiny itself. He had evidently been particularly anxious to shoot Colonel Forbes when Forbes had arrived at the gates of the fort on the morning of the mutiny. Other testimony named the killers of various British officers who perished during the mutiny. A sepoy named Mohummud Dawn was alleged to have killed Colonel McKerras, and a palace servant, Abdul Cawder, was identified as the murderer of Lieutenant Popham, and possibly also of Colonel Fancourt. 103

The report contained one final surprise. Mustapha Beg, the sepoy who had gone to Colonel Forbes three weeks before the outbreak of the mutiny and warned him of the conspiracy, only to find himself imprisoned, was presented
in a new light. Although the government had rewarded Beg handsomely, Forbes and Coombs produced testimony which accused Beg of actively planning the mutiny.\textsuperscript{104}

The fakir, Rustoon Ally Shah, testified that Mustapha Beg had been initially 'united in the plot' with Mahomed Jaffer. He had, however, allegedly quarrelled violently with his fellow conspirator over the way in which the mutiny should be carried out and had ended up going to Forbes out of spite and 'in hopes of getting promotion'.\textsuperscript{105}

Furthermore, a sepoy of the 1\textsuperscript{st}, Moortee, testified that after Mustapha Beg returned to the fort in the aftermath of the mutiny he had lied to the Commission of Enquiry by testifying that the mutiny was only on account of the turbans. Moortee alleged that Beg had told him, 'You must say that it was on account of the Topi. This is what I shall say when I am examined and what I have said'.\textsuperscript{106}

Although in many ways the Forbes-Coombs report was the most revealing of the enquiries held by the British into the Vellore mutiny, it was also the most controversial. Its appearance served to widen divisions within the British community in Madras, and the causes of the mutiny remained uncertain.
NOTES to Chapter 3

1. NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 f.191 Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. Gillespie to Harcourt, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
5. Ibid. f.205 Harcourt to Madras Council, Vellore, 13 July 1806.
6. NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 f.191 Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
14. MSP Vol.22, f.2851 Gillespie’s deposition to Commission of Enquiry reconvened to examine Lt-Col Marriott, Vellore, 29 August 1806.
15. NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 f.153, Gillespie to Bentinck, Vellore, 10 July 1806.
16. HMS Vol.507, f.156 Marriott to Bentinck, Vellore, 10 July 1806.
17. NLS Walker of Bowland 13684 f.67 Captain Charles Marriott to ?,Vellore, 12 July 1806.
19. Ibid. f.276, Evidence of Allagurry, sepoy, to Court of Inquiry, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
21. Ibid. f.258 Evidence of Charlotte Walters to Court of Inquiry, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
22. Ibid. f.317 Evidence of Shaick Ahmed, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
24. Ibid. ff.276 and 332 Evidence of Allagurry and Rahmaswamy, Sepoys, to Court of Inquiry, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
25. NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 f.191 Gillespie to Cradock, Vellore, 12 July 1806.
28. HMS Vol.507, f.246 President's Minute, Fort St George, 17 July 1806.
29. Ibid. f.247.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid. f.248.
NLS Walker of Bowland 13684 f.42.

Lt-Col McKerras and Major Haslewood.

HMS Vol.507, f.220 President's Minute, Fort St George, 15 July 1806.

Ibid.

Ibid. ff.401-407 President's Minute, Fort St George, 23 July 1806.

Ibid. f.451 Pierce to Cradock, Madras, 22 July 1806.

Ibid.

Minto 11322 f.87 General Order, Fort St George, 15 July 1806.

Portland PwJb 57, f.474 Cradock's Minute Fort St George, 25 July 1806.

HMS Vol.507, f.231 Cradock to Bentinck, Vellore, 15 July 1806.

Ibid. ff.369-371 Bentinck's Minute, 22 July 1806.

Ibid. f.376 Cradock's Minute, 23 July 1806.

Portland PwJb 727 Bentinck to Marriott, Fort St George, 17 July 1806.

The Proceedings of the Enquiry are to be found in HMS Vol.508, ff.103-290.

Portland PwJb 727 Bentinck to Darley, 21 July 1806.


Ibid.

Ibid. f.134.

Ibid. f.183 Evidence of Mustapha Beg, n.d.

Ibid.

Ibid. f.137 Evidence of Merza Syed, 22 July 1806.

Ibid. f.150-166 Evidence of Lt-Col Marriott, 25 July 1806.

Ibid. f.162

Ibid. f.153

Ibid. f.165

Ibid. f.151

Ibid. f.150

Ibid. f.166

Ibid. f.202 Evidence of Shaik Nutter, 28 July 1806.

Ibid.

Ibid. f.7-17 Confession of Shaik Khassim, 31 July 1806.

Ibid. f.9.

Ibid. f.10.

Ibid.

Ibid. f.17.

Ibid. f.273 "all and each denied any previous knowledge of or participation in the mutiny."

Ibid. f.259 Evidence of Moortee, Sepoy, 30 July 1806.

Ibid. Evidence of Ibrahim.

Ibid. f.284 Evidence of Shaik Imaum, Sepoy, 7 Aug 1806.

Ibid. f.271 Evidence of Mahomed Maturbah, 4 Aug 1806.

Ibid. f.254 Evidence of Mrs Burke, 4 Aug 1806.

Ibid. f.180 Evidence of Mrs Pritchard, 27 July 1806.
78 Ibid. f.186 Evidence of James Frost, 27 July 1806.
79 Ibid. f.279 Evidence of Lt Coombs, 7 Aug 1806.
80 Ibid. f.263 Evidence of Ramroa, Sepoy, 6 Aug 1806.
81 Ibid. f.287 Evidence of Shaik Nutter, 7 Aug 1806.
83 Ibid. f.109.
84 Ibid. f.120.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid. f.117.
87 Ibid. f.120.
88 See Ibid. ff.454-480 All these testimonies were taken before 1 Aug 1806.
89 Ibid. f.530 Campbell to Madras Govt, Trichinopoly, 15 Aug 1806.
90 Ibid. f.455-470.
91 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
95 MSP Vol.25, f.4267 Evidence of Jemaul-ud-din.
96 Ibid. f.4279.
97 Ibid. f.4267.
98 Ibid. f.4272.
99 Ibid. f.4312 Evidence of Rustoon Ally Shah to Forbes and Coombs.
100 Portland PwJb 59, f.4422 Forbes-Coombs report.
102 Ibid. f.4253 Evidence of Ramoo, Sepoy.
103 Ibid. f.4253-4267.
105 MSP Vol.25, f.4251 Evidence of Rustoon Ally Shah.
106 Ibid. f.4252 Evidence of Moortee, Sepoy.
Chapter 4: An Exploration of the Causes of the Mutiny.
In its report of 23 August 1806, the Commission of Enquiry into the Vellore mutiny complained:

It is not easy to calculate upon the motives which may have actuated a large body of men, composed of different castes, religions and countries.¹

In the context of the Commission's indecisive findings, this amounted to an admission of failure. The Commission had been unable to identify clearly the causes of the mutiny, and it argued in its own defence that the complexities of Indian culture made it very difficult to understand the behaviour of its inhabitants. In many ways this was an admirably frank acknowledgement of its own limitations by an officially appointed government body. Nor was the Commission alone in its failure to resolve the doubts over the massacre at Vellore. None of the three enquiries in Madras succeeded in winning widespread approval of its conclusions. On the contrary, each served only to exacerbate relations between the different individuals and authorities involved in the affair.²

All three enquiries attempted to identify as the major cause of the mutiny either the activities of the Mysore princes or the effects of changes in the dress regulations of the sepoys. Before attempting any new explanation of the causes of the mutiny, it is very important to examine fully the strengths and weaknesses of the cases that were made out in favour of each of these possible causes.
In 1804 Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Marriott had produced a report on the Mysore family which gave particular attention to the princes. At that time it was felt that the more that was known by the East India Company about the family, the less likely the authorities would be to be taken by surprise should the princes attempt to escape. This report was called for and examined by the Commission of Enquiry in August 1806. ³

It is immediately evident from Marriott's report that the arrival of the princes from Seringapatam had an enormous impact on the size and social structure of the town of Vellore. The princes brought with them a virtual Court, an enormous retinue of relatives and servants. In 1806, the number of these adherents was put officially at 1,812, but Marriott himself believed that in all 'not less than three thousand Mysoreans may have settled there'.⁴ In a provincial town with a population of approximately twenty thousand, this represented an enormous increase in population, and a significant gain in political importance. The arrival of the princes also meant that the size of the garrison in the fort had to be increased. Vellore, therefore, became something of a boom town. There was a considerable increase in the amount of money in circulation and this rise in prosperity attracted even more people. It was estimated that between 1801 and 1806 the overall population of Vellore increased by five or six thousand.⁵
The princes at Vellore were naturally a potential focal point of opposition to the rule of the Company. The presence of such a large entourage did nothing to diminish the idea that they represented a Court in exile. The prisoners, however, were kept in close confinement. In theory, they were permitted to leave the fort if the purpose of their journey was considered sufficiently important, but in practice this never happened. They were held in separate apartments of the palace, which had formerly been occupied by the Nawab of Arcot. However, the apartments were guarded by Indian sepoys, not by British soldiers, and the princes' personal servants were able to travel unhindered between the palace and the pettah. A means of communication with the outside world was thus available to Tipu's family.

In all probability, it was the difficulty of the task of overseeing the day-to-day running of the palace that prompted the Madras government to appoint a Paymaster of Stipends to be solely responsible for supervision of the princes. Previously this had been part of the remit of the fort Commandant, but in 1804, Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott became the first officer to hold the new post.

Despite being prisoners, the princes received handsome remuneration. The Governor-General of India at the time of the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan, Marquis Wellesley, decided to soften his decision to exile the family from Mysore by granting them a 'more munificent maintenance than they had enjoyed during the late reign'. Each of the
four eldest sons received 50,000 rupees per annum to keep his family and servants. The retinues of the princes were expensive to maintain, however. Even this relatively large sum was easily spent. Moiz-ud-din, indeed, was often in debt, and Marriott felt obliged to keep a strict control over his spending. Nonetheless, the Mysore family was able to live in regal style. As a further indication of the Company's generosity, Tipu's younger sons each received 25,000 rupees per annum on reaching the age of fifteen. It was no doubt hoped that the large amounts paid to the princes would reduce their incentive to make any attempts to escape or to seek to re-establish their father's kingdom.

Marriott's report indicates that the princes were permitted a certain amount of freedom to indulge their own particular pleasures. But the young English officer was clearly rather uncomfortable and reticent in writing about the more exotic tastes of what he clearly considered somewhat decadent Indian princelings. In general, Marriott held a very low opinion of the moral characters of his charges. He described with some distaste the servants' administering to the Prince's sensuality and extravagance, 'in procuring for him privately whatever they thought would be most gratifying to him, and advantageous to themselves. In doing this, I have sufficient reason to believe that some of them did not scruple to submit to the lowest form of human degradation'. Marriott did not define precisely the nature of this
"degradation" but it is worthy of mention that the prolixity of the prince's speech was uncharacteristic. He took urgent steps to remove the temptation to suicide by means of internal, external, and material supports. From the very beginning, Khalick was known to be a person of unbounded energy, and an excellent co-ordinator, who never allowed his personal life to distract him from his duties.

The eldest son, Nadir, was haughty, and full of self-importance. On one occasion, Khalick, who was on a diplomatic mission to a foreign country, was arrested and confined by the authorities. The news reached Nadir, who immediately ordered Khalick to be brought before him. Nadir was the second son, and a friend of Nadir's. Nadir was a boy where it was alleged that the prince was involved in seducing and attempting to seduce a number of his wives and servants. Moreover, according to Harriss, Khalick was a "degenerate of Godom", who did not even have the decency to pay the young boys who were enlisted into service in this respect. Of Moiz-ud-din, FUTTEH HYDER, perhaps less to say.
'degradation' but it is obvious that it was the sexual proclivities of the princes which most distressed him. He took urgent steps to protect his charges from further temptation by stopping the previously unchallenged passage of covered carriages, purporting to carry ladies in full purdah from the pettah to the palace. In future these doolies were to be searched and thus prevented from concealing, as Marriott suspected, a multitude of evils: 13

There were many other aspects of the princes' personalities which displeased the Paymaster of Stipends. The eldest son, Futteh Hyder, was described as 'cruel, haughty, superstitious (like all Moormen), distrustful, deceitful and abominably given to falsehood on the most trifling occasions', and possessed of a mind 'as mean and contemptible as it is uninformed and prejudiced'. 14

Concluding his assessment with a final flourish, Marriott asserted that Futteh Hyder had had children by 'more than one of his mothers-in-law ... an incestuous connection abhorred even amongst the most profligate and abandoned Mussulmen'. 15

Marriott was no more complimentary about the second son, Abdul Khalick. His report cited instances where it was alleged that the prince was involved in torturing and attempting to poison a number of his wives and servants. Moreover, according to Marriott, Khalick was a 'descendant of Sodom', who did not even have the decency to pay the young boys who were solicited into service in this respect. 16

Of Moiz-ud-din, Marriott had rather less to say.
In customary ways, the signs of decrepitude. At the same time, more interestingly, were drawn to the bounds of destruction and the end of life was hastening. Harriott also expressed his belief that the last words to take thought of were:

"Only God, who, in the person of Napoleon, became our guide and protector..."

He was certain that the Emperor would not show any antipathy towards the things he considered moral or immoral. He had always known that he was not the sort of a man who was likely to be lulled into a false sense of security with regard to his charges. Harriott asserted that it would always be advisable to expect the worst from their intentions and too many precautions cannot be taken relative to the security of their persons. Nonetheless, he rejected the possibility of a liaison between the swissess and any French agents who..."
In customary vein, the report reproached his moral decrepitude. It was asserted that 'his vices are venal'. More interestingly, and perhaps significantly in view of the charges of conspiracy that were later levied against him, Marriott also remarked of Moiz-ud-din that 'believing in fatality, he will live for the day and let the morrow take thought for itself'.

Only Mohi-ud-din, Moiz's elder brother and the third son of Tipu, emerged with any credit from Marriott's scrutiny:

He is the only native of India with one exception, and that is the present Rajah of Coorg, in whom I have met with every appearance of being really satisfied with the dispensations of Providence and of being really contented with his condition. . . . They are the only two natives in whom I could never see the least attempt at duplicity, prevarication or deceit.

Overall, Marriott's report betrayed a strong antipathy towards Muslims. He frequently commented on what he considered their shortcomings and moral blind spots and he evidently believed that the princes' personal morality had been infected by their religion. The report was certainly not the work of a man who was likely to be lulled into a false sense of security with regard to his charges. Marriott asserted that it would 'always be advisable to expect the worst from their intentions and too many precautions cannot be taken relative to the security of their persons'. Nonetheless, he rejected the possibility of a liaison between the princes and any French agents who
might be at work in the form of a threat, which Tipu Sultan tacitly held over British on their guess upon the success or failure of the allies. Marriott believed, however, that the fixed terms of the Treaty of Hyson are finally dissolved the interest of the allies for the hold of French dominion.

Two other factors were undermining the imprisonment of the allies. They were apparently that they were not likely to have been overthrown in an effort to reduce the vested interests of the allies. This would further reduce the allies in free transactions.

Yet while Marriott was confident that the allies would be incapable of cohesive political action, he was improbable that even be imagined that ally resistant
might be at work in the country. The brief flirtation which Tipu Sultan had had with the French had put the British on their guard against a repetition by any of his sons. Marriott believed, however, that the omission of Mysore from the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 (in which, for example, Pondicherry was returned to the French) had finally disabused the princes of any hopes they may have held of French intercession on their behalf.

Two other factors also contributed to the secure imprisonment of the princes, Marriott believed. First, they were continually quarrelling amongst themselves. There was a great deal of rivalry between them and they apparently displayed little friendship towards each other. This inability to get on together made it exceedingly unlikely in Marriott's opinion that they would ever combine in an effort to escape. Secondly, he felt the vested interests of their large retinue of servants would further reduce the possibility of their taking action to free themselves:

I feel confident that there is scarcely a murdiam admian about the place but in reality thinks it more for his own individual interest, that his master should remain in his present condition, than that he should endeavour to better it by any hazardous or precarious attempt. Indeed few of them would wish to change their present lazy and indolent, but secure and profitable way of life for the more hardy and precarious one of the field.

Yet while Marriott was confident that the princes would be incapable of cohesive political action, it is improbable that even he imagined that all ambition had
vanished from the hearts of his prisoners. The British victory at Seringapatam had deprived at least one of the princes of real power and wealth. However supine their life-style in the palace at Vellore, the fact that they were the captives of an alien power can seldom have been far from their minds.

III

In any assessment of the possibility of the Mysore princes becoming involved in an attempt to restore a Mohammedan government to South India, their role as potential figureheads must be examined. If, as Marriott argued, the princes themselves had little incentive to re-establish their position of pre-eminence, there may nonetheless have been factions in South India which would have been happy to have the prestige of being led by one of the sons of Tipu Sultan.

South India was far from being in a settled, peaceful state in 1806. The East India Company had not at that time gained the position of uncontested supremacy that it was later to enjoy in the area. For example, it is apparent that little had been done to persuade the peasantry that Company rule was any less stringent or dishonest than that of its predecessors. In 1795, Thomas Munro informed his father:

We see every day collectors, who always lived above their salary amassing great fortunes in a very few years. The operation by which this is accomplished is very simple:—when rents are paid in money, by giving government a rent roll below the real one, and when in kind, by
diminishing the produce of the land or of the sales. It is in vain to say that collectors, being men of education and character will not descend to such practices; the fact is against this conclusion.

The collector cannot expect that the country is to flourish, when he himself has given the signal to plunder it. The numerous bands of revenue servants require no encouragement to exercise the trade which they have always followed; but they now act without restraint, and are joined by the head farmers, in stripping the unfortunate husbandmen of the great part of the produce of their labours. This is the system under the Nabobs, under Tipu, under the Company, and, I believe, under every government in India. The collectors and their deputies, not being paid, help themselves, and by this means the country is often as much harrassed in peace as in war. 23

Nor was it only at this grass-roots level that the Company had failed to pacify the country. Much opposition was encountered from poligars, local chieftains of varying degrees of power and influence, who often employed their own private armies. All forms of centralised government threatened the independence of this class of local potentates. Tipu Sultan had met with stiff resistance in his efforts to subdue the poligars and, on occasion, he had been forced to make agreements with the most influential of them. 24 In this way, the poligar could become the revenue collector for a given district. As long as Tipu's government received its valuation of the rent for the land in question, central government and the poligar could co-exist peacefully. Even after the fall of Tipu, the poligars remained a force with which the British had to reckon. According to the Cambridge History of India:
at the end of the eighteenth century
the southern poligars alone maintained
100,000 armed retainers, who were
employed in resisting the central power,
in making war upon one another, and in
plundering peaceable cultivators.25

An historian of North Arcot, the district in which
Vellore itself lay, confirms that 'scattered over the
district were the estates of zemindars and poligars,
 petty chiefs who by the weakness of previous governments
had been enabled to assume a position almost of independ-
ence'.26 An economic historian of South India has also
remarked on the power of the poligars:

Every petty Poligar and Zemindar had a
band of retainers numbering 2000 to
3000 and more. In the Ceded Districts
alone, it was computed that there were
about 30,000 armed men in the service
of the Poligars at the period of their
transfer to the Company (1802). . . .
Rapine and incendiaryism constituted a
feature of the times. Poligars who
possessed large estates allowed them to
lie uncultivated while they plundered
their neighbours and one another.27

When Thomas Munro was appointed to the collectorship
of the Ceded Districts in 1800, he was confident that the
region could provide a large revenue for the Madras
government, but:

before such a desirable change can be
effected we shall have to remove many
powerful and turbulent poligars, and
many petty ones of modern origin, who
have taken advantage of the troubles
of the times in order to withhold
their rents for a few years, and then
to declare themselves independent.28

Two years later, Munro was complaining that the
poligars 'have cost me more trouble than I was aware of
when I began; for scarcely a day has passed since I entered the Ceded Countries, that some part of my time has not been occupied by them'. 29 Indeed, it was his very low opinion of the merits of the poligars as landowners that helped to convince Munro that a riotwari settlement of the revenue was preferable to dealing directly with a class of men:

despised and detested by all the better classes of their subjects... they can command no respect but through the exercise of power. They can never be converted into private landholders who would devote their whole attention to the improvement of their estates, but will always maintain bodies of armed men and endeavour as far as they can to act as petty sovereigns. 30

Munro's views, strongly supported as they were by Lord William Bentinck, indicate that the poligars were generally regarded as a serious destabilising influence on the country. In relation to the Mysore princes and the Vellore mutiny, two of these poligars are of particular interest. The first, Dhoondiah Waug, was imprisoned by Tipu Sultan for refusing to submit to his authority. He escaped during the aftermath of the storming of Seringapatam in 1799, and his career thereafter was brief but glorious. Operating from within Mahratta territory, he made frequent raids on the Mysore countryside and became a considerable embarrassment to the Company authorities in their attempts to settle the area following the fall of Tipu. 31

Styling himself the 'King of Two Worlds', Dhoondiah, within two years of his escape, was said to have been able
to call on 50,000 fighting men. His rise sufficiently alarmed the Governor-General, Richard Wellesley, to cause him to give permission to his brother, Arthur, to pursue Dhoondiah into Mahratta territory. The Governor-General exhorted his brother to 'hang him from the first tree'. For his part, Dhoondiah was given to sending boasts and threats to the British authorities. He was particularly interested in the fate of the princes at Vellore. On one occasion he demanded 'that you liberate and deliver up to me Tippoo's sons or I will lay waste the country from Seringapatam to Madras'. Dhoondiah was not able to carry out this threat, however, and he was eventually captured and killed by Wellesley.

There is also some evidence to suggest that there may have been some form of liaison between Dhoondiah Waug and the princes. In 1801, a curious incident occurred at Vellore. A physician, Golam Mahomed, informed the commandant of the fort, Colonel Dallas, that the eldest prince, Futteh Hyder, was in communication with Dhoondiah. As a result, British agents intercepted and arrested an emissary from Vellore who was found to be carrying a message of goodwill to Dhoondiah. This purported to come from Futteh Hyder, and bore his seal. Further investigation revealed, however, that the physician was in the employ of the Prince Abdul Khalick. It was then alleged by Futteh Hyder that Abdul Khalick had stolen his seal and engineered the whole incident in order to discredit him. Such a construction undoubtedly fits the quarrelsome
image of the princes drawn by Marriott, but the affair was never wholly resolved, and some suspicion remained that communication may have taken place between the princes and the rebel leader.

The second poligar of whom some account must be taken was Marudu Pandyan. As Minister of State for the region of Sivaganga from the 1770s onwards, Pandyan had occupied a respectable position and had shown no inclination towards rebellion either against Tipu Sultan or against the Company. In 1798, however, he gave up his official duties and began a vigorous campaign against the European invaders. According to K. Rajayyan's South Indian Rebellion, 1800-1801, Pandyan then became the 'central figure' in a loosely knit alliance of poligars and other dissident elements who opposed the rise of the Company. The leaders of this alliance 'sent their emissaries in the name of Futteh Hyder'.

Marudu Pandyan's career as a rebel was short. Like Dhoondiah he was captured and hung by the British, in October 1801. Before his death, however, he wrote a proclamation which was widely circulated in the southern parts of the Madras Presidency. This address set out clearly Pandyan's revolutionary philosophy and programme. Shortly after the mutiny at Vellore, a copy of the address was found publicly displayed in the centre of the city of Madras. In the "extremely tense" atmosphere which pervaded the Presidency at that time, Pandyan's words gave fuel to those British who feared that a widespread
conspiracy was being conducted to overthrow their power and influence. The address appealed to all the peoples and castes of South India to unite in opposition to the British:

His Highness the Nabob Ali Khan having foolishly given the Europeans place amongst you, is become like a widow. The Europeans violating their faith have deceitfully made the Kingdom their own, and considering the inhabitants as dogs, accordingly exercised authority over them, there existing no unity of friendship among you the above casts, who not aware of the duplicity of these Europeans, not only calumniated each other but have absolutely surrendered the Kingdom to them. In these countries now governed by these low wretches, the inhabitants are become poor and the rice become vellum, and although they manifestly suffer they are still without understanding to discern it. It is certain that a man must die altho' he may live a thousand years, and it is certain that his fame will survive him as long as the sun and moon; therefore it is desired and determined in future each shall enjoy his hereditary rights . . . . Therefore you Birmahs, Chitterahs, Byce, Soodorahs and Mussulmen, all who wear whiskers, whether civil or military, serving in the field or elsewhere, and you Subidars, Jemidars, Havildars, Naikes and Sepoys, in the service of these low wretches, and all capable of bearing arms, let them in the first instance display their bravery, that is to say, wherever you find any of the low wretches, destroy them. Whoever serves the low wretches shall never enjoy eternal bliss after death. Know this, consider and deliberate on it — and he who does not subscribe to this, may his whiskers be like the hair of my secret parts, and his food be tasteless, and without nourishment, and may his wife and children belong to another, and be considered as the offspring of the low wretches to whom he had prostituted her. Therefore, all those whose blood is not contaminated by Europeans will begin to
The appearance of Pandyan's revolutionary proclamation argues that there were at least pockets of resistance to Company rule in South India at the beginning of the 19th century. Marriott's claim that there was no possibility that the princes could summon support from outside Mysore may have been too complacent. The Paymaster of Stipends had written that 'it is proverbially known and believed that not an hundred men in Hyderabad could be raised to follow a Mysoor standard from the contempt universally shown towards the family of Hyder Naique'. Further, he had asserted that the princes were 'fully convinced that they could only expect to be tools and state puppets in the hands of any Country or European power, into which they might voluntarily trust themselves or accidentally fall'. But at least one influential member of Tipu's family, who had escaped from the British after Seringapatam, was actively involved in plotting to free the princes.
IV

When the Mysore family was removed from Seringapatam in 1801, a brother-in-law of Tipu, Khareem Sahib, who was a general in Tipu's army, was also taken to Vellore. He became a pensioner at the palace. His wife was allowed to remain in Seringapatam, while their son, Futteh Ali, escaped and fled to the Mahrattas. In 1804, it was discovered that Futteh Ali had been visiting his mother's house in Seringapatam, and it was rumoured that he had been involved in efforts to raise money in order to mount an attack on the town. It was also proved that his mother had been maintaining an illicit communication with the princes at Vellore. Emissaries were arrested in Mysore carrying letters from the palace at Vellore. Although these contained no directly incriminating evidence, it was believed that Futteh Ali had gained some influence with the Mahratta leader, Holkar, and that an attack on the whole of Mysore was being considered.

After the mutiny at Vellore, the British resident at Pune, deep within Mahratta territory, emphasised the significance which he attached to Futteh Ali's machinations:

That from this early period even, the Princes entertained hopes of being able to effect their release and reinstate the family in dominion is evident from the intrigues which were carrying on in this quarter by Khareem Sahib's son who had previously made his escape and maintained himself with a few followers on the Kistna. This young man lost no time in referring himself to the Mahratta States. When Holkar established himself here in 1802 his durbar was regularly attended by a vakeel from Khareem Sahib's son who invited Holkar to pursue his
Holkar did not take up Futteh Ali's suggestion, but it appears that Tipu's nephew continued to intrigue for the restoration of a Mohamedan government to Mysore. There is evidence that Futteh Ali was profoundly disappointed with the outcome of the Vellore mutiny, and that he was critical of the princes for failing to take advantage of the situation. On 27 November 1806, the Madras Council, in secret session, received from Colonel Harcourt, a translation of a Persian letter which had been intercepted at the fort. The letter was addressed to 'the Lord Futteh Hyder' and was signed by Futteh Ali. Harcourt professed himself 'at a loss' to know whether or not it was genuine. By sending it to the Council, however, he demonstrated how seriously he was prepared to treat it. The letter was apparently intended for the four eldest princes:

It is reported in these parts that the persons of our enemies have been at once dispatched to Hell by your muskets guns and swords and that the Majestic Flag has been exalted on the conquered fort of which you had complete possession but that you four . . . through fear of your fortune-forsaken enemies did not give the assistance necessary but at that time preferring a hermit's solitude the fort thrown into your hand without an effort was reconquered. If you had acted with caution and kept possession of the fort for a week or ten days your friends would have taken heart and your numbers daily increased and by the Grace of God your Flag would again have been respected—such opportunity as this when shall we find again. But what is past let us
speak of it no more ... By the Grace of God everything is favourable to me and I shall bring all my prospects to a happy conclusion.48

Even if the authenticity of this remarkable communication remains open to question, its suggestion that the princes knew of the plans for the mutiny but played, at most, only a very minor role in it is strongly supported by all available evidence. The military Court of Inquiry held at Vellore immediately after the mutiny was most eager to convict the princes of co-ordinating the revolt. It is likely that the Court was keen to pre-empt any accusations against the army of having introduced injudicious changes in the sepoys' dress. Yet even this Court was able to produce evidence of only a very tenuous nature against Moiz-ud-din alone of all the princes. The question of how much the sons of Tipu Sultan may have corrupted the allegiance of the sepoys to the Company can therefore be said to hinge on how deeply Moiz-ud-din was involved.

There can be little argument that this fourth son of Tipu did indeed carry on some form of communication with the mutineers during the actual events of 10 July. Palace guards, palace servants, and sepoys all testified to having seen him either talking to, or encouraging, or distributing betel and pilau to the rebellious Indian troops.49 There was admittedly little consensus between witnesses as to precisely what actions Moiz-ud-din had taken, but this could be attributable to the confused circumstances of a sudden and very violent mutiny taking place largely under
cover of night.

The most serious charge against Moiz-ud-din, made by two separate witnesses, was that he had encouraged the sepoys to take control of the hill forts near to the main fort, and promised them a reward if they were successful. If this is true, there is no doubt that the prince had entered fully into the spirit of the mutiny. But this is still a long way from proving that he took any kind of leading part in planning it. Indeed, at least one observer testified to having seen Sheik Adam admonish the prince for distracting the sepoys by offering them food. This suggests that Moiz-ud-din was an interested bystander rather than an integral part of the events of that night. Such a role would certainly be consistent with the prince's character, as assessed by Marriott, who believed Moiz-ud-din incapable of long-term planning.

Consorting with the mutineers and showing them a degree of hospitality could merely demonstrate that Moiz-ud-din wished to maintain friendly relations with any force that might be about to take over the running of the fort in which he was confined. Despite his pension, it is highly unlikely that he felt any great allegiance to the British. They had, after all, deprived him of freedom, lands and wealth, as well as of the status and power that went with being a member of a ruling family. It may be that he was not unwilling to consider lending his name to the mutiny if it proved successful. But, purely on the evidence of the events of 10 July, Moiz-ud-din must be
acquitted of having played any very significant part.

Could he then have been instrumental in planning the mutiny, or even have been responsible for its original conception? The evidence for this suggestion is largely contained in the testimony of Shaik Nutter taken by the Commission of Enquiry, and in the written confession of Shaik Khassim, which was taken by Colonel Forbes and Lieutenant Coombs.

Neither Shaik Nutter nor Shaik Khassim was able to identify positively Moiz-ud-din. Each said that at their respective oath-taking ceremonies, where they bound themselves to the conspiracy to overthrow the Company rule, a 'royal personage' was present whom they believed to be a representative of Moiz-ud-din, or even to be the prince himself. Both also testified to there being a general understanding amongst the sepoys responsible for fomenting the mutiny that one or more of the princes knew of the intended insurrection and approved of it. It was never revealed, however, exactly which of the princes may have been involved.

The most detailed account of the planning of the mutiny which any of the enquiries managed to elicit was that given by Moiz-ud-din's foster brother, Jemaul-ud-din, to the enquiry conducted by Forbes and Coombs in October 1806. There are, however, a number of problems in dealing with this evidence. First, Jemaul-ud-din had flatly refused to give evidence to the Commission of Enquiry. At that stage he denied all knowledge of either
the planning or the conduct of the revolt.\textsuperscript{55} It is not known what brought about his change of heart and induced him to give a full 'confession' of his own involvement in the affair. It may be that Forbes and Coombs offered him his freedom in return for his account of events, though they certainly had no authority to do so; or it may be that he decided to make a belated attempt to shield Moiz-ud-din from the burden of blame by deeply implicating himself instead. It is possible only to speculate.

Secondly, the reliability of the Forbes-Coombs report itself is open to question. It had not been requested by the Madras Council, and was received by them with reluctance and scepticism. By the time the report was presented in November, the Council, with the significant exception of the Commander-in-Chief, considered 'all proceedings on that subject to have been closed'.\textsuperscript{56} Bentinck insisted that Forbes and Coombs had been appointed only to attempt to identify different degrees of guilt amongst the sepoys imprisoned after the mutiny. The Governor therefore believed that Forbes and Coombs had considerably exceeded their brief. He went so far as to say that he viewed their report as an 'insult' to the Commission of Enquiry and he attacked Forbes and Coombs for 'defending an opinion already formed'.\textsuperscript{57} Bentinck refused to recognise their findings, since 'the heated and interested feelings of those officers take away in my judgement all value from this document'.\textsuperscript{58}

Bentinck's questioning of the credentials of these officers to make such a report was not unreasonable.
Each had been intimately bound up in the events of the mutiny. Forbes' judgement in ignoring Mustapha Beg's warning had been disastrously at fault. Coombs had been so unpopular with the sepoys that, at its onset, he had believed himself personally responsible for the mutiny. Both, therefore, can be said to have had a vested interest in proving that the mutiny had resulted from external interference with the army rather than from internal considerations. By any standards, they were not ideal investigators of the mutiny, and their report cannot be accepted without reservations.

Jemaul-ud-din's evidence is therefore doubly suspect. Yet the dubious context from which it emerged does not in itself make it untrue. His claim that he misled the chief conspirators into believing that he had Moiz-ud-din's approval for liaising with them would, if true, account for the inability of Shaik Nutter and Shaik Khassim to say precisely which 'royal personage' was present at their oath-taking ceremonies.\textsuperscript{59} It would also be consistent with Futtah Ali's censuring of the princes for their inaction during the mutiny.

Ultimately, however, Jemaul-ud-din's evidence does not provide a sufficiently strong basis to acquit Moiz-ud-din completely of all involvement in planning the mutiny. Even by Jemaul's account, his foster brother knew of the intention to mutiny by the 23 or 24 June, and if he did not actively encourage the development of the plot, nor did he apparently do anything to discourage it.
The verdict on Moiz-ud-din must remain 'not proven', but what is certain is that any role he may have played was not enough in itself to account for the mutiny.

If the Mysore princes were not the prime moving force behind the mutiny, it might reasonably be supposed that the introduction of the new pattern of turban and of the dress regulations was responsible for the bloodshed. This view was held by many contemporaries and has subsequently been accepted by many historians. There are a number of alluring circumstances which support such an interpretation.

The determination with which the sepoys at Vellore rejected the new pattern of turban and the disturbance at Wallajahbad when it was first introduced in May 1806 establish beyond question that the turban was intrinsically objectionable to the sepoys. Its resemblance to a drummer's cap and its consequent association with Christianity account for its unpopularity with the Indian troops. No agents provocateurs were required to stimulate resistance to its enforcement. The protests against the turban appear to have been spontaneous and sincere, reflecting the repulsion felt by many sepoys towards its design.

Similarly, dress regulations prohibiting the use of caste marks and ear-rings when the sepoys were on parade and establishing a standard shape for facial hair were no doubt viewed as unnecessary infringements on personal liberty. Furthermore, the way in which the British
handled the complaints of the sepoys concerning the turbans is open to criticism. They were tactless in their choice of design, inflexible in their methods of enforcement, and, perhaps, reckless of the men's disdain for their new headgear.

There is, nonetheless, a categorical difference between rejecting a new turban in May, and deciding to attempt an unprecedented slaughter of an entire British garrison in July. Given that the sepoys were angered by the way in which their objections to new regulations were being ignored; given that they feared that there might be some concerted attempt on the part of the British to threaten their religions; given that the three month interval between the two mutinies allowed time for anger to increase; it is still scarcely credible that these factors alone could have provoked such a response. This would imply a degree of religious fanaticism which is scarcely consistent with what is known about the sepoys.

While it was certainly the case that the Indian troops were generally far more devout in their various religious practices than were the majority of the British forces, it is also pertinent to note that sepoys violated the most orthodox principles of their religions by working for Europeans in the first place. To orthodox Hindus, Europeans were the equivalent of pariahs. To orthodox Muslims, they were infidels.

It is logical to suggest, therefore, that any sepoy joining the Company's service was consciously setting to one side part of his religious principles, giving the need
for gainful employment a higher priority than that of conforming strictly to the conventions of his religion. It is well known that the conditions under which the sepoys carried out their duties were not conducive to upholding caste or religious customs. In the Madras army, no special allowance was made for high caste recruits. Such recruitment had consequently fallen away by the end of the eighteenth century, and the Madras army was composed predominantly of men of low caste. In such circumstances, any interpretation of the Vellore mutiny as purely a spontaneous outburst of outraged religious fervour against a foreign oppressor appears rather suspect. Such a major insurrection required after all, careful planning and direction. Offended religious sensibilities may have been a factor in the immediate outbreak of the mutiny but they do not represent a satisfactory explanation for the events of 10 July at Vellore.

All the enquiries held by the British in Madras came to the conclusion that Indian officers had been instrumental in preparing the rest of the sepoys for revolt. The names of such as Subidar Shaik Adam, Jemidar Shaik Khassim and Naik Abdul Cawder cropped up repeatedly in testimony relating to the planning of the mutiny. Investigation also revealed that most of the sardars who had figured prominently in the revolt were Muslims. Many, it transpired, had been in the service of Tipu Sultan before joining the Company army. Their allegiance to the Company was consequently purely circumstantial. Indeed,
it was this factor that led the military authorities to suspect, almost to assume, that Tipu's sons had corrupted the army. Another interpretation is also possible, however. If the Indian officers of the army, thoroughly discontented with their lot, had come to the conclusion that an uprising against the British was the only way to improve their conditions, an association with Tipu's sons would have furnished a possible means of lending political credibility to their schemes. It is likely that the pressure for revolt came not from the princes, but from the Indian soldiers who were best placed to influence the whole of the sepoy establishment, that is the sardars.

The prestige of Indian officers had indeed declined through the second half of the eighteenth century. As more and more British soldiers arrived in India, officer status became increasingly the preserve of Europeans. From having previously occupied positions of considerable power and influence in the army, and being treated accordingly by the British, the sardars found themselves relegated to a situation where their rank tended to count for little. The military reforms of 1796 accelerated this trend. A still higher proportion of European officers was demanded by the new code, and the rank of killeer, fort commandant, to which sardars could formerly aspire, was abolished.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that discontent amongst the sardars in the Madras army had risen to a dangerous level. In October 1806, Sir John Cradock
produced a minute for the consideration of the Madras Council which clearly indicated his anxiety on the subject:

The situation of the Native Officers of this army appears to demand the consideration of Government . . . . When they attain the rank of Subidar, their further advancement is entirely precluded . . . . The almost invariable consequences of this state of things is that the Native Officers on attaining the rank of Subidar become either careless, indolent and indifferent to their duties, or dissatisfied with the Service and ready to remove by its destruction the obstacles which it opposes to their further elevation. 66

The Commander-in-Chief believed in fact, that the sardars had been willing tools of the Mysore princes during the mutiny. He was of the opinion that they had employed no endeavours to undeceive the sepoys, and suppress their discontent'. In addition, 'they furnished no information of the disaffection that prevailed' to the British.67

Although Cradock remained mistakenly convinced that the princes had co-ordinated the Vellore mutiny, his suspicions concerning the sardars were more perceptive. In July 1807, one year after the Vellore mutiny, a remarkable document was delivered to Colonel Agnew, the Adjutant-General of the Madras army.68 It had come from Hyderabad, and it was in Persian. Agnew sent the document to the Persian translator. As the text was slowly translated into English, it became evident that it was a list of grievances sent by a member of the Subsidiary Force at Hyderabad. The document purported to represent the views of the entire body of Indian troops at that garrison. The translator passed it back to Agnew, who wasted no time in
delivering it to the Madras Council. In the context of the troubled state of the army and of the government of the presidency, its contents were regarded as political and military dynamite.

The translator was 'fully convinced' that the document was 'exclusively the work of natives' and that the question of forgery did not arise. Sir John Cradock considered it of 'uncommon interest' and worthy of 'deep reflection'. The Governor and the other Council members were, if anything, even more deeply impressed by this extraordinary paper. It was immediately resolved that consultations should be held with Lord Minto. He had lately arrived in Madras en route for Calcutta, where he was to take up his duties as Governor-General in succession to Sir George Barlow. Minto considered the document to be highly controversial. He believed that it represented a potent threat to the security of the Madras government, and he strongly advised the Council not to record its receipt, even in secret consultation:

The paper contains in my judgement matter, which, quite independent of ... the very offensive mode in which it is convey'd, deserves the serious and deliberate attention of Government. It is nevertheless, scarcely less important that both the deliberations and the decisions that may take place on these subjects should stand, as clear as possible in the public eye, from the influence of this or any other attempt at intimidation. On this account I am led to doubt whether it would be adviseable to record this paper in the proceedings of Council immediately; in the first instance, I would recommend the communication of it personally to each member of Council for the purpose of
collecting their opinions individually on the preliminary point. It will give me great satisfaction to meet Lord William Bentinck and Your Excellency with Mr Petrie and Mr Oakes in friendly and confidential consultations on this important subject, as soon as the paper has been perused by the Members of Council. 71

The list of grievances was anonymous. But the author claimed to speak for 'all the sepoys of the army; cavalry and infantry being united'. Further, he stated that the document had been prepared 'with the knowledge of all the sepoys'.72 The cloak of anonymity was worn in order to avoid repercussions:

Suspicious must not be attached to any Subidar, Jemidar, Havildar, Naque, or Sepoy. I should certainly have revealed my own name to the Gentlemen of the Company's government, if I had not found that their justice is of two kinds: if they were well pleased with my communication I should be rewarded like Mustapha Beg, but if they were offended at it, I should be killed in the same manner that numbers were killed by Colonel Gillespie without enquiry. Having considered these circumstances, I have not made known my name. Whatever endeavours shall be employed to discover it shall assuredly be disappointed; it will never be known. I am a sincere friend to the Company. I am faithful to the obligations of my duty. It is on this account that I have made this communication to the Company's government.73

The document comprised thirty-two paragraphs enumerating a long catalogue of grievances and complaints. It focussed particularly on the plight of sardars. The envelope in which it was delivered exhorted the Adjutant-General to treat it seriously:
To Colonel Agnew, Adjutant-General.

European Officers, if they should remain a hundred years in the country would find it hard to understand the hearts of the people; the secrets of the natives are to be learned from natives only; it is therefore necessary to trust them with respect. By observing this rule, the Gentlemen of the Company's Service will obtain considerable advantages. 74

The enclosed manuscript made a number of specific references to the Vellore mutiny. Information and opinions on the mutiny were presented which suggested that the British investigations had failed to reveal all the facts pertinent to the revolt and its causes. There was first a statement concerning the causes of the mutiny:

When in consequence of the new turbans a certain event occurred at Vellore, it is reported that some Gentlemen declared that it was occasioned by the sons of Tippoo Sultan. This declaration is false. If at that conjunction all the Subidars, Jemidars, Havildars, Naiques and Sepoys had been united, Vellore would not have been retaken. The cause of the mutiny proceeded from the folly of a few persons, and from the European officers having ill-treated the Subidars and Jemidars on every occasion. 75

This statement is ambiguous. Both 'new turbans' and ill-treatment of sardars are cited as causes of the revolt. In view of the contents of the rest of the document, however, the correct interpretation of the statement would appear to be that while the turban furnished an immediate cause for the mutiny, its underlying cause was the ill-treatment of the sardars. The author went on to recall bitterly the recapture of the fort by the British:
Colonel Gillespie's conduct at this time was exceedingly unwise. A few persons incited by their folly united and occasioned the rebellion; but three portions of the native troops were ignorant of the intention to mutiny and were faithful to their duty. Yet Colonel Gillespie, instead of inquiring into those circumstances as he ought to have done, confounded friends with enemies and devoted them all to indiscriminate slaughter. If another insurrection should occur in the Army, all the men will be united in sentiment and action in consequence of Colonel Gillespie's undistinguishing vengeance. The Gentlemen of the Company's Service consider Colonel Gillespie to be a very wise man: but according to our judgement his extreme folly is incontestable. What right had Colonel Gillespie to order the death of all without any inquiry?

There is no way of confirming whether this very low estimate of the number of sepoys involved in the fighting at Vellore is accurate. It is, however, not inconsistent with the sudden collapse and total failure of the mutiny. If a force of some fifteen hundred sepoys had been fully committed to the cause for which they were fighting, the recapture of the fort by a squadron of Dragoons would have been impossible. Equally, hundreds of sepoys were executed in the fort in the immediate aftermath of the recapture without making any attempt to resist. Would they have so meekly submitted to the bloodthirsty authority of the Dragoons had they been properly armed and ready for battle? Certainly the author of the list of grievances was extremely confident that if the Indian troops had united they would have successfully resisted the Company's European forces:
The Gentlemen have stated that in consequence of the treachery shown by the native troops at Vellore, five or six regiments have been demanded from Europe. We are extremely happy at learning this intelligence. The Company's Government are at liberty to call 20 or 25 regiments from Europe: but the natives at this moment are faithful to their duty. At the time when the natives shall entertain hostile designs nothing can be effected by any force. This is known to God, and what he wills shall be accomplished. ??

Finally, with direct reference to the mutiny, the document made a curious statement about Mustapha Beg, who had subsequently been rewarded by the Company for his apparent loyalty in warning Colonel Forbes of the impending danger at Vellore:

In the affair at Vellore when the mutiny first commenced it was on account of Mustapha Beg: and the Gentlemen of the Company's Government have bestowed on him a reward of two thousand pagodas from the public treasury, with the rank of Subidar. The same Mustapha Beg sepoy was the man who gave the signal for revolt to the people at Vellore. And this is the man whom the Company have distinguished by their favour. The reason of their rewarding Mustapha Beg in so extravagant a manner is this, that if any sepoys shall hereafter meditate rebellion some one of them may be encouraged to come forwards with information. All this is perfectly well understood by the whole army. The disposition of the Gentlemen of the Company's service and the nature of their Government make a thief happy and an honest man afflicted'. ??

It is not difficult to understand the sentiments of jealousy and resentment expressed by the author of the document against Mustapha Beg. The evidence of the Forbes-Coombs report makes it appear likely that he did
play a part in bringing about the mutiny in the first place. By conspiring, and possibly by actively recruiting support for the plan, he may even have been a central figure in the plot. For him then to quarrel with his fellow conspirators, go to Colonel Forbes and warn him of the planned insurrection, and end up being handsomely rewarded for his part in the whole affair, would naturally excite the disgust of other sepoys and sardars, many of whom may have played no part in the mutiny whatsoever. Yet even this does not explain fully the allegations expressed in the document that the mutiny was 'on account' of Mustapha Beg, and that he 'gave the signal for revolt'. On 10 July, after all, Beg remained in irons in prison. From there, how could he possibly have triggered the mutiny, and, in any case, surely his confession to Colonel Forbes would have irretrievably alienated him from their cause? This strange paragraph invites wild speculation. It could, for example, be suggested that Beg's warning to Colonel Forbes was part of an intricate design on the part of the conspirators to discourage any other sepoy from divulging the secret to the British authorities. It is not impossible that the conspirators knew that Forbes would delegate the investigation of the allegation with which Beg approached him to the sardars. They could conceivably have stage-managed the whole thing and ensured that Beg was imprisoned, thus demonstrating to the whole corps that the military authorities would not look kindly on any stories of imminent revolt. Indeed, a number of
witnesses to the Commission of Enquiry testified that Beg's fate discouraged them from informing their European officers of the planned mutiny. This is, however, no more than a speculative effort to construct an explanation for an apparently inexplicable allegation on the part of the author of the document. There is no other evidence which throws light on this enigma, and, overall, the true role played by Mustapha Beg in the mutiny at Vellore must remain an intriguing mystery. There is no doubt that his reward was resented, however, and probably not only by the author of the list of grievances, who was unable to refrain from a further sarcastic reference to the way in which the Company had reacted to information volunteered by sepoys:

For a trifling service they rewarded Mustapha Beg in the most conspicuous manner, and we who have ascertained the sentiments of the whole camp, and have revealed them to the Company's Government, we shall undoubtedly be rewarded in a more distinguished manner than Mustapha Beg. 79

VI

Two other major themes dominated the controversial list of grievances. The first referred to the poor conditions of employment of Indians in the Company army. The second was concerned with the low status of sepoys and sardars in relation to their European counterparts. Of course, the two themes were intertwined, yet there seems no doubt that the sepoys would have regarded their position with less bitterness had there not been the
constant example of the far superior conditions and privileges enjoyed by the Europeans in the army.

The most basic complaint was concerned with the level of pay and pensions allotted to the Indian troops. Of the thirty-one paragraphs contained in the document, seven referred to the financial arrangements of the army. The lack of racial equality particularly rankled with the author of the document:

Almighty God has created all mankind whether white or black men; the same desires that are possessed by white men, whether to eat, to drink, or to enjoy the pleasures of life, equally prevail in the hearts of black men; and if the European Gentlemen shall consume three parts of the Company's revenues it is well, let them assign a fourth part at least to the Natives in order that they may be happy.80

The document then went on to compare unfavourably the rates of pay for European officers with those of their Indian equivalents. The Company was accused of having fixed the levels of European officers at:

70 pagodas, of some 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, or even 1000 pagodas. While the Gentlemen have adjusted their own rank and pay in this manner, they have bestowed the ranks of Jemidar and Subidar on their Native Officers and allowed nothing beyond the latter; and according to their regulations have granted the pay of 7 pagodas to a Jemidar and 12 to a Subidar.81

The author remarked ironically that 'the justice of the Company's Government to their native troops is highly decent and praiseworthy: the whole world must be happy in contemplating such a perfect example of generosity and justice. To the wise it is unnecessary to write more on
this point; they will undoubtedly comprehend it'.

As Cradock's observations on sardars in October 1806 had anticipated, the length of time to achieve the rank of subidar also rankled with the Indian troops. It was argued that only a fortunate few ever rose to enjoy even that rank:

If we should pass our whole lives in the Company's service we may perhaps with infinite difficulty and exertion acquire the rank of Subidar. After the attainment of that rank further advancement is impracticable. The Company have established three rates of pay for Subidars. At first on being made a Subidar the pay of 12 pagodas is received, after six years further service the pay of 15; and after ten years that of 20 pagodas. According to the constitution of the Company's service three portions of the life of a man must elapse in... attaining the situation of Subidar. Afterwards at the end of 10 years if a man should happen not to be dead, but to have survived, he will receive the pay of 20 pagodas. The same regulation obtains in the Cavalry. The Gentlemen must imagine that great benefits derived to the Company's interests from this system. What reason had they for adopting it?

The hard life endured by the sepoys was also emphasised, their situation being unfavourably compared with other ways of earning a living:

Compared with a Sepoy's condition that of a Horsekeeper... is respectable and happy; he earns each month two or three pagodas, and remains at one place among his friends; but to rub the horse, to scour his musket and clean his arms, to dress in a variety of ways, and to march from country to country where everything is scarce and dear, are the occupations of all the sepoys. They must also expose their lives in battle; and besides those things the sepoys experience privations, hardships and distresses which exceed all description. Every sepoy has four or five relations
whom he must support. This is the custom of the country and it is well known to the Gentlemen of the Company's Government. If they had understood anything of the value of their sepoys they certainly would have made their pay more suitable and proper.

Nor was it only the rates of pay during the active service of the sepoys that concerned the author of the list of grievances. Numerous complaints were also made about the pensions to which the sepoys became entitled at the end of their service. No secret was made of the importance of the pension to the Indian troops. In the opinion of the author, 'the sepoys adhere still to the Company's service in consequence of the invalid and pension establishments alone. If they did not exist all the sepoys would abandon the service'. The document demanded, however, that those highly-valued pension rights should be extended to families of sepoys killed whilst in the service of the Madras army:

> We all enter the Company's service for the purpose of supporting our wives and children with respectability and honour. We have marched to a great distance in that service with European officers; and immense numbers of sepoys have died on those expeditions whose families are destitute and ruined. If the Company's Government had been the protectors and supporters of those families, the wives and children of the sepoys would not have been disgraced. The people of the Carnatic are ashamed of this state of things. It must be well known to the Company's Government. At present the result of the Company's service is bread to the sepoys while they live, and dust to their families when they die.

The whole approach of the East India Company towards its sepoys was contrasted unfavourably with what was claimed to have been the general practice under Mughul
rulers. It was claimed that the families of dead sepoys had been maintained by the Mughul government, and that troops were rewarded with 'presents and honours' during their lifetime, when their services had led to success for their rulers. The allegiance of the sepoys, the author inferred, had only been gained by the East India Company because it was believed that a system of just and fair treatment for all would prevail:

When the English first arrived and possessed a very small extent of country, their justice and moderation were exemplary. At that time we all said those strangers have small possessions but the principles of their Government are excellent, if Providence should increase their prosperity they will undoubtedly manifest still more justice and wisdom. The sepoys under the influence of those impressions abandoned the service of their own Nabobs and many persons of high family embraced that of the Company.

Contrary to the sepoys' expectations, the document argued, the standard of justice and fairness of treatment adhered to by the Company had declined. They had come to demonstrate 'much strictness but very little justice'. This belief led the author to include a cautionary tale for the benefit of his employers, referring back to the fall from grace of the Nawab of Arcot, or, as he was also known, the Nabob Wallajah:

The Nabob Wallajah was extremely unworthy, unwise and unjust: he did not pay his sepoys regularly month by month: nor did he exercise enquiry and justice in a suitable manner: the Nabob Wallajah therefore lost his country and what limits can confine my censure of this wretched old monkey?
Besides the Nabob there were other Ameers in the country who in every respect cherished and distinguished their sepoys: for this reason their names are still revered in the country. 89

A further major grievance that was aired concerned the low status allotted to sardars. Aside completely from the question of their financial reward, the lack of respect shown to sardars by Europeans was evidently a source of great bitterness. For example, ordinary troops in the detachments of King's regiments were not required to salute sardars. When subidars or jemidars were in charge of a corps of sepoys, the authority of the sardar was in turn subordinated to that of a sergeant. In this way, the authority of the sardar, even over the sepoys in his corps, was seriously under-mined, since it became apparent that even a non-commissioned European officer ranked above him. 90

It was extremely rare, moreover, for a sardar to be rewarded with any external sign of the dignity of his office, such as a horse or a palankeen:

The Company's Government have granted Palinkeens perhaps to about 4 or 5 Subidars, but if the Gentlemen had derived satisfaction from seeing natives carried in Palinkeens they would have granted a suitable allowance for the maintenance of bearers . . . . It would be better for the Company to with-hold their bounty altogether than to confer such a lame Palinkeen. 91

Europeans, it was further claimed, were in the habit of jeering at Indian officers who appeared on horseback. It was partly on account of the inflexibility of European
officers that the bitter division between black and white
soldiers was maintained:

for the European officers view with
contempt the endeavours of black men
to ride horse or to appear in any
respect on an equal footing with them­
selves. While the European officers
entertain those sentiments of jealousy
and enmity towards us how can we come
in competition with them? 92

It was argued that the racialism of the European
officer corps had become particularly marked 'within the
last ten years', due to an influx of young officers into
the Company's service. This was in consequence of a
change in the structure of the battalions of the Company
army which required that a higher proportion of Europeans
than had previously been the case should be employed:

every new European officer who has
arrived from Europe . . . manifests
no consideration or regard towards
a Subidar or Jemidar, and deems them
more unworthy than his cook.93

This same spirit of contempt, it was alleged, led to
great neglect by European officers of even the most
rudimentary elements of the local languages. As a result,
commands during drill practice were frequently incorrect.
But it was the sardars who took the blame if the wrong
manoeuvres were carried out, and it was the sardars who
were frequently humiliated in front of the sepoys by being
abused by the European officers:

The sepoys are much more frequently
at exercise than the European officers;
and although our whole lives have been
passed at drill and exercise it is our
fate to receive abuse from raw European
officers. In consequence of these
circumstances our hearts are alienated
from the Company's service. Whether we are right or wrong blame is equally imputed to us. We wish for the favour of all the European officers, but they regard us as enemies. 94

The final paragraph of the document made a strong appeal to the government to reform its treatment of the Indian troops, in the Company's interests as much as the sepoys:

All the sepoys concur in representing to the Gentlemen of the Company's Government the propriety of rewarding and promoting Native Officers who perform distinguished services in the same manner that European officers are honoured and promoted; and also the propriety of looking upon European soldiers and sepoys in the same light. By acting and thinking in this manner, the prosperity of the Company's flag will be advanced. A great extent of country still remains to be subdued which has not come within the grasp of the Company's Government — and much service is still to be performed by the native troops. It is therefore necessary to the Company's Government to keep the hearts of the Natives... and after they have conquered the whole country they may act according to their pleasure. 95 This is written for your guidance.

There is no way of establishing whether the list of grievances was, as it claimed to be, truly representative of the feelings of the overwhelming majority of the Subsidiary Force at Hyderabad. The Commander-in-Chief acknowledged the problem of assessing its reliability. At the same time he feared the possible outcome of such reasoning, even if it was only confined to a minority of the troops:
I do not take upon myself to hazard
the observation whether it is likely
to be a true or false exposition of
the prevailing sentiments in the
Native Army, or whether it may be
the production of a discontented
few, or the majority, but that such
dangerous reasoning should exist
even in a small party, no doubt
intent to make proselytes, must be-

What is certain is that the document displayed an
intimate knowledge of the workings of the army. It
was undoubtedly composed by one or more members of that
army, and there is no reason to question that it was in
fact the work of sardars. It is consequently of
particular significance that the list of grievances, in
all its thirty-one paragraphs, made only one reference
to the infringement of the sepoys' religious practices
by the military authorities. Even that did not appear
until the twenty-ninth paragraph:

Every man whether a Mussulman or
Hindoo is happy following his own
customs and religious usages; but
if endeavours should be employed
to abolish those usages, and
introduce Christianity in their
place, what sepoy will be satisfied?
To prohibit the wearing of rings on
the hands, of the mark on the fore­
head, and of ornaments on the ears;
to forbid the use of music at
festivals, to prevent marriage
processions from passing after 8
o'clock, and if women are carried
in doolies to pry at them with such
curiosity and ridicule; if those
orders and practices obtain what
sepoy will be pleased with the
Company's service; at present to
serve the Company is the same with
renouncing one's religion, abandoning
his customs and washing his hands
from the most sacred ties that connect
him with society. . . . 97
This specific reference to the prohibition of caste marks and ear-rings confirms that the military dress regulations were offensive to the sepoys. Yet the complaint comes only after all the many other references to pay and conditions, to status and prestige, which are contained in the document. If the theory that the sepoys at Vellore mutinied on grounds that were principally religious in nature was correct, it is scarcely conceivable that this point would have been tucked away towards the end of such a long and detailed critique of the conditions under which the sepoys served.

On the contrary, the concerns expressed in the document are almost entirely worldly in character. Anxieties about money and status are uppermost in the minds of the author. If the document is to be believed, the areas in which the Indian troops felt most underprivileged were extremely mundane and did not hinge on fine religious points such as the exact shape of their headgear. One further extract helps to illustrate this point:

European officers in compliance with their wishes procure agreeable and beautiful women and give them the pay of 30 or 40 pagodas. If Native Officers received pay in proportion to their just claims they also would be able to enjoy the pleasures desired by their hearts. At present it is difficult for a native to obtain the slave of a handsome woman: and we are ashamed even to show our faces to a fine woman. Everything is dependent on gold, why should I write more; a hint is sufficient to a wise man.
Horses, Palinkeens, carriages, lofty houses, ample tents, couches, pleasure and enjoyment, gratification and delight, whatever yields joy is the portion of the European officer; rain, wind, cold and heat, fatigue and hardship, trouble and pain, and the sacrifice of life itself in the Company's service, these are all the portion of the sepoy.98

There is no doubt that this document calls into question the widely accepted view that the Vellore mutiny developed out of a perceived threat to the religious integrity of the sepoys. It may well be that the sardars were able to use their influence to convince the men that the British intended to convert them forcibly to Christianity and that the turban and the dress regulations were only a small part of this design. Yet if the list of grievances is at all representative of the opinions of the Indian troops at the time of the mutiny, the proposed changes in their dress must be seen not as the central, pivotal issue on which the mutiny turned, but rather as 'the straw which broke the camel's back'. In all probability the true causes of the Vellore mutiny resided neither in elaborate plots by disinherited princes, nor in the religious fury of devout sepoys, but deep within the structure and conditions of service of the Indian army.
NOTES to Chapter 4

2. See Chapter 5.
4. Ibid. f.254 Evidence of Marriott to Commission of Enquiry, 31 July 1806.
5. Ibid.
7. Portland PwJb 729, f.157 Political Department, President's Minute 22 Jan 1805.
10. Ibid. f.245.
11. Ibid. f.253.
13. Ibid. f.337.
15. Ibid. f.346.
16. Ibid. f.357.
17. Ibid. f.365.
18. Ibid. f.358.
19. Ibid. f.327.
20. A detailed account of Tipu's involvement with French emissaries can be found in L. Forrest, Tiger of Mysore, (Edinburgh, 1970), Chap. XVII.
22. Ibid. f.340.
24. Forrest, op.cit., Chap.XVII.
30. Portland PwJb 264 Munro to Bentinck, Anantpur, 12 May, 1806.
32. Ibid. p.95.
33. Ibid. p.96.
34. Ibid. p.96.
36. Ibid.
40. SRO GD 51 Sect.3/129 Melville Castle Muniments.
41. Ibid.
42. HMS Vol.508, f.327 Marriott's Report to Commission of Enquiry.
43. Portland FwJb 729, ff.48-112 President's Minute to Madras Council, 27 July 1804.
44. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid. Fujihe Ali to Fuihe Hyder n.d.
50. Ibid. f.189 Evidence of Shaick Ahmed.
51. Ibid. f.259 Evidence of Moortee, Sepoy.
52. Ibid. f.287.
53. Ibid. f.7-17.
54. MSP Vol.25, f.4267.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid. f.4320 Bentinck's Minute n.d.
57. MSP Vol.27, f.82 Bentinck's Minute, 4 Jan 1807.
58. Ibid.
59. HMS Vol.508, ff.7-17 and 202.
60. MSP Vol.25, f.4267.
64. This was freely acknowledged by Sir John Cradock.
65. See Minto 11322, ff.113-115, Minute by the Commander-in-Chief, Madras, 23 Oct 1806.
67. Minto 11322, f.113 Minute by the Commander-in-Chief, Madras, 23 Oct 1806.
68. Minto 11322, ff.93-112. 'Translation of a Hindustanee Paper which was transmitted from Hyderabad to Colonel Agnew, Adjutant General of the Army'.
69. Ibid. f.93 J. Munro to Sir J Cradock, Fort St George, 2 July 1807.
70. Ibid. f.119 Secret Minute of the Commander-in-Chief, Madras, 3 July 1807.
71. Ibid. f.172 Minute to Cradock, Madras, 7 July 1807.
72. Ibid. 'Translation' paras. 1 and 32.
73. Ibid. 'Translation' para.32.
74. Ibid. f.93 'Translation'.
75. Ibid. 'Translation' para.4.
76. Ibid. 'Translation' para.4.
77 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 19.
78 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 25.
79 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 25.
80 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 23.
81 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 20.
82 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 20.
83 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 1.
84 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 24.
85 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 26.
86 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 10.
87 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 12.
88 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 13.
89 Ibid. 'Translation' paras. 14 and 15.
90 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 6.
91 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 9.
92 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 17.
93 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 18.
94 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 28.
95 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 32.
96 Ibid. f.119 Secret Minute of the Commander-in-Chief, Madras, 3 July 1807.
97 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 29.
98 Ibid. 'Translation' para. 21.
Chapter 5: A Division of Authority.
The Vellore mutiny shook the government of Madras to its very roots. The pre-eminence of the East India Company in South India depended upon the fidelity of its Indian troops. Thus discovering the origin of the revolt and acting to prevent any repetition was essential if political and military stability in the Presidency were to be preserved. Yet at this time of high crisis, all investigations into the insurrection were hampered by the disunity and rivalry which prevailed between the civil and military arms of government.

Poor relationships between Governors and Commanders-in-Chief in Madras had been notorious for many years prior to the arrival of either Bentinck or Cradock. There had been violent clashes of personality. The gradual process of transition from an exclusively military government to one in which civil authority and the rule of law prevailed inevitably carried with it a certain tension between the two offices. At the time of his appointment as Governor, Lord William Bentinck was already well aware of the problems he might face in this respect:

The divided state of the Madras Government and the opposition and counteraction which my noble predecessors received, are circumstances to be lamented: they tend to destroy all the vigour and efficiency so imperiously requisite in the management of a great, unsettled territory. The only system of conduct which can oppose itself with success to such attacks, must be founded upon a steady and determined resolution to do what is right, uninfluenced by party or prejudice, careless and fearless of the event. From the
moment I cannot retain my situation consistently with my own honour, character and comfort, I will resign it.2

Bentinck’s resolution in this matter was to be tested to the full. Sir John Cradock had no intention of allowing the high command in the Presidency army to become totally subordinated to the authority of the Governor and his Council. An early and ample demonstration of Cradock’s determination to preserve the status of his office was provided by a dispute over control of military patronage, in which Bentinck bowed to the demands of the Commander-in-Chief.3

A more particular example of the tension which existed was the dispute over the division of authority at Vellore. This had been a vexed question for some time, ever since the Mysore princes had first been transferred to the fort from Seringapatam in 1800. British control at Vellore was effectively divided into three parts.4 The commandant of the fort was the commanding officer of all troops stationed at Vellore, including both the Company forces and any detachments of King’s troops which happened to be stationed there at any time. He was not responsible for the security of the princes, however. This duty was exclusively in the charge of the Paymaster of Stipends, who was directly responsible to the Governor in Council and not to the Fort Commandant. The third element in the power structure was the Town Major of Vellore who was responsible for the policing of the pettah, and, like
the Paymaster of Stipends, was responsible to the Council and not to the commanding officer. The position of the Town Major excited little controversy, but the relationship between the Fort Commandant and the Paymaster of Stipends was problematic and there was often a lack of co-operation between them. In the period immediately before the mutiny at Vellore, the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief had clashed over this very issue.

In a minute to the Madras Council dated 9 May 1806, Bentinck had acknowledged 'the great difficulty' in the distribution of civil and military authority at Vellore:

> it is impossible that the service can be successfully carried on without a degree of union, temper and conciliation between the different officers. If these feelings do not exist, the whole arrangement may be defeated and the general objects frustrated.\(^5\)

The minute then went on to criticise strongly the behaviour of Colonel Fancourt as Fort Commandant:

> Since the period of Lt Col Fancourt's appointment there have been continual appeals from the civil authorities at Vellore against the interference of Lt Col Fancourt, both to the orders of Government and to the feelings of the Princes. While I assert this as the result of Lt-Col Fancourt's conduct, it is not my intention to attribute to him the degree of blame which the same conduct from some other people would deserve. I believe Lt-Col Fancourt to be a good-hearted man but his extraordinary want of temper and judgement, too notorious to be questioned, certainly defeat the good intentions for which I am willing not to refuse him credit.\(^6\)

As an example of this type of conduct, the Governor drew attention to an incident in which Fancourt had
refused to make available a garden near to the palace for the purposes of the wedding celebrations of one of Tipu's daughters, despite having been specifically ordered to do so by government. This had led to the marriage being 'indelicately delayed'. Bentinck believed this incident to be 'particularly illustrative of the embarrassments which have arisen from an apparent wish to obstruct the public service' on Fancourt's part. He recommended that Fancourt should 'be removed from Vellore, to a command where the same intermixture of different authorities is not likely to produce the same collision'.

The Commander-in-Chief opposed the removal of Fancourt to another post. He insisted that, if it were to be carried out, Colonel Fancourt should first of all face a Court Martial so that he should be given a chance to defend himself against the complaints of the civil authorities. The two other Council members, who had supported Bentinck in his desire to see Colonel Fancourt posted elsewhere, did not believe that there was enough evidence to bring the Colonel before a Court Martial. The matter, perforce, rested there. Ironically, had Cradock not defended Fancourt's rights so vehemently, it is likely that the fort commandant would not have been at Vellore on 10 July.

The mutiny did not, therefore, create the sharp division between civil and military authority in the Madras Presidency, but it did serve to demonstrate how
wide was the gulf between them. It also increased tremendously the pressure on an already uneasy co-existence. It is only within this context that the divisive investigations into the mutiny can be properly understood. Neither the Governor nor the Commander-in-Chief could contemplate accepting responsibility for any acts which could be said to have increased the likelihood of revolt amongst the sepoys. To do so might have damaged irreparably the status of his office. This tension pervaded relations between the army and the civil government.

In addition, the personal careers of Bentinck and Cradock were at stake. The Governor knew that, in the rapidly fluctuating fortunes of the British political scene in the early nineteenth century, not even the powerful influence of his father, the Duke of Portland, could be guaranteed to save him from being recalled should his government be shown to have faltered in its handling of the affair. Cradock, lacking any such protection, was even more vulnerable.

Recrimination and counter-accusation consequently became inextricably linked with the enquiries into the causes of the mutiny. Refuelled by intermittent reports of further disaffection within the sepoys corps, this unproductive rivalry dominated the affairs of the Madras government for over a year.
II

Reference has already been made to the disagreement between Bentinck and Cradock over the findings of the Military Court of Inquiry. Bentinck had considered its proceedings ill-judged, hasty and biased. By the end of July, however, a number of factors had conspired to undermine, for a time, Lord William Bentinck's confidence that the massacre at Vellore had been a local difficulty, due purely to military mismanagement. Shaik Khassim's 'confession', with its strong implication that the palace had played an important part in the planning of the mutiny, was one factor. There was also a report from Major Munro at Wallahjabad of a conversation which he had had with an Indian cavalry officer. This officer had asserted that the cavalry, too, was on the point of mutiny, having held back only because of the failure of the rising at Vellore. But more substantial, and potentially far more serious, were reported outbreaks of trouble amongst the sepoys at Hyderabad and Wallajahbad.

The East India Company maintained a Subsidiary Force at Hyderabad as part of a policy of keeping an active interest in areas of the country not under its direct control. The corps at Hyderabad was supplied from the Madras army. It was in this force that discontent had become evident, amounting apparently to something very close to mutiny. A rising tide of dissent had been detected amongst the sepoys by the commanding officer of the Subsidiary Force, Colonel Montresor. By 21 July,
he considered that their behaviour constituted a genuine threat to the stability of the army, and he informed the chief British political officer, the Resident, Captain Sydenham, of his fears:

The first intimation I had of any serious discontent or alarm amongst the troops was on the evening of the 11th instant, when I was informed by some officers of the 11th Regiment N.I. that there was an idea amongst the troops that it was the intention of Government to force them to relinquish everything that distinguished one cast from another and by degrees to convert them to Christianity, that they also suspected the Europeans intended to massacre the native troops . . . . I soon learnt that a very general alarm did prevail, and officers were warned by people attached to them not to venture out. 12

Further investigation only served to heighten Montresor's fears that the trouble in the corps was deeply rooted. With the carnage at Vellore so fresh in his mind, he appealed to the Resident to support him in taking strong measures to counteract the steady spread of disaffection amongst the Indian troops:

it is with great concern I have to acquaint you that from every report there is a very general disaffection. The confidential men employed by officers invariably state it hourly increasing and that whenever the men are ordered to wear the new turband, a very serious mutiny is to be apprehended . . . . Therefore is it not better in this critical state of affairs, when the troops at Vellore have already mutinied, and reports of a disaffection throughout the army prevalent, I say is it not better to do away everything that may be deemed a just or at least a general cause of complaint? 13
Montresor's appeal was backed fully by Captain Sydenham and they decided to take matters into their own hands. Both men considered the situation too urgent to waste time conferring with the Bengal or Madras governments in order to gain authority for drastic action. They decided to publish an order to the sepoys emphasising that no threat or insult was intended to their religious practices or principles by the introduction of the new turban and the new dress regulations.14 This was in line with the order which the Madras Council had suggested to Sir John Cradock should be published to the whole sepoys army at the beginning of July, but which Cradock had decided to withhold.15 However, Montresor and Sydenham's order went further than merely paying lip-service to the principles of the sepoys, for they actually withdrew the new turban and ordered that the dress regulations should not be enforced.16

Informing the Supreme Government in Bengal of his action, Sydenham was careful to emphasise the urgency of the threat which had induced him to overstep the normal limits of his authority. He pointed to what he believed was a deeply rooted fear amongst the sepoys of a 'systematic design to convert them to Christianity'. He had acted 'to avert by conciliation while conciliation had remained in our power, the dreadful extremity of a political insurrection', and, above all, considerations of 'prudence, policy and humanity'17 had, he believed, left him no other alternative.
The Madras government, which was by now becoming increasingly nervous, warmly applauded the actions of the officers at Hyderabad. The Council informed Montresor that the measures 'have been deemed by his Lordship in Council to be highly judicious and to reflect credit in your discernment and discretion'.

A further blow to Bentinck's confidence, however, came when an apparent insurrection was reported at Wallajahbad. The garrison at that station, which lay some forty miles to the north-west of Vellore, was severely shaken by the events of 26 July. The commanding officer, Colonel Lang, had been so convinced of an imminent mutiny that he had summoned Colonel Gillespie and the 19th Dragoons to lend urgent assistance.

It soon transpired, however, that there was some considerable doubt as to whether there was any real substance to Colonel Lang's suspicions. In a letter written to Sir John Cradock shortly after his arrival, Gillespie was scarcely able to conceal his irritation at the circumstances which had led Lang to summon him:

I am this instant arrived in consequence of Lt Col Lang's urgent letter. My poor wilting fellows as well as horses are much knocked up. I now on my arrival thank God find nothing to do. The alarm (according to Col Lang) has been great, but yet I cannot really see the source from whence the alarm originated.

The discontent of the force at Wallajahbad had in fact been triggered off by men of the 1st/23rd regiment being locked in their barracks after morning parade to
clean their weapons. They had been kept there throughout the morning without food or water, apparently by accident. On being released, the sepoys had rushed out of the barracks and were heard to curse their officers. One or two had suggested that they would do better to follow the example set by the sepoys at Vellore than to continue to be treated with such contempt by the Europeans. This incident had soured relations between the men and their officers, and the officers, at least, believed that there was an atmosphere of mounting hostility amongst the Indian troops. Although Gillespie could find no specific reason for this alarm, he took the precaution of disarming the battalion. The 1st/23rd was the sister battalion to one of those which had mutinied at Vellore and had been raised at the same time and in the same area as the 2nd/23rd. There is no doubt that this factor added to Lang's alarm when they began to behave irregularly.

It is clear from these alarms at Hyderabad and Wallajahbad that the Vellore mutiny had destroyed the confidence of the Madras army. Incidents which would previously have passed with little comment now tended to take on a more sinister significance. British officers who had never previously suspected the loyalty of their men now began to look at their behaviour in a more suspicious manner. Some officers became haunted by the awful spectre of sudden death and destruction in the dead of night. On the Indian side, too, fears began to grow. Rumours that the British intended to convert the entire
army forcibly to Christianity led the sepoys to scrutinise their orders more closely. Moreover, the scale of Colonel Gillespie's revenge may have encouraged a general disaffection amongst the Indian troops. The Vellore mutiny was not, as the military authorities feared, the beginning of a widespread uprising amongst the sepoys of the Company army; but the acute consciousness amongst the British officers that the bloodshed at Vellore could be repeated at any moment had the effect of destabilising the army. Their nervousness and mistrust of the sepoys served to exacerbate the situation, as was amply demonstrated by the rash of incidents similar to those at Hyderabad and Wallajahbad which was to occur before the end of the year.

On 3 August, an alarmed Lord William Bentinck sent off an urgent appeal to the Supreme Government at Fort William, asking that reinforcements be sent. He openly admitted that 'our confidence in our native army is for the present deeply shaken'. At the same time, he made a similar request to Sir Thomas Maitland, the Governor of Ceylon. The full extent to which his fears had escalated was also revealed in his private correspondence. For example, Bentinck informed his friend and confidant, Lord Minto:

We knew that there was general dissatisfaction among the sepoys, but we did not know that the interference of the Princes extended beyond Vellore. It appears however that great dissatisfaction exists among the greater part of the troops both Infantry and Cavalry in the Carnatic, and how far in other parts it may have gone I do not know.

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Having initially rejected the military Court of Inquiry's views on the role of the princes in the mutiny, Bentinck had now altered his stance on the matter. He asserted that 'the conspiracy formed at Vellore ... was for the express purpose of re-establishing the Mussulman's government in one of the sons of Tippoo'.

Bentinck now agreed that the removal of the princes from Vellore was essential. On 20 August, they were led out of the palace to begin their journey to Madras, where they were to board ship for Calcutta. A member of the guard which formed the escort for the princes gave a graphic account of the atmosphere surrounding their departure:

The Princes heard the tidings of their intended transportation with the greatest grief, and declared at first that they would suffer death rather than quit their families. However they have been compelled by necessity to submit to their fate with apparent acquiescence. The Mussulmen in the Pettah came out through curiosity to see the procession; but showed no signs of opposition or even discontent at the proceedings. The procession through the gates of Vellore made a beautiful exhibition and the scene altogether was highly interesting. The troops were formed in a square upon the parade of Vellore, and the 59th Regiment in garrison were under arms and lining the ramparts. A profound silence prevailed throughout the Fort, when the shrieks of the women and the cries of their numerous attendants within the Palace, announced that the Princes had taken leave, and were preparing for their departure. Shortly afterwards, thirteen palanquins appeared, and they were carried out through a street formed by a guard of the 59th Regiment, and the troops composing the escort took up their respective stations in front and rear as had been previously arranged ...
The yell and clamour from the Palace, where some thousands of women and servants are still detained, continued for a long time and to a great degree after the Princes were carried out. 27

Yet the Governor's feelings on the matter continued to fluctuate. He still doubted the capacity of the Mysore princes to have constituted a serious military threat to the Company's forces. But, on the other hand, he also viewed as 'feeble' the military means at his disposal for suppressing any further insurrections. He speculated optimistically that 'if the dress constitutes the whole grievance, with the revocation of the orders the effect will most probably cease'. 28 This chronic uncertainty was reflected in the equivocal way in which he concluded his letter to Minto:

I trust that you will be convinced from this detail that our situation is very critical. I feel at the same time a degree of confidence that we shall weather this storm without further difficulty. 29

In fact, this 'degree of confidence' was greatly increased by correspondence which Bentinck had with Thomas Munro, the influential administrator of South India. Bentinck held Munro in high respect, regarding him as a man of outstanding ability. 30 The Governor consequently openly confided to him his fears that a widespread revolt in South India might be imminent:

We have every reason to believe, indeed undoubtedly to know that the emissaries and adherents of Tippoo Sultan have been most active beneath the Ghauts. Great reliance is said to have been placed upon the Gurrumconda Poligars by the Princes.
I recommend you to use the utmost vigilance and precaution; and you are hereby authorised, upon any symptom or appearance of insurrection, to take such measures as you may deem necessary. Let me advise you not to place too much dependence on any of the native troops. It is impossible at this moment to say how far both native Infantry and Cavalry may stand by us in case of need. It has been ingeniously worked up into a question of religion. The minds of the soldiery have been inflamed to the highest state of discontent and disaffection, and upon this feeling has been built the re-establishment of the Mussulman government under one of the sons of Tippoo Sultan. It is hardly credible that such progress could have been made in so short a time, and without the knowledge of any of us.31

In reply, Munro went further than simply calling the conspiracy 'hardly credible'; he actually made it abundantly clear that he did not believe in it at all. Drawing on his far greater experience of the country, Munro instructed the Governor in what he considered the political realities of the situation. He emphasised that he had reached very different conclusions from Bentinck:

On the first alarm of the conspiracy at Vellore, I dispatched orders to watch the proceedings of the principle people at Gurrumconda, for I immediately suspected that the sons of Tippoo Sultan were concerned, and I concluded that if they had extended their intrigues beyond Vellore, the most likely places for them to begin with were Chittledroog, Nundidroog, Gurrumconda and Seringapatam. Gurrumconda is perhaps the quarter in which they would find most adherents, not from anything that has recently happened, but from its cheapness having rendered it the residence of a great number of the disbanded troops of their father, and from the ancestors of Cummer ul Din Khan having been hereditary
killedars of Gurrumconda under the Mogul Empire, before their connection with Hyder Ali, and acquired a certain degree of influence in the district which is hardly yet done away. The family Cummer Ul Din is the only one of any consequence attached by the ties of relationship to that of Tippoo Sultan; and I do not think that it has sufficient weight to be at all dangerous without the limits of Gurrumconda.32

Having thus explained the breadth of his investigations, Munro went on to attack the image presented by Bentinck of a country in turmoil, threatened by revolution. He was convinced from his enquiries that the poligars 'never will run any risk for the sake of Tippoo's family', although he also conceded that there was an element 'that would be well pleased to join in disturbances of any kind, not with the view of supporting a new government, but of rendering themselves more independent'.33

As to what he saw as the real cause of the mutiny, Munro was not reticent in putting forward his own strong opinion. He considered that 'the restoration of the Sultan could never alone have been the motive', and he pointed out the undesirability of such a move to the Hindu sepoys 'who form the bulk of the native troops'.34

In any case, he argued, they had behaved steadily throughout the Mysore wars, so why should they now suddenly withdraw their allegiance on that account? For Munro, the explanation was clear:

The extensive range of the late conspiracy can only be accounted for by the General Orders having been converted into an attack upon
religious ceremonies: and though the regulations had undoubtedly no such object, it must be confessed that the prohibition of the marks of cast was well calculated to enable artful leaders to inflame the minds of the ignorant - for there is nothing so absurd that they will not believe it when made a question of religion.35

Bentinck's shaken confidence was fortified by Munro's opinions and it was given a further boost by the findings of the enquiries conducted into the reported disturbances at Hyderabad and Wallajahbad. Although Colonel Montresor was inclined to believe that a connection had existed between the mutiny at Vellore and the disturbances at his own garrison, no evidence emerged to link the Mysore princes with the Hyderabad discontent.

Montresor's suspicions had been based on the fact that 'the very same reports which were prevalent in the Carnatic were industriously spread here'. Specifically, he believed that fears of compulsory conversion to Christianity were rife. Moreover, these fears had taken a most bizarre form.

It was generally reported and implicitly believed both in the cantonment and in the city that an oracle from one of the neighbouring pagodas had revealed to some favoured person the existence of a considerable treasure in the bottom of a well in the European barracks. Which treasure however would not be discovered until a certain number of human heads had been sacrificed to the titular deity of the well. The Europeans were of course to be employed in waylaying persons by night to cut off the number of heads necessary to discover the treasure. A man who was about that time
found dead near the Residency without his head, and an unfortunate accident by which a drunken artilleryman wounded a native sentry so completely confirmed the absurd rumour that scarcely any native could be prevailed upon to leave his house at night. The workmen at the Residency . . . would not work after four o'clock in the evening, and it was seriously reported . . . that the Europeans had built a Church which it required a sacrifice of human heads to sanctify. At another time it was given out that the Europeans would be ordered to massacre all the natives excepting those who should erect the sign of the cross on the doors of their dwelling. 36

It was also discovered that a member of the Nizam's court, Rajah Rao Rumba, was rumoured to have offered the sepoys great wealth to throw off their allegiance to the British. But no positive proof emerged to substantiate this allegation. Three sardars were, however, found to have been active in causing the unrest in the army. 37

The leader of these was a Subidar named Siddee Hussain. A document was delivered to Colonel Montresor by a loyal sepoy who claimed to have intercepted it at the Nizam's palace. It took the form of a petition, apparently signed by Siddee Hussain, in which he described himself as the 'Chief of the English force' and purported to represent 'all the Subidars, Jemidars and Commandants of the Sepoys of Infantry and Cavalry'. The document invited the Nizam to take up common cause with the sepoys and lend his support to their efforts to overthrow the British:

the English propose to us to receive their faith and to wear the dress of hat-wearers; . . . we will not consent
to depart from the faith of Islaam, or to embrace that of the hat-wearers; we consider Your Highness to be our sovereign; and therefore we represent that if Your Highness will honour us with your orders or communicate your auspicious intention, by going on a hunting expedition, or by going to the Fort of Mahomed-Naggar, that five days after that concerted signal we will extirpate the English, every one and all, by murdering them. We further represent that we have always enjoyed the bounty of Your Highness, and, in the same manner, we hope henceforth to enjoy your support and protection; that excepting your Highness (the shadow of God) there is no one to whom we look up. That after the perusal of this arzee, if our designs should meet with Your Highness's approbation, we request the order may be issued - otherwise that the transaction be kept secret. We swear by the Prophet that it shall not be revealed.38

Captain Sydenham informed the Supreme Government in Bengal of the discovery of the document, but also emphasised that it was impossible to say whether the Nizam had ever actually seen it. Even if he had, there might still be an innocent explanation for his failing to inform Sydenham about it, since he was 'suspicious of every person about him' and 'might be afraid to consult anybody on so delicate and critical a subject'.39

No action was therefore taken against the Nizam. Siddee Hussain and two other sardars were banished to Prince of Wales Island.40 The Nizam had Rajah Rao Rumba imprisoned at Golcondah, and the alarm subsided. Despite the absence of any great amount of evidence to substantiate his opinion, Sydenham affirmed to the Bengal government that there was 'little doubt that the native troops were
ripe for a general mutiny'. Sydenham also reported a consultation with the Nizam's chief minister, Mir Allum, about the disturbances. The Resident considered this official 'distinguished for good sense', and possessed of a mind 'superior to the common prejudices of this country':

the Mir expressed his surprise that after the long experience and intimate knowledge we had gained of the character of the natives of this country, we should have attempted any innovations on such delicate prejudices as were attached to turbands, the Whiskers and Beard and the marks of cast amongst the Hindoos. 41

Bentinck contented himself with issuing a general order to the Subsidiary Force, urging them to return to their former standards of loyalty; emphasising the lenient measures that the Madras government had taken in only acting against three sardars and appealing for 'alacrity in the performance of their duty'.42

The investigations at Wallajahbad proved more complex. Sir John Cradock himself took charge of the enquiries. His Board of Enquiry heard that the immediate cause of the trouble had been the men being inadvertently locked in their barracks. The commanding officer of the battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Bownes, considered that there had been nothing deeper in the men's hostility:

There are no ostensible grounds to occasion a suspicion in my mind of the fidelity and attachment of the battalion under my command ... after that irregularity had ceased the men went to their houses and were at drill the following morning in the usual manner ... Subsequent
to these occurrences a variety of rumours prevailed respecting the intentions of the men to mutiny and murder their officers, but these rumours were so vague and uncertain that I could not give much credit to them. 43

Evidence concerning the alleged intentions of the sepoys to mutiny was heard from the wife of a British officer who was fluent in Malabar. She had heard sepoys 'abusing the service in the vilest language unfit to be repeated'. They had complained particularly of their low rate of pay. One man suggested that the pittance they received was an insult to their profession and that the rupees they received ought to be flung in the faces of their officers. 44

Another witness, an officer's maidservant, believed that the turban had been the source of grievance for the sepoys. She testified to overhearing the troops complaining that its introduction was only the beginning of a plan to make them all Christians. The next thing, they feared, would be to 'order them to sit down at table and eat' with the Europeans. The witness continued:

it has been the common discourse of all the sepoys present, that the sepoys at Vellore had preserved their reputation in fighting and dying at Vellore, but at the same time they were foolish and frustrated their own plans by getting drunk after having killed the Europeans and then allowing the English cavalry to regain possession of the Fort. But had they been there it would not have happened as they would not have got drunk after killing the Europeans but would have plundered every rank, inhabitants and all, of their property, and have taken possession of the hill.
and fought for ten years with the English troops who would never have been able to subdue them. 45

Yet, once again, no real substance could be found to support the allegations. Cradock's report recorded that there were no grounds 'to proceed with severity against this battalion'. 46 The Board of Enquiry conceded that the troops had been in a mutinous frame of mind after their accidental imprisonment, but acknowledged that this appeared to be the only circumstance that had given rise to the sepoys' disaffection. One sepoy was charged with having concealed an intention to mutiny, but that was as far as the disciplinary action went. 47

During the proceedings of the enquiry, Colonel Gillespie expressed once more his disbelief that Colonel Lang had had sufficient grounds to summon the dragoons:

Pray and was this all? If so, you must be responsible to the Commander-in-Chief for giving so severe an alert when so few dragoons exist in this country. 48

The Board did not, however, reprimand Lang. The fact that the 1st/23rd was so closely associated with one of the battalions that had mutinied at Vellore was taken as sufficient reason for his, as it turned out, undue suspicion. Yet Gillespie's obvious irritation with his fellow officer is a further indication of the unrest within the Madras army at this time. Gillespie genuinely believed that there was a danger of further uprisings, yet he evidently thought Lang's behaviour to be so pusillanimous as to invite danger, if only by over-stretching
the Presidency's resources of British troops.

III

While the troubles at Hyderabad and Wallajahbad brought a lull in the dispute between Bentinck and Cradock, this was to prove only temporary. When the report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Vellore mutiny reached the Madras Council, the gulf between their views became apparent once more.

Sir John Cradock had never made any secret of his dissatisfaction with the composition of the Commission. At one point he had requested Bentinck himself to head the Commission. When the Governor had refused to take on this role and had stuck to his original selection of members, the Commander-in-Chief was extremely displeased:

I have no faith in the talents of that commission as a general body... It is ungracious to name individuals but his Lordship in Council, I am persuaded, will acknowledge at a period of the most critical importance to the well-being of the state, that the proceedings of that commission should be guided by a person of acknowledged judgement and free from the imputation of any prejudice. 50

Not surprisingly, Cradock was equally unimpressed with the Commission's report. He considered that 'we do injury to the cause of due investigation if our enquiries cease with the contents of that paper'. 51 Furthermore, he argued that the Commission had misinterpreted the evidence. Cradock remained convinced that the princes had been the prime movers in the mutiny and that they had used the regulations as a pretext to
lead the sepoys away from their allegiance. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the turban or the dress regulations, according to the Commander-in-Chief, but the princes and their adherents had managed to persuade the sepoys that there was. Why else, he asked, should Vellore have been the centre of discontent? He was confident that further investigation would prove him correct and concluded that 'the public eye is beginning to open but it often requires a length of time before the Light of Truth reaches persons of power, or the Government'.

Cradock was absolutely determined that the army should not be blamed for the mutiny, and he sought to keep up pressure for further investigations by recording his views on the matter at every opportunity. At one meeting of the Council, he insisted that:

The great body of intelligence that has come into my hands from the examination of prisoners in various quarters, leads me to draw much stronger conclusions than those that appear in the Report of the Commission and unless these informations be added to the stock of public knowledge, the public mind, or what is of more essential import, that of the rulers of India may remain ignorant of the exact state of their affairs. . . . the disaffection was excited and had its foundation in the artifices of the Princes and their adherents, and when the principle was implanted in the ignorant mind of the sepoys, discontent to a very serious extent arose upon the subject.

Lord William Bentinck, on the other hand, had returned once more to his original belief that the
military regulations had been fully responsible for the revolt. He was now convinced that the role of the princes had been a minor one, and he displayed a degree of confidence in this conviction which totally belied his former equivocation. He now dismissed the subject summarily:

I have never heard that they had any connection with the Presidency; and it is probable that the Moor men here are for the most part the followers and adherents of the Carnatic family, and would be rather hostile than otherwise to the establishment of a government under one of the Sons of Tipoo Sultan. 54

William Petrie, the senior member of the four man Council, in terms of Company service in India, also believed the Commission had not been 'sufficiently comprehensive'. 55 Although the fourth member, Thomas Oakes, supported Bentinck in believing that the Commission's investigations had been executed with 'perspicuity and judgement', 56 Cradock and Petrie insisted that the Commission should reassemble to examine more closely whether Thomas Marriott had carried out his duties competently in supervising the princes. Bentinck attempted to shield the Paymaster of Stipends from this renewed enquiry. He argued that it would serve no useful purpose and claimed that all the European officers at Vellore had been guilty of ignorance. 57 Under pressure, however, he submitted to Cradock and Petrie's demands and, on 29 August, the Commission of Enquiry was reconvened. 58
Marriott's rise to a position of responsibility in the Company army had been rapid. Having enlisted as an ensign in 1791, to have reached Lieutenant-Colonel by 1806 represented a dramatic achievement, particularly in an army where promotions were notoriously slow.  

His knowledge of Indian languages had helped his career considerably. A particularly favourable appointment had been his supervision of two of the sons of Tipu when they had been taken hostage by Lord Cornwallis in 1792. Marriott's early experience of dealing with Abdul Khalick and Moiz-ud-din made him a natural selection for the post of Paymaster of Stipends.

Marriott's private correspondence with his family following the mutiny shows how worried he was about being made to shoulder the major burden of blame for the revolt. On 14 November 1806, he wrote to his mother expressing his great relief at being 'vastly well received' in Calcutta, when he arrived there with the princes' relatives and retinue, who had made the journey from Vellore overland. He also asked his mother to distribute copies of a document which he had sent home giving his full version of events at Vellore. He was especially anxious that his account should be widely circulated since he was aware that the Commander-in-Chief was making every effort to 'shake off the blame, let it light where it will'.

When the Commission of Enquiry met to examine him, Marriott acknowledged that he was 'aware that his innocence and that of the princes may be misleadingly bound together'.

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To prove himself innocent of negligence of duty, he believed it was necessary for him to prove that there had been no conspiracy in the first place. But although Marriott considered that the dress regulations and the turban had been the true cause of the mutiny, he frankly conceded:

I have it not in my power to know distinctly how far all or any of the Princes, Sons of Tippoo, may have been implicated either in planning the scheme for gaining possession of the Fort, or in aiding and abetting the mutineers after they were in possession of it.65

Marriott based his defence simply on the fact that since no information had come to him concerning any conspiracy, there had been no reason to take any particular precautions. The Commission was completely unable to adduce evidence that showed Marriott had been in any way negligent, and he was consequently cleared from blame.66 The verdict was not unanimous, however. One of the members of the Commission, Major Dowse, recorded his dissent from its findings on the grounds that Marriott had failed 'to make adequate use of the powers invested in him to prevent conspiracy'.67

IV

Bentinck meanwhile had decided that the highest priority for the Madras government should be to act to restore the sepoys' confidence in the rule of the Company. To this end, he sought to subordinate clearly the actions of European military officers in matters concerning the
dress of the sepoys, to the overall control of the civil administration. He proposed to proceed first by issuing a general order to the Indian troops. On 26 August, he laid before the Council a draft of an order which he had himself drawn up:

No alteration whatever shall be made in any part of the established pattern dress of the sepoy without the previous sanction of the Governor-in-Council. All the various innovations which have been introduced by Commanding Officers without authority shall cease, on the making up of the next new clothing. The fullest permission shall be given to the sepoys to wear their marks of cast at all times and in any manner they shall think proper. The imposition of any restrictions whatever or the expression of any request upon this subject are positively forbidden. The same full liberty shall be given to the wearing of joys and ornaments to different families and casts. The utmost displeasure of the Governor-in-Council will attach to any Commanding Officer who shall in the most trifling particular deviate from the established regulations respecting dress. 68

In effect, the order amounted to an unequivocal assertion that military regulations had been responsible for the mutiny. Moreover, it represented a public statement of this belief. The order did not, however, win the approval of the Council. The Commander-in-Chief was, of course, totally opposed to the publication of a document which he believed would seriously damage the credibility of the European officers in his army. Such a public reprimand, Cradock argued, could only lead to a further deterioration in the relationship between the European and Indian sections of the army. 69
Cradock found support from the other members of the Council. William Petrie took strong exception to the tone of the order. He questioned whether it would not be better to leave things as they were:

Calling attention to the occurrences which had produced insubordination in some of the battalions, we may revive and keep alive the emotions which were excited at that period. An over­solicitude to concede more than has ever been asked may perhaps produce the very effect we wish to avoid by manifesting suspicion and want of confidence in the native army.

Thomas Oakes was also against the proposed order. He believed that if it were published, the sepoy's imagination would be 'let loose to demand what is neither usual nor proper: he will cease to respect the European officer'. Despite being outnumbered by three to one in his Council, Bentinck's resolution for once did not waver. He continued to argue that such an order was absolutely necessary since he had seen 'nothing to induce me to believe that the orders in question were not the original causes of the disaffection of the sepoys'.

The Governor made it perfectly clear that he was quite prepared to use his prerogative and go ahead with publication without the Council's approval, as it was 'necessary and indispensable to the complete satisfaction of the sepoy and to the prevention of similar calamities'.

After considerable debate, Bentinck agreed to drop from the original draft the paragraph which warned commanding officers as to their future conduct. Although
this concession in no way mollified the Commander-in-Chief, it was sufficient to gain the approval of Petrie and Oakes. On 24 September, the order was published. It amounted to an apology by the Council to the Indian troops for unwarranted interference in their religions and caste obligations.

The aptness of such an apology was not, however, the only matter which divided the Council at this time. There was also the question of how to deal with the many hundreds of prisoners who were still held at Vellore and Madras, and who were suspected of having participated in the mutiny. At Vellore, all those members of the mutinous battalions who had returned, whether voluntarily or by being rounded up by the dragoons, were considered under suspicion of having taken part in the mutiny. Those sepoys who had succeeded in fleeing from Vellore, but who had been captured in the south of the Presidency, had been sent to Madras. The correct way to proceed with regard to these prisoners was a matter for heated debate within the Council.

Almost inevitably, Bentinck and Cradock held opposing views on the subject. The Governor was anxious to discover the exact measure of guilt that attached to each man. He consequently opposed any indiscriminate punishment of the men. Bentinck believed that many, if not the majority, had not taken an active part in the mutiny and were perhaps only guilty of looting, and not of murder. He pointed to the need to take into account the terrible severity of the punishment that had already been meted out...
on the spot by Gillespie's dragoons, and emphasised that the time had come to show some temperance in dealing with the remaining prisoners. 76 Those proved guilty of murder would, of course, be punished, Bentinck asserted, but he felt it necessary to demonstrate to the other sepoys 'that we are punishing murder rather than the resistance to orders which were inconsistent with their most sacred ordinances. That we are vindicating the Law and Justice rather than gratifying revenge'. 77

The Commander-in-Chief, on the other hand, argued that all the prisoners should be banished from India, seeing even this measure 'as a gift to humanity and generous feeling'. To take any less punitive steps, Cradock believed, would be considered 'a proof of weakness, not an exercise of the benevolence of Government'. The matter was not easily resolved. 78 The attempt by Colonel Forbes and Lieutenant Coombs to separate the prisoners according to their differing degrees of guilt had proved unsuccessful, since these officers had found it impossible to establish whether the testimony taken from the prisoners was truthful. 79 Petrie and Oakes once again attempted to occupy middle ground between Bentinck and Cradock, and no final decisions over the fate of the prisoners was taken.

No such stay of execution was allowed to the prisoners who had been found guilty by Courts Martial at Vellore before the Governor had put an end to their sittings. By the middle of September, Cradock was anxious that the death penalties should be implemented. He pressed for a policy
of executing the condemned men at different military garrisons throughout the Presidency. Bentinck would have none of this, however, believing that it might be construed by the sepoys at these garrisons as an insult to their loyalty.

On 23 September, nineteen men, found to have been ringleaders of the mutiny by the military Court of Inquiry and sentenced to death by Court Martial, were executed at Vellore. Included in their number were Subidär Shaik Adam who was blown away from a gun; Jemidar Shaik Khassim, whose confession to Colonel Forbes had provided deep insights into the nature of the conspiracy, and who was hung and his body exhibited in chains thereafter; Shaik Meerah, a naik of the 1st/1st, who was shot by musketry; and Abdul Cawder, naik of the 2nd/23rd, who was 'hung by the neck until dead'. Altogether eight mutineers were hung, six blown from guns and five shot.

An eye-witness's description portrayed the scene, with the sepoys of the garrison at Vellore assembled in ranks to witness the deaths of their comrades:

The names and crimes of the convicts with the sentences of the General Court Martial and warrant for the execution were then read in presence of the troops and interpreted loudly in Moors to all the Sepoys... The sentence appeared to make a great impression on the sepoys in general, but the prisoners were hardened and apparently reconciled to their approaching fate. A gallows was erected on the side of the square which was open to the country, where six field pieces were also drawn out and loaded on the spot and a small
space was left in the centre for a detachment of musquetry. The firing party consisted entirely of Sepoys selected from the two corps which had mutinied. The criminals were then marched out to their respective stations to meet the different deaths which they had been condemned to suffer. Upon a given signal, the general execution took place. . . . Almost all the inhabitants of the pettah were out upon the occasion, and made a violent cry and noise when the explosion took place - but they retired very peaceably after the business was over.84
NOTES to Chapter 5

1 See C.H. Philips, The East India Company 1784-1834, (Manchester, 1961), esp. Chaps. II and VI.


3 Portland PwJb 12, f.15 Cradock to Bentinck, Fort St George, 28 July 1805.

4 Ibid. PwJb 729, f.157 President's Minute to the Political Dept, Fort St George, 22 Jan 1805.

5 IOL Board's Collection 1807-08, Vol. 218, Paper 4795, Bentinck's Minute, Madras, 9 May 1806.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid. Cradock's minute n.d.

9 Ibid. Minute of William Petrie and Thomas Strange n.d.

10 Portland PwJb 726, f.55 Bentinck to Thomas Greville, Fort St George, 1 Dec 1806.


12 HMS Vol. 507, f.539 Montresor to Sydenham, Hyderabad, 23 July 1806.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid. f.545 General Order, Hyderabad, 22 July 1806.

15 Ibid. f.151 Governor-in-Council to Cradock, Fort St George, 4 July 1806.

16 Ibid. f.545 General Order.

17 Ibid. f.529 Sydenham to Secretary of Bengal Govt, Hyderabad, 23 July 1806.

18 Ibid. f.546 Madras Govt to Montresor, Madras, 31 July 1806.

19 Ibid. f.438 Lang to Gillespie, Wallajahbad, 26 July 1806.

20 Ibid. f.439 Gillespie to Cradock, Wallajahbad, 27 July 1806.

21 Ibid. f.443 Evidence of Capt Smith, 1st/23rd, to Court of Enquiry at Wallajahbad.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid. f.481 Cradock's Minute, 29 July 1806.

24 HMS Vol. 508 ff.21-26 Bentinck to Sir George Barlow, Fort St George, 5 Aug 1806.

25 Minto 11648 Bentinck to Minto, Fort St George, 3 Aug 1806.

26 Ibid.

27 NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 Letter from an un-named officer of H.M. 22nd Dragoons, from a camp eight miles east of Vellore, 20 Aug 1806.

28 Minto 11648 Bentinck to Minto, Fort St George, 3 Aug 1806.

29 Ibid.

30 Portland PwJb 729 President's Minute to Secret Dept 12 Feb 1806. Bentinck described Munro as 'one of the ablest men in India, and possessing a degree of local knowledge which no other officer can have had the same opportunity of acquiring'. 
31 Ibid. PwJb 727 f.213 Bentinck to Munro, Fort St George, 2 Aug 1806.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 HMS Vol.509, f.268 Sydenham to Secretary of Bengal Govt, Hyderabad, 22 Aug 1806.
37 Ibid. f.352 Sydenham to Madras Govt, Hyderabad, 14 Sept 1806.
38 Ibid. ff.355-356.
39 Ibid.
40 MSP Vol.21, f.2192 General Order, 24 Sept 1806.
41 Ibid. f.2219 Sydenham to Bengal Govt, 31 Aug 1806.
42 Ibid. f.2192 General Order, 24 Sept 1806.
43 HMS Vol.507, f.563 Proceedings of Court of Enquiry at Wallajahbad, Evidence of Lt-Col Bownes, 30 July 1806.
44 Ibid. f.495 Evidence of Mrs Reviere, 29 July 1806.
45 HMS Vol.508, ff.56-57 Evidence of Alim Sahib.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid. f.579 Proceedings of Wallajahbad Enquiry.
49 Portland PwJb 57, f.286 Cradock to Bentinck, Vellore, 15 July 1806.
50 HMS Vol.508, f.5 Cradock's Minute, 2 Aug 1806.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid. f.507, Bentinck's Minute, Fort St George, 22 Aug 1806.
55 Ibid. f.509, Petrie's Minute, Madras, 21 Aug 1806.
56 HMS Vol.509, Minute of Thomas Oakes n.d.
57 MSP Vol.21, f.1828 Bentinck's Minute, Fort St George, 24 Aug 1806.
59 See R. Callachan, The East India Company and Army Reform, (Harvard, 1972), Chapter I.
61 IOL Eur C.133, ff. 1 and 2 Quoted in Elizabeth Marriott to Warren Hastings, Worcester, 13 April 1807.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 MSP Vol.23, f.2802 Evidence of Thomas Marriott to Commission of Enquiry, 29 Aug 1806.
65 Ibid. f.2806.
67 Ibid.
68 HMS Vol.509 ff.33-34 President's Minute, Fort St George, 26 Aug 1806.
69 Ibid. f.35 Commander-in-Chief's Minute, Fort St George, 26 Aug 1806.
70 Ibid. f.47 William Petrie's Minute, Fort St George, 28 Aug 1806.
71 Ibid. f.145 Thomas Oakes' Minute, Fort St George, 6 Sept 1806.
72 Ibid. f.114 President's Minute, Fort St George, 3 Sept 1806.
73 Ibid.
74 NLS Walker of Bowland 13684, f.50 General Order, Fort St George, 24 Sept 1806.
75 Personal details of the prisoners can be found in MSP Vol.30, ff.1839-2036.
76 HMS Vol.509, f.230 President's Minute, Fort St George, 13 Sept 1806.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid. f.120 Commander-in-Chief's Minute, Fort St George, 5 Sept 1806.
79 Ibid. f.129 Forbes-Coombs to Harcourt, 6 Sept 1806.
80 Ibid. f.105 Cradock's Minute, 2 Sept 1806.
81 Ibid. f.114 Bentinck's Minute, 3 Sept 1806.
83 Ibid.
84 SRO Hannay Collection : Brunton Papers GD214/673, Anonymous.
Chapter 6: The Rift Widens.
The fragile relationship between the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief deteriorated further with the appearance on 21 September of a long and detailed critique by Cradock of the civil government. This took the form of a Minute to the Council on the causes of the mutiny and it included a wide-ranging attack on Bentinck's policies in general. Cradock sought to demonstrate that the unpopularity of civil government in the Presidency had created an atmosphere in which opposition and conspiracy could thrive.

The document was not written solely for the internal consumption of the Madras Council. Cradock was fully aware when he wrote it that a ship was due to leave Madras at the beginning of October taking back to Britain news of the catastrophic mutiny at Vellore and of the enquiries that had been conducted into its origins. He evidently considered it essential for his future career to set out his own views on the matter and to show his conduct of the army in the best possible light. The Commander-in-Chief was prepared to use all means at his disposal to attempt to safeguard his reputation. He consequently sent an edited version of this Minute to the editors of the Asiatic Register in London.

Cradock's aim was first to show that no real objection could be made to the turban, and it is perfectly clear from the text of the Minute that he was no longer prepared to admit, as he had done to Bentinck shortly before the outbreak
of the mutiny, that its introduction was injudicious:

An important distinction exists between articles of dress or regulations that are really in themselves repugnant to the ordinances and dogmas of the people; and those which, in consequence of some extrinsic circumstances, are capable of being rendered disagreeable to the people from the artifices employed by designing persons on their ignorance and credulity.³

The Commander-in-Chief defended his decision to press ahead with the introduction of the turban on the grounds that 'the discipline of the army would be committed and most materially injured by abrogating orders... in consequence of a partial opposition to their execution'.⁴ He pointed out that, in any case, the Court of Inquiry at Vellore in May had passed the turban. It had found there to be no real grounds for objection either in its shape or in its composition. Even Shaik Khassim, who was later discovered to have been one of the leading conspirators, had not spoken against the turban in May. From this, Cradock concluded that mutiny, and not the replacement of a genuinely objectionable item of clothing, had been the aim of the conspirators.

Cradock went on to argue that, in the same way, there was no substance to the complaints that had been heard about the dress regulations. He cited letters from eminent and experienced military officers who had found nothing controversial in the new order for the dress of the sepoys.
For example, he quoted Major-General Dugald Campbell, commanding officer of the Southern Division, as stating that for the last eight years:

the marks of cast have been generally discontinued throughout the army, and I am confidentially assured that many instances have occurred of the Native officers of their own accord chastising sepoys for appearing in the ranks so distinguished.5

The opinion of the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion/2nd Regiment Native Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel Chalmers, was called to the defence of the order concerning caste marks and ear-rings:

I have served in seven different Corps and was Adjutant to two, and I declare that I never saw either large ear-rings or conspicuous marks of cast on a sepoy when on duty . . . . Those officers with whom I have had any conversation on the above subject are of my opinion . . . . It has been the practice so generally for these twenty-nine years back that an order has never been thought necessary to be published on the subject.6

Having demonstrated to his own satisfaction that no intrinsic objection could attach itself to the turban or to the dress regulations, Cradock went on to emphasise that the formal abolition of caste marks and ear-rings was no more than a natural extension of the underlying principles by which he had found the management of the sepoy establishment to have been long governed:

The principles of the conduct of this army have been to maintain the complete ascendancy of authority over the troops; to abolish to the
greatest practicable extent the observance of local usages and ceremonies on duty; and to make a most rigid discipline the foundation of the military character and excellence of the native army. . . . and it has been the object of this system to compensate by the severity of discipline for the want of those energies and qualities of mind in which the Natives of India are deficient. . . . the Brahmin or Rajah Poot is frequently found to stand in the ranks next to the Chuckler or Pariah, whose touch the former considers to be defilement. Sepoys of the highest cast are commanded in the ranks by Native Officers of the lowest, to whom off duty they will scarcely speak. But the Coast Army in consequence of the rigour of its discipline possesses few men of very high cast.?

Cradock, moreover, professed himself at a loss to see any logical connection between the introduction of the new pattern of turban or of the new dress regulations, with the discontent in the army:

On what ground of probability can the introduction of a turban which was received without dissatisfaction by the majority of the Army, and which was requested to be continued by a part of it, to be considered the principle cause of the conspiracy, rebellion and massacre at Vellore, and of the disaffection of the troops at Wallajahbad and Hyderabad? 8

He cited the incident at Wallajahbad in which the local populace had jeered the sepoys for wearing the new turban,9 as a clear indication that the discontent did not emanate from the army alone. This reaction, he argued, could only be understood when viewed within the context of widespread rumours that the British intended
to convert the whole country by force to Christianity. Where could such an idea have possibly had its source, he asked:

If there is an idea remote from all apparent possibility and remote from every direct cause of its being suggested to the people, the intention on the part of Government of converting them to Christianity by force is of that description . . . in no situation have so few measures been pursued by British subjects for the conversion of the people to the religion which we profess. No Englishmen have hitherto been employed on this duty in the Provinces of the Peninsula, and from the almost complete absence of religious establishments in the interior of the country, from the habits of life prevalent among military men, it is a melancholy truth that so unfrequent are the religious observances of officers doing duty with the Battalions that the sepoys have not until very lately discovered the nature of the religion professed by the English.

If the fear of Christianity had not originated in anything that the British themselves had said or done, it must have necessarily have been spread by outside interests, and Cradock stubbornly maintained that:

It is proved by the proceedings of the committee which met at Vellore, that the adherents of the Sons of Tippoo employed the most active measures to propagate these alarms and continually represented to the sepoys that every part of their dress or their discipline constituted emblems of the religion of the Europeans or circumstances intended to facilitate its introduction.11

Furthermore, he believed the discontent in the army had been:

entirely confined to those places of which we had every reason to suppose that a considerable portion of the population had
for some length of time been discontented. To Vellore where a considerable proportion of the population is composed of the adherents of the House of Tippoo. To Hyderabad where the British influence is generally regarded with animosity and jealousy, and where intrigues and factions have always prevailed; to the Triplicane where the families and adherents of the House of Wallajah which is adverse to the transfer of the Carnatic, reside in considerable numbers, and to Native corps that were at Vellore at the time of the insurrection, or had been stationed there for some time previous to that event.12

On these grounds, Cradock rested his defence of his army and the regulations which had been introduced. He now turned to the circumstances which had allowed the seed of discontent sown by the Mysore princes and their adherents to fall on fertile ground. The Commander-in-Chief rounded on the performance of the Madras government, accusing its officers of inefficiency and corruption. British rule, he argued, 'has not hitherto produced the amelioration of the condition, or the improvement of the sentiments of the people towards the British Government, which were anticipated from its operation'.13 Moreover;

Evidence is found in the rapid change of Collectors in the Southern Division of Arcot on avowed grounds of incapacity, oppression or abuse, that the management of this Province has not corresponded with the principles of justice and wisdom. Embezzlement of revenue, the removal of Collectors and the institution of enquiries into the conduct of others, afford reasons for supposing that the administration of affairs in the Southern Provinces has not been conducted with purity and ability; . . . . It is to be apprehended that those causes of discontent have been exasperated by the sudden introduction of a system of revenue,
property and judicature, unknown to the people and adverse to their dispositions. . . . This system has introduced new distinctions of property and new relations between the people and their superiors. It has established the Mahomedan Law which never generally prevailed in the Peninsula, and added to that Law a code of voluminous regulations which the people are incapable of understanding. . . . In an army composed of the natives of the country where it serves, the prevalent sentiments of the people soon become those of the troops.14

This was not the only flaw, however, that the Commander-in-Chief detected in the policy of increasing the power of the civil administration. He argued that:

The authority of the European officers over the Native troops has been in some degree impaired by the interference of zillah and criminal courts, lately established, in the conduct of the Sepoys.15

This had had the effect of dividing the powers formerly exercised by military officers alone, and subjecting 'the Native troops to an authority with the nature and extent of which, they are entirely unacquainted'.

In the particular case of Vellore, there was also the division of command that had led, in Cradock's opinion, to a breakdown in the effective security of the fort:

The Commander-in-Chief is apprehensive that a considerable relaxation of vigilance resulted from this change. Confined to the discipline of the troops, the Commanding Officer was deterred by the fear of being removed from his situation from interfering in the arrangements adopted for the care of the Princes. . . . it appears to the Commander-in-Chief that a plot of that description could not have been carried
Cradock's minute was the work of a man who felt himself in imminent danger of taking the full weight of blame for the mutiny at Vellore. His attempts to discredit the civil government amounted to a blatant and cynical exercise in self-exculpation. Yet it is possible to have some sympathy with the Commander-in-Chief's predicament. Whatever failings he may have had in terms of controlling the day-to-day running of the Madras army, there was no precedent which could have prepared him for the shock of the sheer scale and ferocity of the uprising at Vellore. It is hardly surprising that Cradock was desperate to show that he alone could not be blamed for a catastrophe that had cost around eight hundred lives.

To Lord William Bentinck, however, Cradock's scathing attack on his government's record must have appeared like the dangerous and frenzied attempts of a drowning man to avoid death. Bentinck had no wish to share with the Commander-in-Chief the watery political grave that awaited those found to be responsible for the catastrophe at Vellore. Yet the Governor made no attempt at first to refute Cradock's allegations. It is uncertain whether this was an oversight on his part or whether he believed that the proceedings of the Commission of Enquiry justified his government's handling of the crisis, and so required no further amplification. He did, however, carefully
select the man who was to be responsible for accompanying the accounts of the mutiny to London. Major Leith had experience of both military and civil office. His sympathies in the dispute between the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief lay firmly with Bentinck.

In a letter to his father, Bentinck described his emissary in glowing terms. 'His information is like the precious metals - difficult of extraction but valuable'. At the same time, he asserted that 'I confidently rely on the approbation of the Court of Directors of what has been done'. Leith, however, was less convinced of the security of Bentinck's position for he attached to the official records to be delivered to London a defence of the Government's record against Cradock's scathing assault. As Secretary of the Commission of Enquiry, Leith was well placed to give an opinion on the affair. Rejecting Cradock's criticisms of the civil administration, he indicated that he believed 'military avarice' and 'rapacity' to have dominated government in the Presidency prior to the spread of civil law. Leith stated that the worst of the new breed of civil administrators was still an improvement on their military counterparts:

where the comparison is fairly made between the inexperienced judge and British Collector with the experience and caution that influence the conduct of the Adjutant-General's office and his Excellency's orders, Our Honourable Masters will judge whether or not the Commander-in-Chief deserves that approbation he has indirectly so eminently bestowed on himself at the expense of those whom his ill-directed
sneer has so violently attacked yet so feebly wounded. 19

Leith argued that the true causes of the mutiny were self-evident. He referred to the military's stentorian handling of the original mutiny at Vellore in May, and to the Commander-in-Chief's decision at the beginning of July to withhold publication of the general order reassuring the Indian troops that their religions would be respected:

It is impossible for anyone not to perceive that these two circumstances occasioned the Mutiny, the violent letter of the 7th of May, and the imprudent delay in not issuing the order proposed by the Government. 20

For his own part, Bentinck was initially content to confine his defence against the Commander-in-Chief's strictures to his personal correspondence. He informed Lord Minto:

From the moment of the mutiny it has been naturally the wish of the Commander-in-Chief and the military part of the establishment in general to impress the opinion that the dissatisfaction of the native troops did not take its existence in the orders respecting dress, marks of cast etc. . . . . The complete tranquillity which has followed the revocation of those orders, the very general declaration of the prisoners themselves as to the cause of their dissatisfaction, the report of the Commission, the opinion of this Government confirmed by that of the Supreme Government, and lastly the opinion of Meer Allum, the Minister of the Nizam as stated in Captain Sydenham's dispatch to the Governor-General in Council of the 30th August, positively contradict this mode of reasoning.21
Nevertheless, even to as close a confidant as Minto, Bentinck took the trouble to defend the record of his government. To govern South India effectively, was a very difficult matter. The Carnatic was akin to the Ottoman Empire, 'broken in many pieces with many rival Princes ruling different parts'. Bentinck regarded the establishment of 'general tranquillity' as 'one of the great blessings which the British Government has given to this vast population'. Alongside this achievement, there was also to be considered the great advances that had been made in bringing law and justice throughout the Presidency, 'the great advantage which they have gained is in the justice and comparative moderation which come home to the heart of every man in the country'. Through this, 'complete security both of person and property' had been attained.

The Governor was, however, prepared to acknowledge to Minto that there was some substance to the Commander-in-Chief's allegations concerning corrupt practices amongst a number of revenue officers. But he believed this to be an area in which great progress had been made by his government. Measures had been taken to eradicate corruption:

I hope these practices as they have been most severely checked and dis­countenanced do not any longer exist. The revenues are the most important and interesting branch of our affairs. The happiness of our subjects, and the character and general prosperity of our Government are equally involved in it . . . . I entirely discredit the
fact of disaffection - I speak here of the great mass - that there are many dissatisfied individuals who would be happy in a change is the case in every country.24

When, in Council, Bentinck did finally come to reply to Cradock's minute formally, through a minute of his own, he undertook a detailed refutation of the Commander-in-Chief's allegations. His reply to Cradock's suggestion that the civil government had brought to the country a system of law to which it was not fully accustomed was simply to 'assert that the local institutions have been reformed not subverted by the change of Government. Our merit is that there has been no innovation'.25 The only major change which the Governor acknowledged was the separation of the authority which had previously rested exclusively with the Collector into the joint authority of Collector and Magistrate. Justice, instead of being subordinated to revenue collection, was now set above it in importance. In this way, he argued, corruption had been checked. Bentinck was particularly proud of the zillah courts:

The zillahs in the Circars were established in 1802 and the good effects have been made apparent in the increasing value of property, the decrease of the rate of interest, and the general tranquility.26

The Governor conceded that there had been problems staffing the judiciary with men of sufficient experience for such a responsible task, but he believed that there had nonetheless been a tangible improvement in the
quality of officers involved in comparison to the practice under military authority:

military officers in every station have been in the habit of exercising authority and in many instances very undue authority to the oppression of the people and to the discredit of the British character . . . . The Army, I know will object to the Judicial system, and their objections are in my opinion the strongest proofs, if proofs were wanting, of the necessity of the establishment. 27

As an enthusiastic proponent of the rule of law, it is scarcely surprising that Bentinck should be outraged by criticisms of his innovations. Civil government in the Madras Presidency at this period was still an extremely young and tender plant and Bentinck was very anxious to avoid seeing it scythed down by the criticism of military authorities. Yet there is no doubt that some of Cradock's charges struck home. The Vellore mutiny occurred at a crucial period in the development of the Madras Presidency. One of its effects was to expose ruthlessly the unsettled nature of the struggle between civil and military authority in the Presidency. The clash between the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief thus represented far more than simply a personal battle between the two men.

VI

The polarisation of the views of the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief was now complete. The importance of discovering what had really taken place at Vellore had become secondary to the desire to avoid responsibility
for the mutiny. The response of the two men to the appearance of the Forbes-Coombs report in November was therefore entirely predictable. In contrast to Bentinck's total disdain for the report and its findings, Sir John Cradock was triumphant. He considered that the report exonerated and vindicated the views which he had forcefully maintained ever since the outbreak of the mutiny. He believed that whether the report had been asked for or not was of 'little moment'. It was, he claimed, a 'masterly performance' and 'a document of so much perspicuity and truth'. Far from being inappropriate investigators, as Bentinck had suggested, Forbes and Coombs were, in Cradock's view, 'the two persons most capable to form a clear opinion', and he recommended that copies of the report should be immediately forwarded to the Supreme Government in Bengal and to the Court of Directors in London.

At this point, fresh relevance was added to the argument over the possible existence of a conspiracy amongst the sepoys by renewed reports of unrest in the army. On 18 October, British officers at the garrison of Nundydroog, a few miles north of Bangalore, had barricaded themselves in one of the officers' houses and sent off an urgent request for aid, believing an insurrection to be imminent. A detachment of the 22nd Dragoons had arrived within a few hours from Bangalore, but they had found no trace of any disposition to revolt amongst the sepoys. One of the officers who had taken
this precaution later wrote privately to inform his family of the incident:

we immediately took refuge in a house near the Barracks with plenty of arms and ammunition and remained there all night and part of the next day when a detachment of the 22nd Dragoons came from Bangalore and extricated us from our unpleasant situation. I am detained here as an evidence against some of them, but I know nothing material. 31

Colonel Cuppage, the commanding officer at Nundydroog, was initially suspected of cowardice by the Commander-in-Chief, as it appeared that there had been nothing to justify his precipitate action. But an on-the-spot enquiry assembled evidence which appeared to vindicate him. 32 It was revealed that he had been warned of an impending mutiny by a servant. Moreover, the families of the sepoys had apparently all been sent away from Nundydroog on the day before the alleged mutiny was to have taken place. A sepoy testified that it had been rumoured for several months that Futteh Ali, the nephew of Tipu Sultan, was soon to arrive with a force of Mahrattas and that all sepoys disaffected from the Company's service were to join him. It was also claimed that a number of the Vellore mutineers who had escaped in July were in hiding in the hills and jungle around Nundydroog and that they, too, were ready to join with Futteh Ali. 33

The evidence collected by the enquiry was not specific. No individual sepoys or sardars were shown to have positively planned an insurrection. But Colonel
Davis, the head of the investigating committee, declared himself convinced that Colonel Cuppage had been correct in taking precautions against attack. He pointed to the dangerous precedent of ignoring warnings of imminent mutinies:

It is allowed by every British officer in India, that Colonel Forbes was too incredulous on the 9th of July, in not paying proper attention to the intelligence he received from the Sepoy; for had he done so, the lamentable fate of the Vellore officers could never have taken place. 34

Davis also believed that there were local circumstances which gave Cuppage added grounds for fearing that there may have been substance to the rumour of insurrection:

The union of sentiment between certain head men in this province, and the insurgents at Vellore and Nundydroog... is pretty clearly established... We must likewise recollect that some thousands of our sepoys were formerly in Tippoo's army and actually fought against us. The memory of that Sultan is held in the most profound reverence, whose Fate they cannot forget, and for whose family they preserve the most unbounded attachment.35

Although no action was taken against the sepoys of the battalion which had come under suspicion at Nundydroog, they were lectured by General MacDowall on their 'perfidy and ingratitude'. Disaffected sepoys were given the opportunity of leaving the service there and then. Only eleven men took advantage of the offer,36 but the findings of the committee were sufficient to persuade Sir John Cradock that he had been hasty in condemning Cuppage. One observer stated that 'the report has put the affair in
a proper light, and I understand Sir John now not only acquits the European officers of all impropriety but approves highly of their conduct'. Cradock himself later recorded his 'honourable acquittal of the smallest impropriety' and 'warm renewal of the reputation of Colonel Cuppage for firmness and good conduct'.

The affair at Nundydroog pointed up the dilemma in which the Commander-in-Chief now found himself. Having committed himself to the view that there was a widespread conspiracy against Company rule, he could scarcely blame his officers for their edginess in regard to the behaviour of their Indian troops. Moreover, the argument used by Colonel Davis concerning Forbes' negligence at Vellore was virtually irrefutable. As a result, the incidents which took place in various garrisons of the Madras army between July and December 1806 were an inevitable outcome of the suddenness of the mutiny at Vellore. Nevertheless, before stability returned to the army, Cradock was forced to support the panic-stricken measures of an increasing number of his garrison commanders.

The disturbance at Nundydroog resurrected the fears of British military officers throughout the Presidency. Its most immediate effect was at Bangalore where another detachment of the battalion which had come under suspicion at Nundydroog was stationed. The commanding officer, Colonel Ogg, had been closely monitoring the steadiness of his force before he even heard of the trouble at the nearby garrison. After receiving this disturbing news,
he instigated a full-scale inquiry into the fidelity of his corps, and offered rewards for any pertinent information. It transpired that a letter had been discovered in the lines, preaching sedition to the sepoys and establishing an apparent connection with the family of Purniah, the Dewan of Mysore. Colonel Ogg became extremely concerned about the flow of what he considered to be suspicious fakirs and mendicants through the town of Bangalore. He was convinced that they were the agents by which a conspiracy between the sepoys at Nundydroog and Bangalore was being carried forward. Acting on the testimony of one such mendicant, whom he had arrested, Ogg took the precipitate step of leading a force of sepoys into the palace at Mysore and carrying out a thorough search, in the hope of turning up demonstrably seditious documents. Nothing suspicious was found, however, and, after a detailed inquiry into the behaviour of his sepoys, Ogg admitted that:

nothing beyond suspicion can attach to this part of the Corps and even that is confined to a very small number and I firmly believe that this part of the Battalion has been and still is steady in its fidelity and allegiance to Government.40

Colonel Ogg's actions, however, had created a political storm. Purniah complained bitterly to the British Resident at Mysore, Major Wilks.41 He emphasised the embarrassment and insult which he and his family had suffered as the result of Ogg's heavy-handedness. Wilks had a high regard for the Dewan, who had shown himself to be a capable
administrator and a supporter of British interests. The Resident therefore communicated his anxiety concerning the possible alienation of the Mysore government to Lord William Bentinck. The Governor, in turn, viewed the incident at Bangalore as yet another example of military incompetence, and ordered the removal of Colonel Ogg from his post. Bentinck explained to Wilks that he felt that the dismissal was 'necessary by apparent grounds of the most urgent political expediency', and he lamented Ogg's 'great want both of sense and judgement, and delicacy'.

Instances of reported unrest in the army, however, now began to proliferate. At Wallajahbad, the scene of resistance to the new pattern of turban in June and of Colonel Lang's dramatic plea to Gillespie's 19th Dragoons in July, renewed concern was expressed by British officers about the fidelity of the Indian troops. Lang reported to Cradock that a servant had informed him that the 1st Regiment was once again exhibiting unmistakable signs of hostility towards its European officers.

Cradock gave Lang permission to march the regiment away from the rest of the garrison at Wallajahbad and to have their behaviour observed in safer surroundings. One officer of the 2nd/1st, Major Haslewood, was particularly convinced that it was the Muslim part of the battalion which was causing the unrest. He claimed to have established a good relationship with the Hindus in his Company, and through them had been kept informed of the
progress of attempts by the Muslims to spread disaffection throughout the Corps. Haslewood had no doubts of the danger to the European officers:

Before the end of October I returned to my station at Wallajahbad, and on the very day of my arrival . . . could perceive that the conspiracy among the troops had not only revived, but had assumed a most active and alarming state. I could perceive that the spirit of corruption had been most actively at work in my own Battalion, and that it was in a state ripe for revolt.46

Even after the 2nd/1st had returned to their garrison, Haslewood continued to stress his conviction that a conspiracy against the European officers was being conducted in his corps. So insistent was he in his complaints, both to his commanding officer and directly to the Madras Council, that the Government reluctantly agreed to appoint an officer to investigate the strength of the evidence on which Haslewood's fears were based.47 Lieutenant-Colonel Munro was dispatched to Wallajahbad for that purpose. He decided after his inquiries, however, that 'the information communicated to Major Haslewood was considerably exaggerated'. Munro agreed that there had been meetings held under cover of darkness which could be seen as suspicious, and that the men, 'after they had intoxicated themselves with arrack or bang', had discussed the events at Vellore, but he concluded that there was no evidence that any kind of plan to emulate their comrades had emerged. On the contrary, the 'native troops . . . were in general well-affected to the service'.48
News was also received in Madras of another alarm amongst British officers. This time the incident had taken place at Palamcottah, some three hundred miles south of Madras. As at Nundydroog, there were clear signs that the officers had acted in panic. As at Nundydroog, also, the anxieties of the officers were transmitted to another garrison.

In this instance, which took place towards the end of November, the commanding officer at Palamcottah, Major Welsh, had become increasingly convinced that the sepoys of his corps were on the point of breaking their allegiance and mounting an attack on their officers. Tension in the garrison was increased by the discovery of blood stains on the door of the Protestant church in the fort. There were also wild rumours amongst the sepoys that a ghost was haunting the fort. This strange atmosphere no doubt contributed to the general uneasiness, but Welsh had already shown himself to be of a nervous disposition. In July, immediately after the mutiny at Vellore, he had over-reacted to having seen a sepoy on guard apparently loading his musket. Welsh had immediately fetched a detachment to seize and examine the guard's musket. It transpired that he had been wrong; the guard had been merely cleaning his weapon. Welsh's suspicions concerning the attachment of his corps remained, however. On 23 July, he had taken the extraordinary step of dismissing from the service one hundred and sixty-one of the latest recruits on the grounds that he believed them potentially unreliable.
On 20 November, convinced by the evidence of one of his servants that the Muslim part of the corps were plotting to murder the European officers, Welsh arrested his sardars and disarmed the Muslim troops. His letters demonstrate that this was not merely a precautionary measure. He was certain that murder was intended. He informed the British garrison at Quilon, one hundred and fifty miles away to the west, of his action:

We have discovered and defeated a plot to murder us all and you may rely on the same fate intended for you. Five of us marched boldly to the Barracks, secured the arms, seized twenty ringleaders, Native Officers, and disarmed 450 Moormen in five minutes... the followers of the false Prophet are unanimously corrupted. 52

The sepoys and sardars submitted to this indignity without the least sign of resistance. Palamcottah was so isolated in its situation that it would have taken several days for the nearest detachment of dragoons to have been alerted and ridden to the relief of the garrison. Had the sepoys intended mutiny and massacre, it could all have been accomplished with great ease. Welsh's anxieties were in no way diminished by the lack of resistance to his measures, however. In panic, he sent off an urgent plea for assistance to his nearest point of succour, the crown colony of Ceylon:

By a miraculous effort we have discovered and quelled a mutiny at this place... but from the nature of a plot understood to be in great forwardness all over the Coast, we think it absolutely
necessary to apply to you for immediate succour . . . a few companies of Europeans for a rallying point may prove the means of saving Company's territories all over the Coast . . . . A European succour alone can complete the work which under Providence we have so fortunately begun. 53

In Ceylon, the Governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, found himself unable to ignore the passionate tones of Welsh's appeal for aid. Despite the fact that he considered his own territory to be dangerously short of British troops, he sent a detachment of two hundred men to Palamcottah. 54 As at Nundydroog and at Wallajahbad, when the relief force arrived they found nothing for them to do. At Quilon, meanwhile, Lieutenant-Colonel Grant had received Welsh's letter warning him of possible danger to his garrison. On the strength of Welsh's advice, Grant also disarmed his Muslim troops. 55

The Madras government was incensed by these incidents. The policy of singling out Muslims for suspicion was particularly frowned upon, and Bentinck was not slow to express his sentiments on the subject:

_His Lordship in Council is particularly disposed to consider the measure of separating the Mussulmen from the Hindoo troops to have been highly injudicious, from its obvious tendency to create those sentiments of jealousy and distrust which must be destructive of the discipline and welfare of the Army._ 56

Bentinck was as much angered by Lieutenant-Colonel Grant's action at Quilon as he was by Welsh's behaviour. In informing the Resident at Travancore of his action, Grant
had complimented the sepoys of his corps for their steadiness while being disarmed.\textsuperscript{57} In Bentinck's view, this assurance on Grant's part merely underlined the unwarranted nature of such action in the first place. Bentinick also found himself forced to apologise to Maitland for Welsh's unnecessary demand:

There appears not to have been any grounds for alarm in either case. I am sorry to say that the officers have lost confidence in their men and till that is restored we shall be exposed to these alarms. ... but the Empire is safer in my opinion than ever it was at any former period. The fever that has seized some of the Native Troops is subsiding fast and I am convinced that the bad countenance of the European officers alone keeps it up.\textsuperscript{58}

The severe and highly unusual step of issuing a public reprimand to Lieutenant-Colonel Grant was taken. A General Order was published to the army in which the Governor in Council expressed his 'utmost concern' at the measures taken by Grant. The Order stated that Grant had acted under an 'erroneous distrust of the fidelity' of the sepoys, and emphasised that Grant's 'unauthorised' action had 'excited the greatest regret in his Lordship's mind'.\textsuperscript{59} Bentinick also expressed his disgust to the Governor-General, Sir George Barlow, characterising the officers concerned as being 'in the highest degree culpable'.\textsuperscript{60} Barlow agreed with Bentinick and recommended that Welsh and Grant be court-martialled.\textsuperscript{61}

Along with the disturbance at Palamcottah came news
of incidents at Sankerrydroog, Bellary and Mangalore. At Sankerrydroog, British officers had once more become suspicious of the behaviour of their force. Permission was requested to be allowed to open the men's mail to check for any seditious ideas that might be being spread in the garrison. The Council withheld such powers, however, believing it totally unwarranted, judged by the very shaky evidence on which the officers were basing their fears. There was no act of disloyalty perpetrated.62

At Bellary, the problem was somewhat different. It appeared that a number of fakirs and mendicants were engaged in attempting to undermine the religious beliefs of the sepoys. The fakirs, who had gained some support from within the army, were reputedly advocating that all formal religion should be abandoned, that there was no difference between good and evil, and that the Koran should be 'thrown away into the water'. The European officers were concerned that the morale of the men might be affected by these 'pernicious doctrines'. There was also the danger that in some way these doctrines could become associated in the sepoys' minds with a fear of compulsory conversion to Christianity. Yet another inquiry was instigated. This time a subidar and a sepoy were charged with helping to spread the fakirs' message, and, as a result, dismissed from the Company's service.63

At Mangalore, the reported incident must have seemed to Bentinck an ironic parody of all the discontents that had been reported since the mutiny at Vellore. In this
case, a British commanding officer had become mentally unbalanced from his conviction that a mutiny was imminent. His behaviour towards the sepoys had become so hostile as to arouse fears on the part of the local magistrate and the second-in-command that the Colonel would provoke the very insurrection which he wished to avoid. The magistrate appealed successfully to the Council for permission to remove the Colonel from his post on account of his 'deranged state of mind'.

This new wave of unrest in the army, whether from causes real or imagined, undermined Bentinck's fragile confidence in the stability of the Presidency. Although he assured Maitland that 'the Empire is safer in my opinion ... than ever', his actions suggested that the reverse was closer to the truth. The Governor was genuinely concerned about the influence of fakirs and mendicants in spreading sedition. Despite his disgust for the general behaviour of many military officers during the crisis, he was prepared to give extraordinary powers to the army to arrest and try by court-martial any persons whom they suspected of behaving in a way detrimental to the army or the government.

For once, Bentinck's proposals won the unanimous support of the Council. William Petrie was of the opinion that the disturbances in the army had arisen out of 'fear and apprehension' on the part of the sepoys, and that it would therefore be beneficial to eliminate agents engaged in spreading unsettling rumours concerning the intention
of the government. Moreover, he believed 'the zillah courts, the Magistrates and Police Paeons are . . . incapable of quelling the present disorders'.

The Commander-in-Chief was naturally content to support any measures that increased the powers of the military, but he maintained his view that their recent bout of disorders simply confirmed his long-held conviction that there was a conspiracy amongst the sepoys to overthrow the British.

The Courts-Martial of Major Welsh and Lt-Col Grant in March 1807, however, kept the matter in the public eye. Each officer based his defence against the charges of 'unofficerlike and precipitate conduct disreputable to the Military Character' on the dangers of ignoring any possible threat of treachery amongst the sepoys. The notorious example of Colonel Forbes at Vellore was once again cited. Although no concrete evidence was brought to show that there had been any cause for alarm at Palamcottah, and although at Quilon Grant had acted purely on Welsh's advice without making any investigation into his force, both men were honourably acquitted. Raising the spectre once more of Forbes' mistake at Vellore, Grant pleaded that, if he were found guilty, 'then indeed will bloody treason flourish over us for no-one here-after will dare to oppose the wiles of lurking treachery'.

Bentinck had no choice but to accept, reluctantly, the verdict of the courts-martial. But while he was
unable to quarrel with the acquittal on purely military grounds, he made it plain that he disapproved of their actions from a political point of view. In an attempt to reassure the sepoy establishment and to indicate that the actions of the two officers had not been vindicated, the Governor published a General Order to the army which stated that no suspicions were held of its soldiers' allegiance. 72

VII

The state of the army continued to dominate the affairs of the Madras government for the first few months of 1807. Bentinck, who wished for nothing more than a period of prolonged tranquility to allow the sepoy establishment to return to its former loyalty, was particularly irritated by what he considered unjustified panic on the part of numerous military officers. He accused the army of being 'haunted with this Mussulman conspiracy'; he believed that 'every trifling circumstance that usually passes without notice at other times was magnified into conspiracy'. 73 The Governor gloomily ruminated on the collapse of morale amongst the European officers and averred that 'Palamcottah and Quilon had more the appearance of insurrection of the officers against the sepoys than of the latter against the former'. 74

Sir John Cradock's continuing need to defend both his actions and those of his subordinates began to weigh heavily on his mind. It led him to take a similarly pessimistic view of the state of affairs in the Presidency:

It has been my misfortune (and the source
Indeed, the Commander-in-Chief's utterances on the subject from this period onwards suggest strongly that he had begun to fall into a deep depression. Bentinck continued to present to his Council detailed criticisms of the conduct of military affairs, from the outbreak of the first mutiny at Vellore onwards, and there is no doubt that Cradock began to believe himself the victim of persecution. His responses to Bentinck's attacks became increasingly sardonic and wearied. He vowed that 'nothing should drag me again into the worn-out subject of Vellore, upon which no light can possibly be thrown, and having long since fatigued the attention of the world, can no longer answer any purpose but that of self-exculpation'. As for the Governor's strictures on the advantages of civil over military authority, Cradock believed that:

Whoever conceives that Institutions built on their native excellence will alike prosper in India as in England may equally believe that the same seed will bear in every ground.

In lighter vein, he remarked that Bentinck's allegations against military officers would be enough to 'set the honest English populace at one's heels'.

The Commander-in-Chief was anxious to maintain a good relationship with Bentinck in private, even if this was not possible in public utterances. He wrote regularly to
Bentinck, continually expressing his hope that the matter would be allowed to rest. After one of their clashes in Council, Cradock wrote privately to Bentinck bemoaning bitterly the rivalry between himself and the Governor: 'My God are these cursed minutes never to have an end — I trust that these may be the last in the style of contention!' 79

The disturbance of Palamcottah did in fact prove to be the last of these crises of confidence in the Madras army. By April, the effects of the Vellore Mutiny were beginning to lessen both in the Presidency's army and in its government. The six months time-lag between India and Britain, however, meant that official word of the mutiny only arrived at the headquarters of the East India Company in London in February 1807. The impact of this sensational news was tremendous, and it led to profound repercussions for both the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief.
NOTES to Chapter 6

1. NLS Walker of Bowland 13844, ff.1-44 Commander-in-Chief's Minute 21 Sept 1806.
2. Published in slightly modified form in Asiatic Register 1807 (London).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. Lt-Col Chalmers to Cradock, 28 Aug 1806.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. NLS Walker of Bowland 13844 Commander-in-Chief's Minute, 21 Sept 1806.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Portland PwF 1203 Bentinck to his father, Fort St George, 17 Sept 1806.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid. f.46.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
26. Ibid. f.588.
27. Ibid. f.600.
28. MSP Vol.27, f.82 Bentinck's Minute, 4 Jan 1807.
29. Ibid. f.89 Cradock's Minute, 4 Jan 1807.
31. IOL Goodbehere Papers. Lt Goodbehere to his uncle, Nundydroog, 22 Feb 1807.
34. Ibid. f.2930 Evidence of Col Davis, Bangalore, 4 Nov 1806.
35. Ibid. f.2935.
36. Ibid. f.2982 MacDowall to Agnew, Bangalore, 2 Nov 1806.
37. NLS Walker of Bowland f.321, Unsigned account, Bangalore, 24 Oct 1806.
38. MSP Vol.23, f.3006 Cradock's Minute, Madras, 9 Nov 1806.
39 Ibid. f.3240 Col Ogg to Cradock, Bangalore, 22 Nov 1806.
40 MSP Vol.25, f.4175 Ogg to MacDowall, 23 Nov 1806.
41 Ibid. f.3867 Wilks to Bentinck, Mysore, 15 Nov 1806.
42 Ibid.
43 Portland PwJb 727, f.298 Bentinck to Wilks, Fort St George, 25 Nov 1806.
44 MSP Vol.25, f.3210 Captain Hughes to Cradock, Wallajahbad, 15 Nov 1806.
45 MSP Vol.23, f.3375 Cradock to Lang n.d.
46 SRO Melville Castle Muniments GD 51/3/447 Haslewood to Hall Plumer, Madras, 2 Mar 1807.
47 Portland PwJb 264, f.669 Madras Govt. to Munro, 2 Dec 1806.
48 Portland PwJb 58, f.3840 Military Correspondence, Lt-Col J. Munro's Report on the state of affairs at Wallajahbad, 17 Dec 1806.
50 HMS Vol.507, f.607 Col Dyce to Assistant Adjutant-General, Trichinopoly, July 1806.
51 Ibid.
52 Portland PwJb 264 Major Welsh to Lt-Col Grant, Palamcottah, 20 Nov 1806.
54 SRO Melville Castle Muniments GD 51/3/433 Major Buchan to his father, Colombo, 26 Nov 1806.
55 Ibid. f.931 Grant to Agnew, Quilon, 28 Nov 1806.
56 Portland PwJb 264, f.676 Madras Govt to Dyce, 25 Nov 1806.
57 MSP Vol.24, f.3076 Grant to Lt-Col Macaulay, 27 Nov 1806.
58 Portland PwJb 727, f.305 Bentinck to Maitland, Fort St George, 8 Dec 1806.
59 NLS Walker of Bowland 13684, f.63 General Order, Fort St George, 3 Dec 1806.
60 MSP Vol.24, f.3684 Bentinck to Barlow, Fort St George, 10 Dec 1806.
61 Portland PwJb 264, f.677 Barlow to Bentinck, Calcutta, 29 Dec 1806.
64 MSP Vol.25, f.4181 T. Keule to Madras Govt, Mangalore, 19 Dec 1806.
65 Portland PwJb 727, f.305 Bentinck to Maitland, Fort St George, 8 Dec 1806.
66 MSP Vol.23, f.3381 Bentinck's Minute, 29 Nov 1806.
67 Portland PwJb Petrie to Bentinck, Madras, n.d.
68 MSP Vol.23, f.3343, Cradock's Minute, 27 Nov 1806.
70 Ibid. ff.871 and 1022 Verdicts on Welsh and Grant.
71 Ibid. f.945 Grant's statement at his Court Martial. 9 - 15 March 1807.
Ibid. ff.1025 - 1035 Minute and General Order by Bentinck, Madras, 20 March 1807.

MSP Vol.27, f.116 Bentinck's Minute, 6 Jan 1807.

Ibid.

Ibid. f.131 Cradock's Minute, 6 Jan 1807.

MSP Vol.28, ff.608-609 Cradock's Minute, 28 Feb 1807.

Ibid. f.612.

Ibid.

Portland PwJb 12, f.217 Cradock to Bentinck, 27 Feb 1807.
Chapter 7: Consequences of the Vellore Mutiny.
The Vellore mutiny brought Indian affairs to a position of unaccustomed prominence in Britain. First unofficial reports of the revolt began to arrive in London towards the end of December 1806. These referred to a massacre having taken place in Madras in which many British lives had been lost. On 9 January, The Times published a copy of a letter from a British officer in Madras to a friend in Edinburgh, which contained a detailed account of the mutiny. The letter accurately stated that fifteen European officers had perished, but it made no estimate of the losses among the rank and file. Six hundred sepoys were said to have been cut down in the storming of the fort by the Dragoons, with a further two hundred being 'taken from hiding places' and shot. Colonel Gillespie was stated to have been on the point of leading a bayonet charge when the 'galloper guns' arrived and pre-empted the need for such heroics.

The correspondent did not shrink from allocating blame for the mutiny. He roundly condemned Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott for 'want of due vigilance' and had no doubt that the Mysore princes had been behind the revolt. The dress regulations were mentioned as a secondary cause, and the writer was of the opinion that Bentinck had acted 'wisely' in rescinding these orders after the mutiny.

Rumours circulated in Britain to the effect that the fighting at Vellore had been only the first shots in a far wider rising by the Indians against the British. Even
the receipt of the official papers from Bengal did little to quieten the anxieties of those most concerned with India. On 25 March there was an exchange in the House of Commons between Sir Philip Francis and George Tierney, President of the Board of Control. Francis had apparently heard some news of the disturbance at Palamcottah:

If the private accounts he had received were true, what had passed at Vellore was more dangerous than ten battles lost. But if he was not ill-informed, advices had been received officially of so late a date as within a few days of another transaction which had taken place in the Carnatic, which had filled the Government of Madras with alarm and dismay. He had been informed that General Maitland, the Governor of Ceylon, had received orders from the Madras Government to furnish with them with all the forces he could spare— not less than 4000 he understood had been demanded. . . . If the private advices he had received were true, our power in India might be said to be very greatly decreased, if not almost at an end.6

It is likely that Francis owed his information, either directly or indirectly, to the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Thomas Maitland, who had made no secret of his disgust at the Madras government's handling of the crisis. Maitland's gloomy prognostications on the state of affairs in the Madras Presidency had evidently arrived in Britain by this time, and had possibly been bolstered by other private accounts of the incident at Palamcottah.7 Tierney refused to discuss the matter in Parliament, however, and attempted to soothe Francis' anxieties:

respecting the transaction at Vellore, the East India Company were in full possession of papers on that event, and
the Hon. Baronet might, by moving for any such as he thought requisite, obtain all the information he could wish for. With regard to the ... question relative to the Carnatic he assured the Hon. Baronet his information was erroneous. There had been no application from the Government of Madras to General Maitland to send all the forces he could spare. A certain officer in the Southern part of the Peninsula had applied to Gen. Maitland for a small force.

At Leadenhall Street, the Court of Directors of the East India Company appointed one of their number, George Holford, to hold an enquiry into the mutiny. Effectively this meant that it was his duty to sift through the accounts of the mutiny that had arrived in Britain and evaluate their contents. Inevitably, Holford was dependent on the official papers of the Madras Government. As these had been examined by the Supreme Government in Bengal before being despatched to London, the opinions of the Governor-General, Sir George Barlow, were also included in the papers. As a faithful Company servant over many years, his views may well have carried considerable weight in influencing Holford's conclusions.

Barlow was not prepared to admit the possibility of the existence of a conspiracy against the British in South India. He argued instead that the mutiny had arisen solely out of the military regulations, which he considered 'unfortunate'. In a minute which he presented to his Council on 11 August 1806, Barlow issued a disdainful rebuff to Bentinck and Cradock:
The Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Fort St George are probably not yet aware of the sudden and violent effects of the slightest appearance of a violation of sacred prejudices among the natives of India. They are disposed therefore to ascribe to distant and unknown causes that disaffection of which, to a certain extent at least, they must admit to be proximate and certain.  

Barlow's own personal position may have influenced his stance towards the Madras Government, however. Although the incumbent of a highly prestigious post, Barlow was a Company servant without a private income. He must have been well aware that suggestions that India was in any way politically unstable might well count against him. Certainly his observations betray an anxiety to dissociate himself from Bentinck and Cradock and to underplay their concerns. Considering that he had not himself visited Madras since the mutiny and that he was relying purely on accounts sent to him by the Madras government, his opinions on the affair are surprisingly strong.

Whatever Barlow's motives for criticising his colleagues at Madras, there is no doubt that George Holford's report reached the same conclusions. Holford saw his brief as 'endeavouring to form a judgement of the degree of blame to be imputed to the several individuals exercising the functions at Fort St George'; and he decided that the government was:

not warranted in considering the mutiny as the result of a long and deep laid conspiracy having for its
object the entire overthrow of the British power and the restoration of a Mahomedan Government, but that it is fully accounted for by the regulations in respect to the dress of the sepoys. 14

Moreover, Holford accused the Madras Government of negligence in dealing with this very delicate area of relations with the Indian troops:

the great error of Government . . . appears to have been their resting satisfied with the information contained in the former trials at Vellore (in which the turband had been stated to be free from objection) instead of looking further and more seriously into the subject. 15

The Court of Directors accepted the verdict of Holford's report. By the end of April it had been decided that heads must roll for what was believed to be the inadequacies of the Madras government's handling of the whole affair. A directive was composed and sent off to Madras, containing the resolutions of the Court. 16

Irritation at the apparent negligence of those concerned in the control of the army and its regulations was strongly expressed:

We are at a loss to understand how any of our servants, those especially in the first station of the civil and military departments and the officers acting immediately under them could be so little alive, as they appear to have been, to the feelings of the natives in whatever concerns their casts. 17

Cradock's efforts to prove that he had not been in any way responsible for the mutiny were in vain. The Commander-in-Chief was dismissed for being simply
'unacquainted with the state of his own army'. The Adjutant-General, Colonel Agnew, and his deputy, Major Pierce, who had both been deeply involved in framing the military regulations, were also recalled. Their conduct, the Court stated, attracted 'the highest disapprobation'. Other military officers to be reprimanded were Colonel Forbes, for ignoring Mustapha Beg's warning, and Colonel Darley, for heavy-handed behaviour towards the men of his battalion, the 2nd/4th Regiment, during the first mutiny at Vellore. Both of these officers, however, escaped being dismissed from their posts. Lieutenant-Colonel Marriott escaped censure completely, a strong indication of the Court's unwillingness to accept that the princes had played any very serious part in the mutiny.

On the civil side, William Petrie was censured. His fault, according to the Court of Directors, had been his failure to use his long experience of service in India to foresee that controversial regulations might lead to trouble in the army. The fact that Petrie expressed his distaste for the regulations to the Madras Council a few days after the mutiny was actually held against him by the Court, since it was regarded as a case of being wise after the event.

The most controversial of the measures taken by the Court, however, was to recall Bentinck. The Governor knew, of course, that his position in Madras would come under some pressure as a result of the Vellore mutiny, but he had been hopeful that he would survive. As early
as September 1806 he had written to his father stating his confidence that the Court of Directors would thoroughly approve of his handling of the crisis. He even expressed his determination to 'solicit the nomination to succeed provisionally to the Supreme Government'.

By December 1806, Bentinck's confidence had waned somewhat. He had received word that his close friend, Lord Minto, had been offered and had accepted the Governor-Generalship. Minto had in fact been drafted in at short notice to replace the previous nominee, Lord Lauderdale, due to changes in the British Government. Minto explained to Bentinck that the post of Governor-General was a 'situation which so far from seeking, I thought a week before no human persuasion could have led me to undertake'.

The fact that he himself had not even been considered for the post was a blow to Bentinck and he began to doubt whether he would be able to survive his own personal political crisis. His correspondence regarding his prospects gradually became more circumspect. In December he wrote to Thomas Grenville, Minto's successor at the Board of Control, tentatively setting out his future plans for the Presidency but adding the proviso, 'If I am permitted to remain in India which the aspect of things confirmed by reports had seemed to make doubtful'.

Yet Minto's appointment also gave some encouragement to Bentinck, and there is no doubt that Minto made every
effort to save the reputation of his friend. The new Governor-General had no sooner arrived in Madras than he was sending back soothing reports concerning the political stability of the Presidency to the Court of Directors in London. He assured Edward Parry, Chairman of the East India Company, that:

I am happy to find the uneasiness which had been occasioned by the calamitous and alarming events at Vellore, entirely subsided, and to add that ample supplies of rice furnished by the Supreme Government in Bengal, have removed all anxiety concerning the consequences which had been apprehended from the failure of the crop in these provinces. 28

Minto was at pains, however, to establish a good working relationship with both the civil government and the military authorities. He consequently took a very diplomatic view of the causes of the mutiny, presumably in an effort to take some of the heat out of the feud between Bentinck and Cradock. Indeed, Minto's even-handed assessment of the causes of the mutiny sounds remarkably like an attempt to find a solution that would allow both the antagonists to save face:

It does not appear to me at all established, either by the events themselves, or by any information hitherto obtain'd that the proposed changes of dress and turband would have excited any very serious opposition, if that occasion had not been most diligently and actively improved by the partizans of Tippoo's family. Nor, on the other hand, is there any reason to believe that the revolt was founded in any attachment of the sepoys to that family and its cause, or that the Mysore Princes would have
succeeded in any attempt to seduce them, without the pretext which these novelties supplied.  

Minto's concern over Bentinck's future was clearly visible, however, in the glowing personal tribute which he accorded the Governor, and which was no doubt intended to discourage any move in Britain to unseat Bentinck:

I brought with me a very high esteem, and not of a very late origin for Lord William Bentinck... I continue to think that no man is better entitled to the confidence of the E.I. Company and of Government, and that the important trust now reposed in him can be committed to no hands more securely and advantageously for the public interest than in his. No man can possess a more pure and honourable mind, a more anxious solicitude for the public interests, a chosen application to his duties, or a better and more temperate judgement to direct his zeal and exertions.  

But Minto's eulogy was in vain. By the time it arrived in Britain, indeed by the time it was composed, the decision to dismiss Bentinck had long since been taken. The exact wording of the dismissal was somewhat enigmatic. Confidence in the Governor, it was said, had become gradually impaired over the period of the last year, and when this was connected to the events at Vellore, it was felt that there was no alternative but to replace him.  

Historians have been divided about the precise significance of the Vellore mutiny in accounting for Bentinck's recall. The nineteenth century writer, Peter Auber, who was well acquainted with the workings of the East India Company from first-hand experience, believed
that official disapproval of the *riotwari* system of land settlement, about which Bentinck was so enthusiastic, was the basis for the Governor's unpopularity and consequent dismissal. He also blamed Bentinck's long-running dispute with the Madras judge, Sir Henry Gwillim, over the policing of the Presidency. Gwillim, Auber believed, may have represented 'the resentment of private traders, shopkeepers, and other independent Europeans against the hardening of Company rule'.

Bentinck's most recent biographer, John Rosselli, also feels that Bentinck was 'in serious trouble even before the Vellore mutiny sealed his disgrace', and argues that the specific causes of that trouble were many and various:

> In 1805-1807 the Court found reason to censure him on one count after another . . . . Thus he had raised some salaries and allowances, gone to see Wellesley without permission, refused to dislodge on the Court's orders the Eurasian Thomas Warden from the principal collectorship of Malabar, and continued to favour the Munro school (already under fire from the Court in his predecessor's time). Bentinck, in other words was censured for what he thought his best acts, his pursuit of raiyatwari in particular. A further count against him was the Government Bank, and so were quarrels in the Madras Council with their train of private letters to friends in the Direction. Even before the news of Vellore the Court was on the verge of recalling Bentinck.

Yet living under the almost constant threat of recall was more or less a condition of Indian service at high levels of government at this period. Bentinck himself was of course well aware that many of his policies
had met with opposition from within the Court of Directors. Moreover, he knew that the Vellore mutiny could easily be used as a lever by his opponents to remove him from office. It is significant that Bentinck warned his emissary, Major Leith, that it would be necessary to defend the government's record as a whole and not solely to deal with the matter of the mutiny. Bentinck himself was particularly concerned that the riotwari settlement might have attracted a good deal of criticism, and he urged Leith to emphasise the success of the system in pacifying the poligars and laying a safe foundation for the future prosperity of agriculture. Bentinck also feared that his judicial system might be criticised: he asked Leith to highlight the fact that the system did no more than implement the policy first laid down by Lord Cornwallis.

Notwithstanding these factors, there can be little doubt that it was the mutiny itself which led directly to Bentinck's recall. The dramatic impact in Britain of the massacre at Vellore, allied to rumours of further disturbances in the Presidency army, prompted the Court of Directors to take rapid steps towards, as they believed, rectifying the incompetence of their employees in Madras. They may also have been strongly influenced by Thomas Maitland's opinions.

Maitland had found himself drawn involuntarily into the affairs of the Madras Presidency. He had twice been the recipient of desperate pleas from the Presidency to send British reinforcements. On each occasion he had responded by sending several hundred of his highly-valued...
British force, although, ironically, when he himself had feared for Ceylon's security earlier in the year, the Madras government had refused his request for aid.

The whole question of reinforcements pointed up the rather delicate relationship between Ceylon, as a Crown colony, and the Madras presidency, as a possession of the East India Company. Maitland considered that requests for aid from the mainland of India put him in a dilemma. When, in August, in reply to Bentinck's appeal, he had sent four hundred men to Madras Maitland had explained to Bentinck: 'possibly your Lordship may think I have done too little, I am sure His Majesty's Government will think I have done too much'.

There is no doubt, however, that the situation on the mainland was of great concern to the Governor of Ceylon. In September 1806, Maitland wrote a long and detailed account of his anxieties on this matter to Lord Minto (whom Maitland believed to be still the President of the Board of Control but who had in fact already been appointed to succeed Sir George Barlow as Governor-General in Bengal). Maitland believed that the mutiny at Vellore was a warning that the British in India ought to take very seriously indeed:

Were this a question merely whether a Lord Wm. Bentinck or a Sir John Cradock or a Col. Agnew or a Major Pierce had been guilty of a piece of imprudence and folly, or whether they all together had conducted themselves unwisely or imprudently, yr. Lordship most undoubtedly would have been saved the trouble of the
present address but . . . from every information I have received, the parties on the Coast seem to me to be more engaged in individual exculpation than in sifting to the bottom of the whole of the causes which have led to this melancholy event . . . which . . . must tend to give a false colouring to the business and lead to a belief that a transaction that has in truth shaken to its very foundation the whole of our Indian Empire, happened from causes that are easily removed and which when removed will put an end to every sensation of disaffection originally connected with it. 39

Maitland then set out to disabuse Lord Minto of any such mistaken interpretations into which he may have been led by the Madras government's report of the mutiny. He argued that anyone believing that the 'exclusive sources' of the mutiny were the princes and the turbans was 'grossly deceived'. Instead, Maitland believed that the whole system of government in India was at fault. He used this letter to Minto as a platform from which to air his views on these shortcomings. He criticised the way in which the status of Muslims had been allowed to decline. Even those rulers who had been permitted to retain their thrones found themselves subject to the insidious effects of the system of Subsidiary Forces which slowly undermined their positions. For Maitland, these policies inevitably led to hostility towards the British. He considered that the folly of such a course of action was frequently compounded by the practice of absorbing the dissident elements into the army. He warned Minto:

You have then all the Mahommedans and the high military cast of men in India decidedly hostile to your Government.
You have all the Poligars equally ready for rebellion at the first signal, and to keep this immense continent, full, in the course of human nature, of dissatisfaction and dislike, you have too an army composed of those very Mahommedans and, of late as I understand, of those very Poligars. 40

Maitland proceeded to launch into a scathing attack on the way the Madras government had behaved since the outbreak of the mutiny. He believed that with the notable exception of Colonel Gillespie there had been a general failure to take sufficiently strong action against the mutinous elements in the army:

On the contrary they have bowed down their heads to the evil, they are licking the rod which has scourged them, they have taken into their bosom the very viper which is stinging them, they are trusting for their cure to the very assassin which has stabbed them, they are compromising the permanent interests of their country to secure to themselves the precarious benefit of a momentary and fallacious calm.

What have they done? They have instituted a farce of a Board to enquire into the causes of what is called a mutiny . . . . They are giving out orders stating what every child and driveller knows to be false, that they have perfect confidence in their Sepoy establishment at a moment when they are sending to me and other Governments declaring they have no confidence of any kind. 41

So vitriolic was Maitland in his description of the Madras government that it is hard to believe that the bitterness arose simply out of the disturbances following the Vellore mutiny. His total lack of sympathy for the plight in which Bentinck and his Council found themselves
suggests strongly that he had held this low opinion of the Madras government for some time previous to the mutiny. There is, however, no evidence in his correspondence with Bentinck in the period prior to the mutiny to suggest that relations between the two men were anything other than cordial. The refusal of his own request for reinforcement hardly seems in itself sufficient to provoke such a strong reaction. It may be that Maitland was yet another victim of the traumatic effects of the Vellore mutiny and that the strength of his reaction grew out of fear that the entire security of the British in South India, and by extension Ceylon, had been put at risk.

Lord Minto considered that Maitland had gone too far in his censure of the Madras government. He may even have suspected Maitland of aspiring to replace Bentinck in the Madras Presidency. When Minto arrived in India to take up his appointment as Governor-General, Maitland was at pains to deny any such intention. He sought to justify his vigorous attack on Bentinck. Conceding that he may have adopted the 'gloomy side of the question', he explained that:

as the massacre of Vellore occurred and I was myself dragged into the consequences of it by an application of the Madras Government to assist them with troops, it became necessary for me then to account to His Majesty's Government for my conduct in deviating from their orders; and, having to account, I conceived it my duty to state fully and fairly my opinion upon the subject without mincing the matter with regard to any person or anything.
To Lord William Bentinck personally I certainly could have no objection and I think your Lordship will entirely acquit me of what I understand some have asserted, that I attacked his character with a view to obtain his situation. When your Lordship reflects at the time I wrote the dispatch my brother was daily expected as Governor-General, and I do not think that even an enemy of mine will imagine I was fool enough to imagine that the two great governments of India could be monopolized in one family ... my opinions were ... the result of conviction at the time and did not arise from any self-interested motive.

Whatever Maitland's motives may have been for his criticisms of Bentinck, by the time he came to make this explanation to Minto the matter had become purely academic. Bentinck's fate had been sealed.

II

The letter recalling Bentinck and Cradock arrived at Madras in the middle of September 1807. Both men were, in effect, peremptorily dismissed. Even the small courtesy of arranging their passage home was withheld from them. Cradock was particularly angered by such treatment; he later complained bitterly of the expense he had been involved in as a result.

The Vellore mutiny was already fourteen months in the past by this time, and it is likely that both the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief had entertained hopes that the whole business had blown over. Bentinck was certainly convinced that on his return to London he would be able to demonstrate to the Court of Directors that their judgement was at fault. In order to avoid giving any
impression of resenting the verdict of the Court, therefore, he refused to attend a meeting organised by his friends within the Presidency to salute his achievements as Governor, fearing that anti-Company sentiments might be expressed.45 He did, however, accept an address from four or five thousand native Madrasis in which he was thanked for his services to the community and praised particularly for having 'extended relief to the poor inhabitants of this country in the time of calamity and famine'.46 The Governor's reply exhibited once more his loyalty to his employers. He urged the authors of the address 'that whatever changes take place you will never cease to confide in the goodness of the Company'.47

Bentinck left Madras on 29 September 1807 aboard H.M.S. Pitt. The guns of Fort St George and of H.M.S. Culloden, the flag-ship of the fleet by which he was sailing, fired a final salute to him.48 His post as Governor had fallen provisionally, and temporarily, to William Petrie, the most senior member of the Council.49

Lord Minto professed himself 'shocked and afflicted in the highest degree' by his friend's dismissal. Not only did he believe that a serious personal injustice had been done to Lord William, but he also felt that the sacking might have serious political repercussions in the presidency:

The mutiny was completely subdued, opinions were settled, and men's minds were composed on these questions. Those who had suffered the sentence of the law were regarded
as criminals justly punished for atrocious offences. Now that Governor and Commander-in-Chief are publicly condemned and punished, on the other hand, in the view of the very mutineers and their adherents, the public mind may perhaps be unhinged again, and those who were hanged and shot... for mutiny and murder, may seem to have been justified.

Minto's strong criticisms of the measure were answered by Edward Parry. Minto, Parry claimed, was 'not aware of the public feelings after you left England and the impossibility of the Court doing otherwise'.

A similar view was expressed to the Governor-General by Robert Dundas, who had succeeded to the Presidency of the Board of Control:

The recall of Lord William Bentick was a measure resolved upon by the Court of Directors, unanimously I believe, and by Government before the late change of administration, and though I cannot help thinking that the Directors were somewhat hasty in their mode of removing Lord William, yielding a good deal to the clamour of the moment, without giving themselves time to investigate thoroughly the conduct of any of the individuals who were implicated in the transaction of Vellore or supposed to be responsible for the state of the Army at the time, yet, under all the circumstances of the case, and with a view to Lord William's own comfort, it was perhaps unavoidable that he should be recalled at no very distant period.

Minto remained unconvinced. He informed Parry that he retained his 'regret at the mortifying judgement which has been passed on a man of so much worth'.

Nor was he
alone in sympathising with Bentinck's plight. The views of the dismissed Governor's friends in Madras were summed up by Sir Alexander Anstruther, brother of the Advocate-General at Madras, and himself a judge. It had been, he asserted in a letter home to Britain, 'most unfortunate' that Bentinck's conduct had been 'judged and condemned before the panic which naturally spread on the first news of the Vellore business had time to cool. It is now so totally blown over here that we are amazed at the effect which it has produced at home'.

Yet even Anstruther believed that Bentinck had contributed to his own downfall through demonstrating 'an excess of fair-mindedness'. He lamented that Bentinck had failed to identify clearly the 'men most responsible' for the mutiny, whom Anstruther believed to be Agnew and Pierce. He argued that if Bentinck and Cradock had united in reprimanding the staff officers, they might well have avoided the indignity of being sacked. He did not, however, hold a high opinion of Cradock. He characterised the Commander-in-Chief's attacks on the government's record as 'most unwise' and as having 'no foundation'.

While he considered that 'no Governor can ever do his duty more correctly than Lord William Bentinck has done here', he believed Cradock to be of totally inferior character:

Nobody regrets Cradock's removal. He has disgusted the Company's officers to a degree almost dangerous, and which at least has revived all the former unfortunate dissentions between them and the
King's Army. As a member of Government his conduct has been even more unpardonable, as the head of a settled and regular opposition to the Governor in almost every point, impeding and compromising and weakening the public measures which could not be directly opposed. His avidity as to emoluments and want of judgement in bringing forward his claims has also contributed not a little to destroying the public respect for his character.

Anstruther's favourable impression of Bentinck can be contrasted with the views of a prominent Madras merchant, Thomas Parry. The recall, Parry believed, had been entirely justified on the grounds that Bentinck's inexperience in Indian affairs had led him to pass regulations that no experienced Governor would have allowed, since they so obviously transgressed local customs. Unaware that Bentinck had not seen the regulations until after the mutiny, Parry perhaps betrayed his real reasons for criticising the former Governor when he expressed the hope that 'we shall have no more young and ill-advised Lords sent here. They do very well in Bengal where they play first fiddle, but are not at all suited to this latitude'.

His pleasure at the recall was heightened by the elevation of Petrie to the Governorship. Petrie was considered by Parry to be 'my particular friend'. He believed that 'the change which has taken place has given satisfaction to all' and asserted that:

It is extraordinary but true, that the day Mr Petrie took his oath as Governor, we had an abundant fall of rain for the first time for many months, and since it has rained every day regularly. The natives say this is owing to the change
in Government — 'Mr Petrie very good man — plenty of rain and everybody too much happy'.

III

Although Lord Minto was unable to prevent the dismissal of Bentinck, he was anxious to take steps to ensure that any remaining effects of the Vellore mutiny should be alleviated. With Petrie's agreement, he urged that the matter of the prisoners held after the mutiny should be resolved immediately. This was not an insignificant problem. At Vellore, three hundred and ninety-two men were being held on suspicion of having been involved in the insurrection. A further one hundred and eighty-two, mainly those who had been captured after having initially escaped from Vellore, were imprisoned at Madras.

The prisoners represented a security risk of considerable proportions. As time had gone by with no final resolution in sight regarding their fate, they had tended to become increasingly difficult to control. The Commanding Officer at Trichinopoly, in an explanatory letter to Cradock, summed up the kind of attitude that had become increasingly prevalent amongst the detainees:

I have sent to Madras this day twelve more Vellore deserters as I found them very improper fellows to have here, even as prisoners. Only conceive the extent of audacity to which these miscreants have arrived. They have turned their feats at Vellore into songs or rhymes, which they repeat to the sentries, stating how such and such a European was killed.

The Town Major at Fort St George found his prisoners
similarly contemptuous of British authority:

they have on innumerable occasions acknowledged and boasted to one another of very different conduct from what is ascribed to them... they have been turbulent in prison, and have frequently meditated and twice attempted to assault and force the guards, and when disappointed in their immediate views, seemed to console themselves with the hope of having it sometime or other in their power to do more mischief. 61

The process of releasing the prisoners was consequently begun in October, 1807. In order to minimise the risk of the prisoners forming a kind of renegade force against the Company, they were released in several batches with an interval of a few days between each batch. They were escorted back to their native villages. The Collectors of all districts receiving any of the men were alerted to their arrival, so that some watch could be kept over their future movements.62 Before being released, the age, colour and place of origin of each man was noted, along with any peculiarities of appearance, so that it would be possible to identify them if they subsequently made any effort to re-enlist in the Company's service.63 The penalty for any such attempt was to be banishment for life.

Lord Ninto also acted to improve the living conditions of the exiled Mysore family. The princes had been allocated accommodation which, according to one observer, amounted to 'small bungalows little better than the huts of the meanest natives'.64 Ninto ensured that they were transferred to housing which allowed them a more comfortable
and dignified life-style. Explaining his actions to the Court of Directors, he reminded them:

although the unhappy event at Vellore rendered their removal from thence to this quarter of India a measure of indispensable state necessity, yet after a minute and laborious investigation, their guilt, with one exception, has never in any degree been established on satisfactory evidence, and the innocence of the major part can hardly be doubted ... it was highly desirable on every principle of humanity and generosity, to combine with the full security of the public interests, as much consideration for the feelings and prejudices of the Princes and their families as was possible; and it is unnecessary to advert to the peculiar claims upon the liberality of Government which a comparison of their present condition with the state of grandeur and affluence to which they were born, has given them.

The Governor-General was also anxious to take steps to restore confidence in the army. Part of the problem, he believed, lay with the high command. While Hinto had expressed sympathy with Sir John Cradock over his dismissal, he believed that the office of Commander-in-Chief at Madras should in future be more clearly subordinated to that of the Governor. He abhorred Cradock's attack on the policies of the civil government and feared that the new Commander-in-Chief might be equally antagonistic. Hinto consequently appealed to the Court of Directors to take steps to curb military power in the Presidency. The Court responded by removing the automatic right to a seat on the Council which the Commander-in-Chief had formerly held.
Minto was also anxious to raise the morale of the sepoy establishment from the low ebb to which it had apparently fallen. The crux of the problem, as he saw it, lay in the status of the sardars. It seems highly probable that the list of grievances delivered anonymously from the Subsidiary Force at Hyderabad played an important part in alerting the Governor-General to the plight of this influential group of men. Minto could see no simple solution, however, as he was not inclined to give more power to men who had demonstrated no particular loyalty to the Company. He argued instead that it was the duty of European officers to establish better communications with the Indian soldiery:

I allude now first to the condition of the native officer whose views are limited to a rank scarcely superior to that of a non-commissioned officer in our European Army, and who very much from the nature of the case is so much secluded from the society of Europeans that he cannot easily conceive either affection or any of those common feelings which insensibly but firmly cement the union and cordiality of men. This inconvenience cannot be removed, for on one hand the rank of Native Officers could not be raised without increasing their power and ascendancy over their corps, which it is a fundamental point of policy to keep as low as possible. The laws of their religion and their habits of life separate them also unavoidably from any intercourse of conviviality or society with European Officers. . . . . A very material and essential improvement would result from every encouragement that can be given to a closer intercourse between European Officers and the sepoys they command. To this very important end the attention of Government is directed.
In order to examine the problem more fully, Minto appointed Sir John Malcolm to report on the state of the Madras army. As an officer of long experience in Madras, and who had served on the Committee of Enquiry at Wallajahbad following the disturbances in that garrison, Malcolm was well placed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the sepoy corps. His findings, while adhering to the conventional military conviction that there had been outside interference, emphasised that poor relations between Europeans and Indians in the army had been a major contributory factor to the outbreak of mutiny at Vellore:

The mutiny at Vellore gave a shock to that complete reliance on the attachment and fidelity of the Native Troops from which it will be long before the officers of the Coast Army recover, but tho' there can be no doubt that horrid event was the result of treason and intrigue which artfully took advantage of other circumstances to forward its daring designs . . . we must not deceive ourselves so far as to ascribe this melancholy event solely to these causes. Had those ties which ought to unite the European officers with the Native officers and Native troops under their command existed in full force such an event could hardly have occurred. 71

Malcolm was of the opinion that the new military code of 1796 had led to an increased separation between the Europeans and the Indians in the army. Ignorance on the part of new, young officers had led to an 'unnecessary harshness' in the way the sepoys were treated, and to a dangerous tinkering with the 'minutiae of dress'. He also highlighted lack of promotion prospects for sardars,
and low remuneration, as major grievances for the Indian troops.72

The recommendations of Malcolm's report concerning the treatment of sardars appear to be eloquent testimony to the influence of the Hyderabad list of grievances. The specific points mentioned by Malcolm reflect too faithfully the complaints of that controversial document for it to be purely coincidental. Malcolm urged that more respect should be paid to sardars by European officers and troops; that they should be allowed separate tents from the sepoys; that medals should be freely distributed for bravery and good service as outward signs of the Company's approval of its Indian troops; that preferential treatment should be given to sons of serving men entering the army; that land should be made available to sepoy veterans on 'advantageous terms'; and, finally, that the rank of killedar, which had formerly allowed a sardar to command a fort, should be re-established.73

In addition, the report recommended that no further tampering with the uniforms of the sepoys should be allowed and that all European officers should have some knowledge of relevant local languages, so that it would become as 'impossible for a man to attain any rank or charge in the Native Army without a knowledge of the vernacular dialect of his men as it is for an officer to be placed in command of a vessel that is ignorant of navigation'.74
While Lord Minto was thus engaged in attempting to restore order to the affairs of the Madras Presidency, Bentinck and Cradock arrived back in Britain in the Spring of 1808, determined to clear their respective names from blame for the mutiny. They discovered, moreover, that the Court of Directors was now strongly divided over the causes of the mutiny. The revolt at Vellore had provided fuel for a heated debate over whether to admit Christian missionaries to India.

In 1807, Edward Parry and Charles Grant, both enthusiastic evangelicals, had been elected to the Chairmanship and Deputy Chairmanship of the East India Company. Grant and Parry were keen to smooth the path for British missionaries wishing to take up residence in the Company's possessions in India. Influential opponents of this policy, however, had attempted to cite the mutiny at Vellore as an example of the violent response which the continued spread of Christianity would elicit from the Indians. For example, a former Chairman of the Company, William Elphinstone, complained:

> The country can only be held by the native troops and it is in vain to disguise that at this moment their attachment is wavering. The operations of the missionaries, even admitting them to be well meant, which I very much doubt, and the numerous religious books of the Christians, have alarmed the sepoys, or rather have furnished a pretence for emissaries and evil-disposed persons to alarm them, with the idea that the Company intend to make them all Christians; they would as soon be converted into as many devils. 75
Grant, however, saw no connection between the mutiny and missionary activity, and he dissociated himself from the decision of the Court to dismiss Bentinck. In a letter of sympathy to Bentinck written at the time, Grant referred to the many rumours which were circulating in Britain concerning the causes of the mutiny. He explained how, as a supporter of missions in India, he had himself come under some pressure. Grant's opponents, he claimed, had imputed:

the fatal catastrophe at Vellore to the jealousy of the natives that they were forced to become Christians, which jealousy, it is said, was confirmed by the arrival of a number of chaplains and missionaries and their indiscreet zeal; and these points being assured, certain individuals myself among the number, have been accused of abetting such measures and so made indirectly parties to the mutiny of the native troops.

Describing these allegations as 'monstrous and malevolent', Grant went on to criticise bitterly the lack of religious fervour shown by British residents in India, emphasising that he considered them 'as likely to become Hindoos as to compel Hindoos to become Christians'. He pointed out that missionary activity was not new to South India, there having been Danish missions in Tanjore for many years:

The efforts of missionaries . . . are not new. They have been employed for centuries, even under the native governments; but all in the way of mild persuasion and without the slightest disturbance of the peace. At Vellore, or near it, I believe there was not one Chaplain or missionary; and instead of over-running
the country, the establishment of them was scandalously small and mean. I fear there are those who would even trample on the Cross to avoid the apprehension of native jealousy on the score of Christianity.79

Nevertheless, by June of 1807, those members of the Court opposed to missions had sufficiently mustered their forces to threaten to force through a resolution to withdraw completely any official support from proselytisation in India and to proscribe missionaries from Company territories altogether. Edward Parry complained that 'we are in danger of being precipitated here into some measures as impolitic as they would be unjust'.80 Writing to Lord Minto, Parry articulated the causes of the mutiny as seen by most evangelicals. He conceded that the 'injudicious innovations in the dress of the sepoys furnished the immediate occasion of the mutiny', but emphasised that the larger share of the blame for the 'concretion and perpetration of that atrocious act' lay with the Mysore princes.81 Parry ascribed the fear amongst some sepoys of forcible conversion to Christianity to a conspiracy fomented by the princes. This 'malevolent falsehood of Mahomedan intrigue' had:

- not only a great immediate effect on the minds of the Native troops but at length some of the country people seem to have caught the same impression, and, what may be very serious in its effects, our national enemies in all countries take advantage of this occurrence to magnify the apprehensions entertained by the Natives, their consequent alienation from us and the insecurity and danger thence arising to our Government in the East.82
Grant and Parry successfully out-maneuvered their opponents in the Company and, by a narrow margin, won a vote which ensured that the practice of licensing missionaries to work in India would continue. Expressing his relief to a friend concerning the outcome, Charles Grant was of the opinion that:

The tide was so strong that if God had not been pleased to use two well-intentioned, though weak, instruments, in situations in which my colleague and I are, orders of a very different kind, would, in all probability, have been transmitted.

Grant and Parry's success was instrumental in creating the correct climate of opinion within the Court for a reconsideration of the way in which Bentinck and Cradock had been treated. In July 1809, the whole question of the causes of the Vellore mutiny was discussed once more.

In anticipation of this new hearing, both Cradock and Bentinck had produced printed documents stating their cases in some detail. Each emphasized that he believed himself the victim of gross injustice. Cradock painted a melancholy picture of his period of service in India. He had given up, he complained, a lucrative post in Ireland in order to accept his appointment as Commander-in-Chief. On arrival at Madras, he claimed to have found that no provision had been made for his accommodation and that he was to be paid less than his predecessor. Moreover, he considered that he had been unfairly passed over for the post of Commander-in-Chief of India, which had become vacant during his time at Madras. To such setbacks
and hindrances, Cradock argued, his dismissal had come as the culminating insult. 86

Interestingly, in his defence, Cradock made no attempt to renew his former attacks on the civil government of Madras. He concentrated instead on emphasising that he had not been personally responsible for the introduction of the turban or the dress regulations. As a stranger to the country, he had been forced to rely on the 'talents and lengthened experience' of the Company's staff officers. Indeed Cradock claimed to have been the only military officer to express an objection against the new regulations when they were first promulgated. 87

Bentinck's defence was far more expansive, and amounted to more than one hundred and twenty printed pages. He argued that he could not possibly have withdrawn the turban after its rejection by the sepoys at Vellore in May 1806, since:

To recede from a lofty position is at all times a dangerous compromise of authority; and no principle can be clearer than this, that a concession extorted by the mutinous efforts of an armed soldiery is generally fatal to military discipline. 88

Bentinck also refuted the charge of lack of vigilance which had been made against him by the Court in his letter of dismissal. He claimed that his government 'was not suspicious, where they had no reason to suspect'. The former Governor was, however, prepared to concede that his government had not been completely successful in winning the hearts of the people of South India. This had been
especially true around the period of the mutiny:

I am yet bound to admit . . . of a general disaffection, not only among the soldiery, but also among the people at large . . . . I . . . attribute its origin to alarms of a religious nature. However absurd it might be in the natives of India, I will not say to admit the idea that their religion was in danger (for the military orders certainly afforded but too just a foundation for many serious fears), but to indulge it for any length of time, there can be no doubt that such an idea had obtained possession of the public mind. 89

Bentinck made no effort to conceal his low opinion of the way in which the army had acted both in the events leading up to the mutiny, and in its subsequent aftermath. He argued that the general level of ignorance amongst military officers of the Indian culture had effectively precipitated the mutiny:

Of the greater part of the European officers, it was not to be supposed that they should be able accurately to appreciate an injury offered to the religious feelings of the natives; and in the case of military men, peculiarly so, because it will appear, from an examination of the regulations of the Indian Army, that in many instances the customs of the natives had been changed with impunity. 90

On 25 July 1809, the Court of Directors issued its findings on its renewed deliberations into the mutiny and the recall notices which had followed. The Court radically altered its opinion on the major cause of the mutiny. The former conviction that the turban and the dress regulations had been the fundamental reasons for the mutiny was now rejected. Consequently, it was
resolved that the charges:

originally advanced against the conduct of the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief, respecting the violations of cast... have been, in the sense then attached to them, misapplied and defective. 91

Nor was it only Bentinck and Cradock who benefited from this change of attitude. Colonel Agnew and Major Pierce were also exonerated, since, there now being no real objection to the changes in dress, no guilt could attach itself to the officers who had propounded the changes in the first place. 92

Bentinck and Cradock remained under censure, however, for having failed to exercise sufficient 'care and caution' with regard to the loyalty of the sepoys to the Company. The Court's official view of the cause of the mutiny was now that a Muslim conspiracy had succeeded in subverting the army, and it was concluded that the Governor and Commander-in-Chief had been insufficiently alert to the danger of such a plot. 93 This change of heart on the part of the Directors clearly demonstrates the extent to which the causes of the Vellore mutiny had become a political issue. It was not that a great body of new evidence had come to light to bring about the re-evaluation. Rather, there had been a shift towards a pro-evangelical stance within the Court since 1807 and it was now politically convenient for the causes of the mutiny to be re-interpreted.

The Court's resolution partially to acquit Bentinck
and Cradock was far from unanimous, however. In the following month, two Directors, John Bebb and John Hudleston, recorded a Minute to the Court, dissenting from its verdict, and attacking what they believed to be glaring inconsistencies in its interpretation of the causes of the mutiny. Their Minute argued that nothing material had come to light to justify this volte face on the part of the Court. As far as they were concerned, the turban and the dress regulation would have been considered by the sepoys an interference gross enough to provoke a mutiny 'at any period of our connexion with India, and without the aid of any malignant efforts to mislead them or excite them in that feeling'. Moreover, Bebb and Hudleston could see no good reason to exculpate the Governor and Commander-in-Chief when they had patently failed to take heed of repeated warnings concerning the growing revulsion of the sepoys towards the dress regulations. As for the Mohammedan conspiracy, they believed such a possibility to be remote. It was pointed out that Bentinck himself, who was being exculpated because the Court believed in the Muslim conspiracy, had totally refuted the idea. In his statements to the Court, Bentinck had described any notion that a widespread conspiracy had existed as 'gratuitous' and 'contradicted both by testimony and fact'.

Yet Grant was determined to brook no opposition in this matter. He was single-minded in his efforts to avoid any diminution of the status of missionaries in India.
Indeed, he intended to improve that status as far as possible. Bebb and Hudleston's opinions consequently elicited from Grant one further full analysis of the affair. He again stated his unequivocal condemnation of the princes, and explained that it was the very fact that Bentinck ascribed 'less guilt to the Princes than the whole of the evidence plainly fixes upon them' that made it impossible for Grant to exculpate the former Governor completely.97

Even more controversially, Grant now revealed that he put great trust in the opinions of Major Haslewood, whose views had been rejected by the Committee set up to investigate the allegations of a conspiracy at Wallajahbad.98 Grant was critical of the Committee for having failed to pay sufficient attention to Haslewood's suspicions, as 'they appear to be supported by a great deal of evidence' which 'brings facts to light deserving of the utmost attention'.99

Grant went so far as to state his agreement with Haslewood that 'French intrigue was concerned in the causes' of the mutiny. However, since he did not adduce any fresh evidence on the matter, it must be assumed that his basis for this extraordinary allegation was simply Haslewood's own assertions. Grant, ignoring the stringent conditions of service which applied to the sepoys, asked why, if the sepoys' only wish was to avoid offensive regulations, they had not simply resigned from the service. He concluded that a small group of trouble-
makers had poisoned the loyalty of the entire corps at Vellore:

The bulk of the sepoys were probably not conspirators. The conspirators were those who broached the idea of an intention to make the sepoys Christians, before the sepoys themselves thought of it.100

In this, he may have come very close to an accurate interpretation of the events at Vellore. Yet this was purely incidental to him. All that concerned Grant was to protect the missions. The Mysore princes were convenient scapegoats. He ended his statement with a call for a renewed enquiry into the mutiny. But as more than three years had passed since the revolt and as the principal participants had long since been executed or had returned to their villages, it would have been impossible to conduct any meaningful investigation. Grant's proposal was probably consciously gratuitous.

V

Although Grant and Parry strenuously denied that missionary activity could have had anything to do with the outbreak of the Vellore mutiny, the evangelicals were not without influential support in India at the time of the revolt. It has been argued that Bentinck, who actively encouraged missions during his Governor-Generalship of 1828-1835, owed his enthusiastic conversion to Christianity to the personal crisis which he experienced following his dismissal from Madras.101 In defending his actions as Governor, following the mutiny, he had at that time
emphasised to the Court of Directors that it was 'absurd' for Indians to fear that the government intended to convert them to Christianity. But a letter which he wrote to Charles Grant in October 1806, only three months after the mutiny, furnishes strong evidence that Bentinck was already by that time firmly in favour of proselytisation.

The main purpose of the letter was to recommend that the Danish missionary at Tanjore, Dr John, should be granted a monthly allowance by the Company in order to ensure that his work could continue. Bentinck took the opportunity to set out his general sentiments with regard to missionary work in India. The strength of his support must have greatly pleased Grant.

In the first place, Bentinck declared himself 'anxious to afford' Dr John 'all the assistance in my power'. He emphasised the difficult conditions with which the Danish mission at Tanjore was forced to contend, 'the number of converts ... rapidly increasing, the number of missionaries diminishing and the funds inadequate'. Bentinck then set out seven general reasons for supporting missions. He stated first that 'the conversion of the Natives of this country to Christianity can never be accomplished but by the piety, the patience and the perseverance of the Missionaries'. Secondly, he indicated his belief that the progress already made by missionaries showed that conversion was not only desirable but also practicable. Thirdly, he argued that
'Christianity would be the greatest possible blessing to the natives if it could be introduced', since this would allow the social position of outcastes to be dramatically improved, whilst paving the way for the reform of Indian religions.105

Bentinck also expressed agreement with Grant and Parry that it was wrong to prevent the free dissemination of Christianity when it was the custom to allow all Indian religions to be professed without any form of harassment. Moreover, he believed that this dissemination could not be left to chaplains, since they made little attempt to work with Indians, being fully occupied in their 'immediate charge'. As a result, Bentinck continued, converts to Christianity inevitably needed their own pastors since the chaplains did not fulfil this role in any way.106

Bentinck's opinions would have done justice to the most committed of the 'Saints' in the Court of Directors in the East India Company; and it is easy to understand why he and Grant later formed a close liaison. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that Bentinck took much action while in Madras to implement his views on spreading Christianity. His letter to Grant was of a purely private nature and he fully acknowledged that his opinions 'at the present moment might be objectionable' to a large part of the Court of Directors.107

There were, however, a number of ways in which Bentinck quietly furthered the cause of missionary work. He gave as much help as possible to those missionaries,
few in number, who did find their way to South India during his Governorship. One example of this was the encouragement which he gave to Claudius Buchanan.

Buchanan was the Anglican vice-provost of Wellesley College in Calcutta. A Scotsman, with strong views on the need to convert the native population to Christianity, Buchanan was notoriously possessed of tremendous energy. In the summer of 1806, shortly before the outbreak of the mutiny, he had embarked on an extensive tour of South India with a view to assessing the strength of Christianity in that area. In the detailed diary which he kept of his travels, he recorded on 4 September:

Lord W. Bentinck desired I would report my opinion on the best mode of ameliorating the state of the newly converted, in my progress through the Deccan. And indeed their state demands the attention of Government: for I find that the Company's servants in some districts consider the Christian as the lowest cast. 108

The news of the mutiny at Vellore naturally caused a sensation throughout South India, and Buchanan found himself to some extent caught up in the aftermath. Two particular points of interest emerge from his writings at this period. In the first place, even after the massacre, the Madras government clearly made no attempt to curtail his activities though Buchanan himself apparently half-expected that he would be recalled:

There has indeed been so much blood shed at Vellore and so many gentlemen murdered that an attack on me would not be thought strange. In the meantime Government have authorised me to proceed; and desired me to communicate
my observations on the state of the Christians in the south. 109

Secondly, Buchanan totally rejected the idea that fear of conversion had played any part in the mutiny. Indeed he saw in such rumours a hopeful sign that Christianity would shortly triumph in India:

A rumour has for some time pervaded India that all casts are to be made Christians. I know the alleged causes of the rumour, but I consider them as inadequate to produce the current effect without a concurring Providence. This strange rumour of conversion is perhaps auspicious to the event itself; as the shaking of an old building announces its approaching fall.

It was alleged to be shown that the massacre at Vellore, which happened when I was in the neighbourhood, was in some measure caused by this rumour. But it has been proved by the evidence of the conspirators, that the design of resuming the Mohammedan dynasty in Mysore was planned by the princes immediately on their hearing the joyful news that the Tiger Wellesley as they styled him, had been recalled from India. 110

Buchanan was not, of course, the only missionary active in South India at this time. At Palamcottah, in the southernmost part of the Presidency, where Major Welsh had acted to disarm the Muslim troops in his corps in November 1806, a German missionary known as 'Ringeltaube the Rishi' was actively involved in making converts to Christianity. He had, moreover, obtained support from a British military officer for his work. Ringeltaube recorded:

I have made a journey through Travancore and Cochin, and with much difficulty, by
the interposition of Colonel Macaulay, obtained leave from the King to introduce our religion in that country. 111

In view of Major Welsh's reference to his Muslim troops as 'followers of the false Prophet', 112 it is possible that he, too, was a committed Christian and strong supporter of missions. Indeed, during the disturbance at Palamcottah, Ringeltaube, along with other European residents, was brought into the fort by Welsh for his own protection. 113

William Petrie later cited the fear of enforced Christianity in accounting for the actions of the sepoys at Palamcottah. In a minute to the Madras Council of 19 December 1806, he referred to the:

circumstances which have come to our knowledge lately from Palamcottah, where the Native Officers and sepoys appeared so terrified by the unhappy measures adopted by Major Welsh, as to declare their submission to embrace Christianity . . . . In this state of the human mind can one wonder at their private meetings, their secret interviews, their suspicious looks and solemn declarations of fidelity to each other? 114

Those administrators who were opposed to the free dissemination of Christianity in India found themselves in a dilemma. Nearly all were, of course, themselves Christians; to put up barriers against the religion which they themselves professed represented a strange philosophical paradox. Yet the Vellore mutiny strengthened the position of those who believed that missionaries threatened the stability of the country. It appears to
have been the major cause of a complete change of heart on the subject by the then Governor-General, Sir George Barlow.

Before the mutiny, Barlow had lent a tent to Claudius Buchanan for his journey in the south.\(^{115}\) While this can scarcely be construed as an outright statement of support for missionary work, by February 1807 he was no longer prepared to give any support whatsoever to missionaries. Barlow acknowledged that 'all the obligations of philanthropy, morality and religion' appeared to require support for missionaries, but he was now of the opinion that to encourage men such as Buchanan would materially damage the interests of the Company:

No danger can be so extreme, so absolutely beyond the limits of prevention or remedy as the prevalence of an apprehension among our native subjects, that Government meditates the project of their conversion... The security of the British Empire in India should not be put at risk for the business of proselytisation.\(^{116}\)

Barlow, in any case, now professed to doubt the truth of Buchanan's conviction that the Indians, particularly the Muslims, could be successfully converted at all. He believed that a widespread introduction of Christian missions identifiably supported by the government would encourage 'sedition and tumult' and would be used to show that 'the apprehension lately entertained by our native troops on the coast, of the projected substitution of the Christian religion of their country, was not unfounded'.\(^{117}\)

Barlow sought to make a distinction between what was
acceptable in the interests of both Christianity and the Company, and what threatened the integrity of both. He was particularly opposed to missionaries who set out to denigrate the religions of India in the eyes of their followers. He asserted that:

More than once Government has been compelled by the representations of many respectable natives, inhabitants of this city, to restrain by the interposition of its authority the discussion of religious topics in the College of Fort William, involving a comparison of the principles and effects of the Christian faith, with those of the religions of this country, and has found it necessary with reference to the dormant spirit of bigotry and fanaticism to repress the agitation of all subjects of a religious nature. 118

While Barlow was anxious to avoid stirring up the 'fanaticism' of Indians, he feared that many of the British missionaries in India were themselves dangerously fanatical. He consequently urged that no official link should be made between the Company and the missionaries. In Barlow's opinion, even those clergymen being appointed simply as army chaplains should be 'distinguished for the purity and piety of their lives, and for the respectability of their talents and characters'. 119

Barlow's strictures may perhaps have carried with them undertones of class discrimination. The most active of the missionaries in India at this period came from the Baptist and Methodist Churches, and tended to come from middle or lower-middle class backgrounds.120 Such men were frequently regarded with considerable disdain by the
British authorities, who in many instances would have been very pleased to have been relieved of their presence altogether. Nevertheless, criticisms of such enthusiastic missionaries by Company servants in India tended to be couched in guarded terms, particularly since the affinity of Charles Grant and Edward Parry to missionary work was so well known.

Some of the opponents of the evangelicals sought historical reasons for rejecting the spread of missionaries in India. For example, Sir James Mackintosh, the Recorder of Bombay, pointed to the lesson which he believed ought to be learned from what had happened to the Portuguese in India:

The Portuguese who were the first settlers in India hastened if they did not cause their downfall by that bigotted spirit with which they endeavoured to introduce their religion. They surrounded themselves in their towns and settlements with native Christians, but by doing so they drew a line of separation between those natives that adhered to them and all others and thereby deprived themselves of that aid which they might otherwise have received and rendered themselves an object of general dread to all the natives of India. 121

Other observers were more specific in their criticisms of missionaries. A correspondent of Robert Dundas, who wrote from Bengal, feared that the troubles in the Madras army might easily spread to the other Company possessions in India through the extreme enthusiasm of some missionaries:
On the Coast there seems to be great discontent in the Army, nor will it be long ere we have the same thing to apprehend here - preaching Methodists and wild visionaries disturbing the religious ceremonies of the Natives will alienate the affections of our Native troops, then farewell India!

A man of the name of Carey more pious than his brethren lately took it upon him to disturb a procession at Serampore, but when he began to wreak his vengeance on some figures in clay that the people carried with them, they seized Carey and very near put an end to his interference. If those missionaries are not prevented from visiting India we may look for very unhappy consequences. 122

On his arrival in India to succeed Sir George Barlow, Lord Minto found himself rapidly embroiled in the growing controversy over missionaries. There is no doubt that he brought with him a predisposition to adopt conciliatory measures wherever possible, and he was not opposed in principle to the dissemination of Christianity throughout the country. Minto discovered, however, that dealing with this question required considerable tact and diplomacy, He was initially somewhat surprised by the low status to which Europeans were assigned by orthodox Hindus, explaining in a letter to his wife that:

All Christians and other pagans are classed with the lowest or pariah caste. Sometimes people of this caste enlist in the sepoy regiments, and Sir John Cradock, Knight of the Bath and Commander-in-Chief, told me that a pariah sepoy had sometimes come to him for a furlough or some other small favour, and by way of recommending himself has said, 'Master know I be Master's caste',

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and I daresay has paid master no small compliment by acknowledging him even for a pariah. 123

Minto was determined to curb what he considered the extremes of missionary zeal. This brought him into conflict particularly with William Carey and William Ward, Baptist missionaries of long experience in India, who, from their base in the Danish possession of Serampore, published and distributed tracts which made strong attacks on the Hindu and Muslim faiths. The antagonistic nature of their literature was a source of great anxiety to the Governor-General, particularly in view of the recent disturbances in Madras:

The only successful engine of sedition in any part of India must be that of persuading the people that our Government entertains hostile and systematic designs against their religion . . . . In Bengal, however, we are not entirely free from a similar danger, arising from ourselves, and more than usually excited at this particular moment, by the indiscretion of the well-meaning and respectable, no doubt, but very mischievous zeal of the European missionaries. 124

Grant and Parry at first suspected that Lord Minto would prove to be an opponent of the spread of Christianity in India.125 Their fears appeared to be confirmed when Minto decided to proscribe the circulation of any tract printed at Serampore and used his influence with the Danish Governor to ensure that no further works of such a nature were produced there. In a letter of December 1807 to Parry, Minto mounted a vigorous defence of his actions against the missionaries, arguing that their
insults to the Indian religions would rather hinder than
advance the cause of Christianity. He believed that the
implicit dangers of the tracts were self-evident and
enclosed copies of some of Carey's publications for
Parry's perusal:

Let me above all recommend to your
serious consideration the principal
publications which have issued from
the Serampore Press in the Native
languages the purpose of which would
almost appear to have been . . . not
to convert but to alienate and irritate
the professors of both the religions
prevailing amongst the natives of this
country . . . . the pages are filled
with Hell fire, Hell fire and still
hotter fire, denounced against a whole
race of men for believing in the
religion which they were taught by
their fathers and mothers.126

Linto emphasised that he 'was not disposed to offer
any obstacles to the work of conversion' but that he would
most certainly not exercise 'a blind principle of com-
plaisance towards every indiscretion and blunder which
the zeal or negligence . . . which Mr Carey or his brother
missionaries of Serampore may commit'.127

The Governor-General's firm stance against the
Serampore missionaries also inevitably brought him into
conflict with Claudius Buchanan. Buchanan delivered a
memorial to the Bengal government in which he complained
bitterly about the 'great revolution' which he believed
to have taken place in the attitude of the British rulers
to missionaries since the departure of Marquis Wellesley.
Formerly, Buchanan argued, the 'spirit of promoting
learning and religion in India was general and ardent',
but it had now become 'directly adverse' to the diffusion of Christianity. He cited particularly the silencing of the Serampore press and Minto's subsequent efforts to ensure that whatever was printed would be acceptable to Hindu and Muslim authorities. Moreover, Buchanan pointed out that the funds allocated to Wellesley College had been cut. He took this as another sure sign that the Supreme Government of Bengal intended to do all it could to suppress missionary work. Even Hyder Ali, Buchanan suggested, had had a better and more favourable attitude towards the spread of Christianity, since he, at least, had taken no specific steps to repress it. 128

Minto and his Council were irritated by the thrust and tone of Buchanan's opinions. In reply they deprecated the 'disrespectful' manner in which his views had been presented. 129 Yet the mere fact that they felt obliged to reply to such a communication, and to afford it a close, point by point refutation, demonstrates the political influence that Buchanan carried. Minto was well aware that to fail to answer Buchanan's charges might place him in a very difficult position in relation to Grant and Parry. If he was to continue as Governor-General, he could scarcely risk losing the support of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Company. He consequently assured Buchanan that he was doing no more than implementing the avowed policy of the Court of Directors, as enunciated in a letter to the Madras government of 29 May 1807. 130 The Court had at that time insisted that:
In the whole course of our administration of the Indian territories it had been our known and declared principle to maintain a perfect toleration of the various religious systems which prevailed in them; to protect the followers of each in the undisturbed enjoyment of their respective opinions and usages; neither to interfere with them ourselves, nor to suffer them to be molested by others. When we afforded our countenance and sanction to missionaries who have from time to time proceeded to India for the purpose of propagating the Christian religion, it was far from being in our contemplation to add the influence of our authority to any attempts they might make; for on the contrary we were perfectly aware that the progress of such conversion will be slow and gradual.

Minto referred also to the dangers that the Vellore mutiny had revealed. He emphasised the need to avoid any part of the Indian population becoming convinced that the British had a plan to convert the country to Christianity. He absolutely refuted Buchanan's allegations that he was in any way opposed to Christianity.

The Governor-General, in effect, won his point. Buchanan was recalled to Britain. Even Grant and Parry were privately angered by the aggressive attitude which Buchanan had shown towards Indian religions and towards the Supreme Government. Although they had opposed the actual withdrawal of his licence, they were unable to summon sufficient support in the Court of Directors to defeat the motion. Robert Dundas was able to inform Minto in regard to Buchanan that 'I do not think that you need be under much apprehension of seeing him again in India . . . . the subject gave rise to considerable
warmth, and at last I believe the Chairs were left in a very small minority, not more than one or two besides themselves.\textsuperscript{134}

VI

While the ramifications of the debate over the authorisation of missionaries thus continued, Bentinck and Cradock remained dissatisfied with their partial exoneration from the Court of Directors. Each decided to publish his own version of events so that the public would be better able to judge the merits of actions taken during the crisis. Cradock, however, was anxious that the conflict between Bentinck and himself should be brought to an end. He appealed to the former Governor to make certain changes in his pamphlet to avoid further antagonism between them, sincerely lamenting 'that we are likely to appear in print as opposed to each other'. He cited certain passages which he considered 'directly and inveterately hostile to me'.\textsuperscript{135} Bentinck rejected these criticisms, however, and remained unmoved.

In practice, neither man did himself any material good by publishing his defence. The Court of Directors had made its final judgement on the subject and no further hearings were allowed. Yet the careers of both the disgraced officials survived, and later, at least in Bentinck's case, positively flourished. By 1819, his relations with the East India Company had improved sufficiently for him to consider an offer to resume as Governor of Madras. Although Bentinck was tempted by
this opportunity to rehabilitate himself completely in that office, he was also mindful of the dire problems which he had encountered with the army. He therefore asked that he be made Commander-in-Chief as well as Governor, but this request was refused and he turned down the appointment. 136

Cradock remained in dispute with the Company for many years. He believed that he had been unjustly treated. The Company believed that he had contrived to extort salaries and allowances to which he had no entitlement. A long wrangle ensued; and it is not clear whether Cradock ever repaid any of the sums which the Company demanded from him.137 He did, however, go on to hold high command in Portugal during the Peninsular War, and, between 1811 and 1814, he held the post of Governor of Cape Town. In 1820, the influence of his friend the Duke of Wellington was instrumental in having Cradock elevated to the Irish peerage as Lord Howden; and in 1831 he was accepted into the British peerage.138 In later life, he and Bentinck were reconciled, and Cradock's wish to avoid enmity was apparently ultimately fulfilled. In a letter of 1829, the year after Bentinck took up his appointment as Governor-General of India, Cradock, signing himself "affectionately devoted", requested that Bentinck should take a special interest in a nephew who was embarking on an Indian career. He assured the Governor-General that "no words can sufficiently express the interest Lady
Howden and I take in the happiness and prosperity of all that relates to Lady William and you in your distant land'.

VII

No such reconciliation, however, took place between the civil and military authorities in Madras, and there is little evidence to suggest that the Company profited much from the example of the Vellore mutiny. No major re-drafting of the military regulations took place. While some attempt was made to ensure that European officers acquired a basic knowledge of relevant Indian languages, even this improvement was slow and uneven. The rank of killedar was not restored, nor is there any reason to believe that sardars came to enjoy increased respect from the Europeans in the army. The complaints and troubles of the sepoy establishment were in any case pushed into the background by the so-called White Mutiny of 1809, when European officers rebelled against reductions in their allowances. By the time that crisis had been resolved, the condition of the sepoy army was no longer a matter of immediate concern to the East India Company.

Alterations to the uniform of the sepoys continued unabated. Within a few years of the Vellore mutiny, the military authorities had introduced changes in the trousers worn by the Indian troops and attempted to impose a uniform pattern of sandal. Such innovations were made without reference to the civil government; they may even have constituted deliberate acts of bravado on the part of the military authorities, in order to demonstrate that they
had not been cowed by the mutiny at Vellore and that they could still act independently of the civil government.

These changes went undetected by successive Madras governors until 1825, when Sir Thomas Munro discovered what had been happening. Munro was amazed by the extent of the contravention of the code of practice laid down by Bentinck after the mutiny at Vellore. Even aspects of the turban had been altered, and all purely on the authority of circular letters from the Adjutant-General's office. Munro's anger at these unsanctioned changes in the dress regulations mirrored Bentinck's response nearly twenty years previously and demonstrates that the same old problems of how to control the actions of the army continued to bedevil the Madras government:

Under the authority of these letters, almost every article of dress has been altered from the standard prescribed by the general order of Government of the 24th September, 1806. The form and ornaments of the turban have been entirely changed ... These alterations, however, though sufficiently objectionable are not the main grounds on which I disapprove of the circular letters. The strong ground of objection against them lies in their operating in direct violation of the General Order by Government of the 24th September 1806, sanctioned by the Court of Directors and never yet repealed. I would therefore recommend that ... His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief ... be requested to cause a stop to be put to the issue of circular letters, affecting in any way the dress of the native troops, without previous reference to Government. 142
NOTES to Chapter 7

1. IOL Sm 1 The Times (London) 23 Dec 1806.
2. Ibid. 9 Jan 1806.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. HMS Vol.510, f.441 Receipt of account of Vellore Mutiny at Leadenhall Street, 17 Feb 1807.
6. IOL Sm 1 The Times (London) 26 March 1807.
7. For example, SRO Melville Castle Muniments GD 51/3/433. Major Buchan to his father, Colombo, 26 Nov 1806, contains one such private account.
8. IOL Sm 1 The Times (London) 26 March 1807.
10. Ibid. ff.426-437.
11. Ibid. f.25 Governor-General's Minute, Fort William, 11 Aug 1806.
12. IOL Eur F 176/28 Barlow Papers, Col Collins to Barlow n.d.
15. Ibid. f.471.
17. Ibid. f.798, para. 3.
18. Ibid. f.833, para. 23.
19. Ibid. f.839, para. 31.
20. Ibid. ff.839 and 844, paras 31 and 39.
21. Ibid. f.808, para. 12.
24. Portland PwF 1203 Bentinck to his father, Fort St George, 17 Sept 1806.
25. HMS Vol.506, f.455 Letter of appointment to Lord Minto. Ironically Minto was appointed on 10 July 1806.
27. Portland PwJb 726, f.55 Bentinck to Grenville, Fort St George, 1 Dec 1806.
28. Minto 11282, f.153 Minto to Parry, Madras, 24 June 1807.
29. Ibid. Minto to George Tierney, Madras, 30 June 1807.
30. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Portland PwJb 729, ff.218-221 Bentinck's Minute, Fort St George, 31 May 1806.
37. Portland PwJb 31, f.64 Maitland to Bentinck, Colombo, 13 Aug 1806.
38 Minto 11673 Maitland to Minto, Colombo, Sept 1806.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 See Portland PbJb 31 Correspondence between Bentinck and Maitland 1806.
43 Minto 11673 Maitland to Minto, Colombo, 28 July 1807.
44 J Cradock, Sketch of the Situation of Sir John Cradock Resulting from his having accepted the Appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the East India Company Forces at Madras in 1804, (London, 1808), p.7.
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47 Ibid. f.759 Bentinck's Farewell Speech, Sept 1807.
48 IOL Newspapers 27A Madras Courier, Wed. 30 Sept 1807.
49 Ibid. Wed. 16 Sept 1807.
50 Minto 11283, ff.222-224 Minto to Robert Dundas, Calcutta, 28 Nov 1807.
51 Minto 11388 Parry to Minto, London, Nov. 1807.
52 NLS Melville Papers MS 1063, Dundas to Minto, London, 1 June 1807.
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54 SHO Baird of Elie GD 147 Box 61, Bundle 3 Anstruther to ?, Madras, 28 Sept 1807.
55 Ibid.
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67 Ibid.
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69 Minto 11283, Minto to Parry, Fort William, 19 Sept 1807.
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Portland PwJb 264, f.676 Welsh to Lt-Col Grant, Palamcottah, 20 Nov.1806.


115 Pearson, op. cit., p. 2.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
121 Minto 11733 Sir J. Mackintosh to ?, Bombay, 21 Feb 1808.
123 Lord Minto in India, edited by Countess Minto, (London, 1880) Minto to Lady Minto, Madras, 18 July 1806.
124 Minto 11283 Minto to Parry, Fort William, 19 Sept 1807.
125 Minto 11338 f. 11 Parry to Minto, London, 15 July 1807.
126 Minto 11283 f. 231 Minto to Parry, Calcutta, 2 Dec 1807.
127 Ibid.
129 Ibid. p. 125.
130 Ibid. p. 133 Minto to Madras Govt, 29 May 1807.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid. p. 137.
133 Grant to G. Udny, 15 Sept. 1808 Quoted in Morris, op. cit., p. 295.
134 Minto 11302 f. 77 Dundas to Minto, n.d.
136 Rosselli, op. cit., p. 100.
137 For details of the dispute, see SRO Melville Castle Muniments GD 51/3/467.
138 D. of N.B.
139 PwJe 233 Cradock to Bentinck, London, 18 July 1829.
Chapter 8 : A Legend is Born : The Response of the British Community in Madras to the Vellore Mutiny.
The investigations into the Vellore mutiny were carried out as far as possible in secrecy. The Madras government was anxious that a matter which appeared to pose so great a threat to the security of the presidency should not become a matter for public knowledge and discussion. It was feared that the more the mutiny was talked about and speculated upon the greater would be the danger of a repetition. There were, however, problems in attempting to keep the matter quiet. In the first place, there was ineffective security. For example, William Petrie complained that 'it is known and the fact is too notorious to be concealed, that copies of our most secret papers can be procured from the Public Offices: that the native writers are masters of our language'.

In addition, the various enquiries into the mutiny were drawn out over several months, and fresh reports of alarms at military stations throughout the Presidency ensured that the whole question remained in the forefront of public attention.

In any case, nothing could have prevented public speculation about the mutiny. In general the British residents of the Madras Presidency were far from reticent in communicating their opinions of what had happened at Vellore to their own private correspondents. One who lived in Madras itself wrote, 'tho' we are so near . . . no particulars are made public. All we hear is the private accounts of people who were present and have
escaped. In such an atmosphere, rumour and gossip inevitably flourished, and a number of panic-stricken letters home were despatched by British people who feared that their lives were at serious risk. One such account was written by a young cadet, Frank Fowkes, who arrived at Madras only days after the mutiny at Vellore. He informed his father:

there has been such a horrid massacre of almost all the Europeans. They killed them (the brutes) in the most savage manner you can imagine. We are constantly alarmed with fresh reports of insurrections. A paper has been stuck up against the Government walls saying that all true Mussulmen will rise and massacre every European in India. Reports are so many here that we do not know which to believe.

Fowkes went on to give his father a graphic description of the actual events of the mutiny, based, of course, on the current rumours. The relief of the fort was described in particularly dramatic, and particularly inaccurate terms, with only six British soldiers said to have survived and these having only one round left in their muskets when the Dragoons arrived. Prominence was also given to a gory account of the recapture of the fort, which Fowkes called an 'amazing slaughter'. So heavy had been the death-toll, according to the young cadet's information, that 'ten carts were employed for four days in carrying the dead bodies out of the Fort'. His figure of six hundred sepoy dead, however, matched the official estimate.
Another young officer, Major Buchan, stationed at Colombo in Ceylon, was equally pessimistic about the state of affairs in South India in the aftermath of the mutiny. After being ordered by Ceylon's governor, Thomas Maitland, to embark for the Indian mainland following Major Welsh's urgent plea for assistance from Palamcottah, Buchan wrote to his father that 'the aspect which the affairs in this Country bears, at present, is most gloomy and what the result may be God only knows'.

Military opinion, even amongst those who were not closely involved in the affair, tended to condemn the princes. Writing to Thomas Munro one week after the mutiny, General Dickens was of the opinion that the princes should be 'executed forthwith'. This view was apparently widely held throughout the army. Frank Fowkes reported:

"It seems pretty clear that one of the Princes is the cause of all this disturbance, which we experience. He has bribed a great many sepoys... Colonel Marriott to whose care the Princes were entrusted seems to have been very neglectful of his duty in allowing them free correspondence all over the country."

More influential voices shared the view that there had been slip-shod security at Vellore. Sir Barry Close, the British Resident at Pune, drew an unfavourable comparison between Marriott and his predecessor, Colonel Dallas, who had been solely responsible for the security both of the princes and of the fort:
Dallas you know was particularly selected for the trust and the duties of the Fort were conducted you know with more rigour than at a frontier post in Europe in time of war. Dallas' spies constantly resided in the Princes' habitations and so difficult was it to pass anything out of the Palace without his knowledge that every attempt of the Princes to correspond with individuals abroad was immediately detected.8

Another correspondent came to the same conclusion:

It still seems to me that there must have been a shaky security in Vellore or the catastrophe could not have happened . . . . When Colonel Dallas commanded at Vellore, I know positively for I was there at the same time, that a rat could scarcely stir without his knowledge. Poor Colonel Fancourt could not possibly have been properly qualified for that delicate charge, a stranger as he was to the country, new to the Natives and unacquainted with their languages. A man to have good intelligence must be able to converse himself with his secret agents.9

The Governor of Bombay, Sir Jonathan Duncan, was also convinced from the first that the princes were at the root of the disaffection. He believed that the Vellore mutiny was a stark reminder for Company servants of the precariousness of their situation in India:

The late events at Vellore, which garrison the Nysore Princes were able to induce our own sepoys to endeavour to wrest from us, and in which they had well nigh succeeded . . . . betrays the secret of what a little hold we have on the affections of those on whom we must nevertheless rely for our Indian dominion.10

Other observers felt that the army had brought the trouble on its own head through issuing the controversial
regulations and the new pattern of turban. No less an authority than Thomas Munro was absolutely sure that this had been the case. His long official letter to Bentinck at the beginning of August had explained why he felt that the Mysore princes could not hope for any support in the country in general. In private, to his father, he was able to embellish his views without the constraints which were unavoidable in his correspondence with the Governor:

This trifling regulation, and a turban, with something in its shape or decorations to which the sepoys are extremely averse were thought to be so essential to the stability of our power in this country, that it was resolved to introduce them, at the hazard of throwing our native army into rebellion. One battalion at Vellore had already rejected the turban . . . but the projectors were not discouraged. They pushed on their grand design until they were suddenly stopped short by the dreadful massacre of the 10th of July.

Lady Elizabeth Gwillim, wife of a prominent Madras judge, also believed that the originators of the new regulations were responsible for the mutiny. In this, she was evidently reflecting the views of much of the civil and administrative establishment in the Presidency. She held the Deputy Adjutant-General, Major Pierce, chiefly responsible, and she applied her rather venomous wit to him in a letter to her family in England:

from all I can find he is a young man whose friends have mistaken his talents and made him an officer instead of a tailor, in which latter department he might have made a great fortune for he invents all sorts of new lapels
and ornaments and caps; and as those above him have adopted his fancies, the sepoys had innumerable changes in their dress and caps.13

Sir John Anstruther, the Advocate-General at Madras, shared this highly critical view of the dress regulations. He believed that to introduce the new turban and to alter the custom concerning caste-marks and ear-rings was:

just as wise as if a Mahomedan conqueror of Spain and of Britain were to forbid the inhabitants of the former to hold relics in devotion, or were to order organs to be built in all the Kirks in Scotland because David danced to the sound of musical instruments before the Ark of the Lord.14

This opinion was also adhered to by Thomas Parry, the prominent Madras merchant, who asked of one of his correspondents whether he could 'suppose it possible that any people could be so absurd as to issue such orders'.15

II

The dispute between the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief rapidly became a matter of public knowledge throughout the Presidency. The rivalry between the civil and military authorities had long been a fact of life in Madras, but the mutiny at Vellore added new depths to it and both the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief came in for some harsh criticism in the aftermath of the revolt. A correspondent of Robert Dundas, President of the Board of Control, pointed out that disputes between the two authorities had served to weaken control over the army:

In ascribing as we do most conscientiously the whole mischief to the Commander in
Chief, we cannot exonerate Lord William Bentinck from a primary error which gave place and opportunity to many subsequent ones. We mean the absolute and total relinquishment of the patronage of the Army and of all control over military arrangements to the Commander-in-Chief. We own we consider the independence of the Commander-in-Chief as pregnant with many dangers in this country from the peculiar nature of our native establishment. After the mutiny a violent discussion arose between the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief. The former said I left the army to you and you are responsible. The latter said no. The regulations complained of were passed by Your Lordship in Council and you are responsible as well as me. 16

Criticism was also widely levelled at the handling by the government of the crisis which followed the mutiny. To those who believed that the causes of the mutiny could be ascribed to the military regulations, Bentinck's equivocation was a particular source of irritation. Thomas Munro commented scathingly:

They were then filled with alarm. They imagined there was nothing but disaffection and conspiracy in all quarters, and that there would be a general explosion throughout all our military stations. There was fortunately, however, no ground for such apprehensions; for almost every person but themselves was convinced that the sepoys, both from long habit and from interest, were attached to the service - that nothing but an attempt to force the disagreeable regulation upon them would tempt them to commit an outrage, and that whenever this design was abandoned, every danger of commotion would be at an end, and the sepoys would be as tractable and as faithful as ever.
Their discontent had nothing in it of treason or disaffection; it was of the same kind as that which would have been excited in any nation by a violent attack upon its prejudices. 17

Lady Gwillim, too, exercised her vitriolic pen on the government in general and Bentinck in particular. No doubt her husband's dispute with the Governor over the powers of the courts in the Presidency coloured the way in which she viewed Bentinck's actions. 18 Although she was satisfied that the mutiny had originated in the dress regulations, Lady Gwillim was far from pleased with the decision to rescind the dress regulations completely:

Our blessed Governor is now, contrary to all advice, making concessions to the natives which never were thought of before and which will, of course, convince them that they have only to oppose whatever they dislike in order to obtain the opposite. 19

Nor did Bentinck's personal character escape censure:

Nothing would exceed the timidity of the Governor during this affair. He is said to have ridden round his garden for exercise, being afraid to venture into the roads; and all concerned are trying to shift the blame from one to another. I cannot think who will appear to be the culprit when the accounts reach you! The lowest will be likely to bear the burden of blame. 20

The freedom which so many correspondents allowed themselves in writing about the mutiny and its causes contrasted sharply with the progress of the various official enquiries. Those who were responsible for sifting through the evidence and evaluating its significance found it very difficult to come to many firm conclusions. Those
private individuals who were unencumbered with the facts of the affair, found it easy to put forward their untested hypotheses as to the causes of the mutiny. Through this combination of official secrecy and private opinions there emerged a picture of the Vellore mutiny which bore little resemblance to the truth. The heroics of Gillespie, the plotting of the hated Mysore princes and the sensitive religious superstitions of credulous sepoys were all exaggerated out of all proportion. Public opinion triumphed where official investigation had failed, and the real events and causes of the Vellore mutiny were largely obscured by the legends which sprang up around it.

III

One particularly intriguing account of the atmosphere in the Madras Presidency in the months following the Vellore mutiny is, unfortunately, anonymous. It consists of two documents, dated 26 February 1807 and 4 March 1807, which are now lodged in the records of the Secret Department of the Madras government.²¹ It is evident from their contents, however, that these papers were never intended for the eyes of the Governor and his Council. It is not certain whether they came to light in the lifetime of that government or whether they were deposited there subsequently.

The documents are written in a highly cryptic, conspiratorial fashion. They give a candid, personal assessment of the affairs of the government at this period
and provide many interesting insights. It seems probable that they were intended for the consumption of a higher British power than that of the Madras government. The Supreme Government in Bengal is one possible recipient, though it is perhaps more likely that they were meant for the Court of Directors or the Board of Control in London. One other, rather more remote possibility is that the documents were newspaper copy. Whoever they were intended for, there is no way of ascertaining whether they ever reached their destination, or whether the documents held in Madras are the originals or merely copies kept by the sender.

The author gives few clues to his identity. This is perhaps not surprising in view of some of the highly controversial comments he has to make about the affairs and the personalities of the Madras government. It seems certain, however, that the intended recipient did not know the author's identity either. For example, the author takes the trouble to describe himself as being 'no Company's man or disappointed man', implying that his motives were purely altruistic and that he was not acting out of personal embitterment or revenge. Moreover he professes himself on occasion unable to comment with certainty on a number of matters, conceding that:

   It would require an access to documents out of my reach to speak with precision on these points, but as to an unbiased opinion I may not be far wrong.\textsuperscript{22}

   If not engaged in the highest echelons of the Madras government, however, it is nonetheless evident from his
writings that the author has had some close personal contact with both Lord William Bentinck and Sir John Cradock, for he describes the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief in intimate detail and with a certainty of touch which it is hard to believe was garnered at second hand. It is possible, though this is pure speculation, that the author of the documents was a senior officer in the King's army, an office which would explain his professed detachment from the Company and also his apparent social contact with the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief. On the other hand, it is also possible that the writer was a relative of a prominent official, civil or military, on a prolonged visit to Madras. It must be said, however, that whatever his identity, his views are rather more consistent with the military interpretation of the causes of the mutiny than with those of the civil authority. Overall, the picture he draws is of a society close to panic and breakdown:

After the affair at Vellore, suspicion and alarm spread through every garrison. Rumours propagated by Mussulman or French interests that the extirpation of the English was at hand. Emissaries in the disguise of Fakirs daily apprehended, exciting disaffection among the troops. A French flag was hoisted at Seringapatam. No person could tell who did it. Placards posted full of threats against the English. Choultries scribbled with mutinous expressions. Christmas Day and New Year's Day were said to be appointed for a general massacre. 23

Other rumours were also current:
Rajah of Calastry and other Poligars have taken a threatening attitude. Reported that 400 of our sepoys intended to join them, after having cut off their officers. If the French on hearing of the Vellore business send out their emissaries and spies, the country must be lost to England, unless she sends out a man of uncommon capacity to prevent the fatal effects of such a mission. . . . Reported also that many thousands of people are collecting about the Black Town for the intention of plunder. One merchant has requested guards to protect his property. 24

These fears demonstrate dramatically the full extent of the threat which many believed to hang over the British community at this time. Being apparently a detached observer of the scene, the author of the documents had no need to justify himself. His comments consequently carry a more vivid picture of the state of affairs than is portrayed in the official writings of the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief. Equally, since the documents are clearly not letters to concerned relatives, there was no need for him to adopt a falsely optimistic tone, merely to keep up the spirits of the recipient.

The author was not alone in his concern that the French might be involved in the mutiny and its aftermath. The Treaty of Amiens of 1802 gave the French access once more to South India by re-establishing their sphere of interest in Pondicherry. The war in Europe provided every incentive for the French to harass British colonial possessions wherever practicable. Yet there is no direct evidence to link the French with the mutiny at Vellore or
with any of the other disturbances in British military garrisons in the succeeding months. Futteh Ali, Tipu's nephew, who appears to have been the most active agent in attempting to free the princes from Vellore, claimed to have the friendship of an influential Frenchman, but nothing appears to have depended upon this.25

Anxieties about the activities of 'Mussulmen' and poligars were, of course, widely held by the authorities in the Presidency. The author's reference to the danger of plunder by the inhabitants of the Black Town area of Madras is rather more remarkable and can be linked to further comments which he makes about the state of the Madras economy during a famine which beset the Presidency in 1806 and 1807:

Whole coast threatened with the horrors of famine . . . . Failure of the public revenue from a failure of crops . . . . When the rains failed it was known there would be a famine. Advertisement for encouraging the importation of rice delayed too long and produced a scarcity at Madras, and some stores were broken open and plundered. Sepoys continue to guard the bazaars. After the advertisement grain came from Bengal in abundance but it is still dear. Nevertheless great distress is apprehended.26

Lord William Bentinck won some praise from the anonymous author for his efforts to overcome the effects of the famine by 'humanely' employing the poor for various public works and paying them in rice. Overall, however, the actions of the government in relation to suppressing the revolt and its concomitant disturbances came in for some heavy criticism:
Europeans without attachment to or confidence in their present rulers... Some time passed before any Proclamation was issued to the native troops assuring them that there was no foundation for the reports which drew them from their allegiance. This had an immediate good effect - to be regretted it was not published in July instead of December. When posted up it was defaced and torn down, a proof of disaffection. Since that period all is pretty quiet. Whether this is the effect of the Proclamation or fear of famine is yet to be proved.27

Moreover, the writer argued that an error had been made by the government in insisting that Colonel Grant and Major Welsh should be court-martialled following their actions at Palamcottah and Quilon:

similar actions have been overlooked in favourites - they were wrong but it is wrong to try them. It shows to the native troops the limits of the authority of superior officers, which it would be prudent at present to conceal. Military character sufficiently lowered by the establishment of civil power over them - this was right but to proceed further would lose the country by the disgrace which would attach to the military character in the eyes of the natives.28

Bentinck's conviction that the discontents in the army could be attributed simply to the dress regulations was strongly criticised. The author claimed that 'the more experienced and better informed of the Company's servants looked to other causes for so cruel and perfidious an act as that perpetrated at Vellore'.29 He believed that the concessions made to the Indian troops had not really succeeded in defusing the situation. On the
contrary, the Madras government 'stands on a very insecure footing', and it was claimed that the true causes of the mutiny and its troubled aftermath were to be found in the entire system of government employed in Madras, from its very inception.

The author argued that insufficient attention had been paid to the dignity of the Mughul rulers, whom the Company had gradually replaced. The family of the Nawab of Arcot, for example, had been treated with contempt:

As soon as the Nabob acceded to the transfer, a set of native revenue servants were let loose upon the country who committed the most shameless depredations on the servants of the Nabob, depriving the women of their jewels and clothes under the pretext of securing arrears of revenue.

Further, the whole concept of a riotwari settlement of the land revenue which had been vigorously recommended by Thomas Munro and enthusiastically supported by Bentinck was said to have failed:

The present revenue system is not satisfactory to the people. The husbandman is exposed to greater vexations than he was before its introduction.

That local attachment which formed so striking a feature in the native character, and which it is our policy to encourage, has been destroyed by it.

Many of the ryots flock to the large towns for subsistence and discontent is prevalent amongst the whole.

In fact, the drawbacks of the revenue system referred to in the document must have been due, at least in part,
to the famine which the author himself cites. The anonymous writer may have chosen to make a certain amount of political capital out of this natural disaster in order to discredit the controversial revenue system. He was, however, equally scathing in his opinion of the legal system which Bentinck had done so much to encourage. The principles by which it was drawn up were not at fault, he claimed, but the people of South India were simply not ready to accept or understand its sophistication, particularly when its administration was highly inefficient:

Judicial system, altho' a wise one, it is supposed will not answer. Natives can't comprehend it. Young judges unfit for the duty. Service cannot furnish men qualified for these offices. Bad is the best among them. Some too young, some too lazy, too stupid or too little conscientious. People at large not fit for civil liberty. System ought to be gradually established. It should be tried in one District under an efficient judge and proved, and then in another and so on.32

The writer was convinced that the introduction of civil authority had been too rapid. The relatively sudden influx of judicial and revenue officers had undermined the authority of the military, and led to confusion amongst the Indians and resentment in the army:

Company's officers complain that the unlimited powers vested in the Judges and the indiscreet exercise of those powers have in a great measure deprived them of the respect and esteem of the sepoys who had always been accustomed to look up to their Commanding Officer as the person from whom they were to expect reward or punishment.
To impress the sepoys with a correct sense of the distinction between the civil and military authorities is declared to be impracticable.

This loss of influence with the men the officers attribute to a fixed and settled design to degrade the Company's military servants. 33

For the Company officers this loss of prestige had been accompanied by a trend towards awarding all the top ranks in the army to King's officers, a practice which appeared to further devalue the Company's officers.

To these general deficiencies in the system of government had been added, it was claimed, two specific errors in the way in which the government had handled matters at Vellore. First, the division of authority at Vellore had 'contributed essentially to the success of ... intrigues'. The author of the document believed that Marriott had allowed the Mysore princes 'unwarrantable indulgences'. Secondly, the decision to enforce the turban after the initial objections to it were expressed in May had 'operated as a powerful engine in furthering the plans of the disaffected of all ranks and led to the catastrophe at Vellore'. 34

While the writer thus made a strong attack on civil authority, he was equally unimpressed by the quality of military leadership in the Presidency. His opinion on the characters of William Bentinck and John Cradock reveal more sympathy for the Governor than for the Commander-in-Chief:
The plain tale is bad enough. Lord William is a well-meaning, good-natured man, and of extraordinary forbearance. I have always found him friendly but deficient in candour, is suspicious and wants mind. 'Sir John is an old rake, a dissipated man of fashion, a trifler, but taking care of the main chance.'

Displaying the lack of constraint which marks the whole document and contributes so much to its fascination, the anonymous writer was not at all reticent in developing these themes:

A melancholy case when the people have no confidence in the talents or virtue of their rulers. Lord William is a well-meaning man but has nobody about him fit to advise with. ... Lord William's tergiversation of conduct prevents free communication with him. He is determined to be moderate and he has been so 'with a vengeance', for the bad have prevailed on his moderation and a general relaxation prevails. His excess of moderation drives him to the strongest measures. ... This moderation gained him neither friends nor reputation. Men who do their duty are neglected or their interests over-turned by new connections or new parties. Lord William of no party but the tool of everyone. His caprice destroys the regard his good nature and affability are calculated to create, and few appear to have any confidence in his exertions or talents to preserve them in perilous times.

It was the Commander-in-Chief, however, who came in for the most biting criticisms:

Sir John is a courtier of the first rate. Suaviter in modo never leaves him: but if one tenth of what is said about him is true he is of all men the least qualified for his situation. Has attempted to swindle the Company out of double the allowance granted to him.
He has disgusted the Company's army by his partiality to the King's troops — has made the service a perfect convenience without doing it any good.

... Was a popular Commander for the first four months. His urbanity is engaging but his address cannot conceal his duplicity as equal to it. In the army generally detested, by the Company's officers abhorred — one or two sycophants excepted. His partiality to the King's has completely disorganised the Company's army. He is hated by those for whom he has violated every principle of justice.

This unsparing indictment of the Madras government and its leading personalities led the author to conclude gloomily:

Thus we stand at Madras. Army both officers and men dissatisfied. Civil establishment without energy ... Inhabitants depending on Bengal for food. Treasury likely to be soon exhausted. The thinking part of the community anxiously waiting for what may happen without any confidence in Government ... The system is corrupt — unless corrected — we are ruined.

IV

Of all the British in Madras who committed their views on the Vellore mutiny to paper, none was more convinced of the existence of a widespread conspiracy to subvert British power than Major James Haslewood, the officer whose views were so enthusiastically embraced by Charles Grant. At the time of the mutiny he was stationed at Wallajahbad, no more than forty miles from Vellore. In October 1806, Haslewood wrote to a friend in the Court of Directors, stating his strong opinions about the causes of
the mutiny. He left no doubt that he considered himself amply qualified to comment on the affairs of the army:

The Court of Directors and the Board of Control will be crammed with causes that have had no influence whatsoever in the late events. They will be told of vaccination and Priests, Princes and New Judges, and of French emissaries, which as causes have no existence in truth. The Mutiny at Vellore broke out in the Battalion I had served with, near 7 years, and I was personally acquainted with all the ring-leaders. I was with the other battalion of the same regiment . . . when the mutiny began and actually present at Vellore on the second day after it. The guilty and innocent unbosomed themselves to me without reserve. Their separate accounts all agreed then, and have never since been contradicted so that I have as good evidence as the nature of the case can afford, and as comprehensive as can be obtained. 39

The Major attributed the mutiny to a spirit of disaffection amongst the sepoys which he claimed to have been gradually developing ever since the introduction of the new army regulations of 1796. The new code, he argued, by creating the need for a sudden influx of young European officers into the army, had had the effect of making the contact between the officers and the sepoys less personal. In this way the bonds of contact between the British and the Indians, which Haslewood believed to be essential to the successful management of the army, had become weak. Moreover, he believed that it was from that period that the desire originated to assimilate as far as possible the dress of the sepoys with that of the
European troops. Amongst the new European officers there was little effort to establish good relations with the sepoys. Consequently, the Madras army had become increasingly alienated from its officer corps.

In Haslewood's judgement, the young officers who arrived in the Presidency were not properly prepared for their task. Totally inappropriate reforms had been introduced:

Every discovery made in Hyde Park or calculated for St James's, every new system of discipline that sprung up in Shorncliffe or Barham Downs was transplanted with the utmost avidity into an Army attached beyond all others on earth to ancient customs and usage, ever unwilling to prefer new to old, however much the former might exceed the latter in advantage, and who could only be held within the limits of obedience by Custom, prejudice and ignorance. 40

Although Haslewood evidently held the sepoys in contempt for this 'prejudice and ignorance', his paternalistic attitude towards the Indian troops, allied no doubt to a strong wish to preserve the power of field officers over their men, prompted him to begin a campaign against these new trends in the army. His attempts to influence successive Commanders-in-Chief met with no success, however, a fact which he attributed to the power of the Adjutant-General's office which was so strong that:

those who attempted to oppose them rendered themselves in the public estimation ridiculous and contemptible. To complete the disgust of the Native Soldier it was judged necessary to deprive the Hindoo of his marks and ear-rings, and to curtail the sanctity of a Mussulman's beard, and to cover
the head of all casts with a turban
the exact resemblance of the Cap of
the European Soldier. 41

According to Haslewood, these measures had appalled
even the Christians amongst the sepoys, and had provided
the necessary impetus for a Mohamedan plot to re-
establish their pre-eminence 'on the ruins of the
English power'. He argued, however, that the role of
the princes had been a minor one. The princes, he
claimed, 'were corrupted by our sepoys, not the sepoys
by them . . . they were the tools in the hands of the
sepoys for destroying the English power, and for
erecting a new Mussulman Empire'. 42

Haslewood's views are therefore demonstrably in line
with the evidence of the list of grievances sent from
Hyderabad, the letter from Fûtteh Ali intercepted at
Vellore in November 1806 and the remarks made by the
anonymous observer of the Madras scene in the months
following the mutiny. All agree that the princes were
approached by the sepoys and not the other way round;
that their role was minor; and that a small number of
conspirators succeeded in spreading disaffection through
the ranks of the sepoys for the purpose of re-establishing
a Muslim government.

In the case of Haslewood, however, his concerns over
the existence of a conspiracy apparently became
increasingly obsessive in character. The alarm at
Wallajahbad in October confirmed for him that the army
was widely disaffected. In March 1807, he wrote again
to Hall Plumer to explain to him the circumstances surrounding Colonel Lang's desperate plea to Gillespie and the Dragoons:

Before the end of October I returned to my station at Wallajahbad, and on the very day of my arrival . . . could perceive that the conspiracy among the troops, had not only revived but had assumed a most active and alarming state. I could perceive that the spirit of corruption had been most actively at work in my own Battalion, and that it was in a state ripe for revolt. 43

Although Cradock's enquiry revealed little substance in the fears of the European officers at Wallajahbad, Haslewood remained highly suspicious. Indeed, he began to be convinced that it was only through his own efforts that the lives of the Europeans in his garrison were being protected:

The Mussulmen continued their conspiracy and three different plots were formed for murdering the European officers and going off with their arms to unfurl the banners of Mahomed. Having won over many confidential Hindoo officers and sepoys, and some Mussulman non-commissioned officers and sepoys, I always got intelligence of their plots in time to counteract them . . . I have no doubt that a general conspiracy exists among the natives of every cast and class to expel us from the interior of India, to confine us to our factories and to reduce us to our original character of humble traders. 44

As has been shown, Haslewood's continuous campaign to alert the Madras government to the continued dangers existing in the army resulted in Lieutenant-Colonel John Munro being despatched to Wallajahbad to investigate. 45
While this officer found nothing on which any substantial case could be made out in support of Haslewood's suspicions, this was by no means sufficient to discourage the Major. In January 1807, he took the extraordinary step of travelling to Madras, and there, in front of a magistrate, dictating a sworn affidavit containing the grounds for his fears and demanding that the government should renew its enquiries. These vigorous attempts to re-open a subject which the government considered best left to die away of its own accord were a constant source of embarrassment to the civil authorities. Even the Commander-in-Chief had reached the stage of wishing to hear no more about conspiracies in the army. He confided to Bentinck, 'I think Major Haslewood's letter the most curious production I have ever read. I shall endeavour to stop his tongue, though I despair of success without some stronger measures'.

At length, the government reluctantly agreed to give Haslewood another opportunity to air his views on the subject. In this they were no doubt influenced by the notorious example of Colonel Forbes and Mustapha Beg. The Major once more prefaced his presentation of evidence with a rather pompous assurance of the vital role which he himself had played in avoiding further mutinies. He advised the Committee which the government had assembled that the witnesses he would bring:
will prove that my own individual exertions and discernment have prevented an insurrection against the Government and against all British authority from breaking out in the Carnatic. 47

In the event, however, the testimony brought forward by Haslewood amounted to no more than rumour and suspicion. Sepoys and servants spoke of nightly meetings involving a number of Muslim officers at which it was alleged that seditious plans had been laid. No proof emerged, however, and the Committee remained unconvinced. In its report, it conceded:

that Major Haslewood has established that a serious spirit of disaffection and mutiny pervaded a part of the corps he commanded.48

Crucially, though, it was not prepared to countenance Haslewood's insistence that 'this partial disaffection in the corps was the result of a general conspiracy or had any general object in its aim'. It counselled Haslewood to be more discreet in his approach to publicising his fears, in case he should succeed only in unsettling the army further; and it expressed its regret 'that he has permitted the belief of a general Mahomedan conspiracy against the British power to take such possession of his mind'.49

It is, of course, easy to dismiss Haslewood as an eccentric who became a little unbalanced by the fear of sepoys plotting against him. Yet there is no doubt that his was only an extreme example of the way in which British military officers in many garrisons were overcom
by a feeling of impending doom. In retrospect, knowing that no further troubles occurred at Hyderabad or Wallajahbad, at Nundydroog or Palamcottah, or at Quilon, it is easy to scoff at the spectre of insurrection which came to haunt the Madras army. These were all examples, however, of the intense shock that the Vellore mutiny transmitted throughout the Presidency. The bloodshed at Vellore had such a dramatic impact on the Madras community that its entire stability was undermined, and it should be no surprise that in such circumstances military officers responded with fear and suspicion.

Haslewood himself remained fully convinced that his suspicions were justified. It is interesting to note that his clash with government and with the Commander-in-Chief and his staff did not materially affect the course of his career. Although he had only reached the rank of Major in 1805, by 1809 he had been promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. He was invalided out of the Company army in 1811, but enjoyed a long retirement. Years after returning to Britain, the events surrounding the Vellore mutiny still occupied his mind. He continued to carry out as much investigation as his situation would allow, and late in the 1820s he produced a lengthy treatise on the subject which purported to bring forward startling new evidence. Haslewood claimed to have been made privy to an unknown truth about the causes of the mutiny, and in presenting this information he did not stint his well-developed sense of drama:
This secret, I must now proceed to reveal, for I believe up to this hour the Madras Government is in profound ignorance of it, unless Captain Hughes of the 1st Regiment (long dead) revealed it to them, for I authorised him to communicate all my information to Sir John Cradock then Commander-in-Chief.51

Haslewood's revelation was, in fact, that the seeds of the Vellore mutiny had been sown as long before the actual event as 1802. He claimed that three factors had combined to disaffect the Muslim troops and to encourage them to attempt to overthrow the British. In the first place, the lawful heir to the Nawab of Arcot had not been allowed to succeed to his rightful inheritance and had instead been set aside and replaced by the British. This had angered the Muslims as it appeared to furnish positive proof that the British intended to follow a policy of weakening them at every opportunity. Secondly, the Peace of Amiens allowed a French governor to return to Pondicherry. A natural centre of enmity had consequently been created within South India to the British government and from it had emanated a stream of anti-British propaganda. According to Haslewood, it had been rumoured by the French that the British were on point of a mass emigration from their own country and intended to take over India completely in order to escape from Napoleon's armies.52 This had been widely accepted by the inhabitants of South India, and antipathy towards the British had intensified. Thirdly, the effect of the reformed army regulations meant that the close contact
between European officers and Indian troops which could have been vital in defusing the disaffection had been severed.

This 'French connection' was the major thrust of Haslewood's new evidence. In substance, however, it was no more concrete than had been his submissions to the Committee at Madras in 1807. He referred to a sardar, Usman Cawn, from whom Haslewood had learnt many intimate details concerning the mutiny. Usman was said to have been a man of great influence with the sepoys at the time of the mutiny. Haslewood revealed that Usman had confessed to having been the first of the Indian corps to approach the Mysore princes in order to inform them of the sepoys' intentions to mutiny. When Haslewood had arrived from Wallajahbad at Vellore on the day following the mutiny, he had questioned Usman about the origins of the revolt. The sardar, who had not himself participated in the actual insurrection, had informed the Major that neither of the causes then being most widely spoken of, were in fact correct:

Sir, this is not a turband business. The men were daily making up the turbands ... under the personal inspection of Colonel Forbes ... and neither him nor I discovered any reluctance in them. 53

Haslewood had then suggested that the princes must have been responsible for the mutiny, but this surmise had been swiftly dismissed by Usman:
What! those poor boys confined in a prison? If the wealth of the Padsha or the great Nabob his father was never able to corrupt any of us, how could those boys corrupt two battalions? 54

Despite this apparent willingness to disabuse Haslewood of his mistaken views on the causes of the mutiny, Usman refused to inform the Major of its true origins. Haslewood had only much later discovered what he believed to be the whole truth concerning the mutiny through a servant of his who had been a sardar at Vellore at the time of the insurrection.

For all the drama of his presentation of his evidence, Haslewood's treatise did not add materially to the stock of knowledge concerning the mutiny. It was not a sensational revelation to the Madras government to discover that Muslims in South India resented the loss of their power and the treatment of many of their rulers by the British. Nor was it surprising that the French at Pondicherry circulated stories designed to discredit the British. These were both factors with which successive governors of Madras, including Bentinck, were all too familiar. Overall, Haslewood's final attempt to demonstrate that he knew far more than any other European about the origins of the mutiny was no more successful than his previous presentations. It did, however, add one more layer to the legend of Vellore.
## NOTES to Chapter 8

1. Portland PwJb 264 Petrie to Bentinck, February 1808.
2. IOL Gwillim Papers, Lady Gwillim to ?, Madras, 30 Sept 1806.
3. IOL Fowkes MSS Eur E 10, Letter 106, Fowkes to his father, Madras, n.d.
4. Ibid. Letter 107, Fowkes to his father, Madras, n.d.
5. SRO Melville Castle Muniments GD 51/3/434 Major Buchan to his father, Colombo, 26 Nov. 1806.
6. IOL Munro Collection, Eur F/151/9 Dickens to Col Munro, 16 July 1806.
7. IOL Fowkes MSS Eur E 10, Letter 106, Fowkes to his father, Madras, n.d.
12. Ibid.
13. IOL Gwillim Papers, Lady Gwillim to ?, Madras, 30 Sept 1806.
19. IOL Gwillim Papers, Lady Gwillim to ?, 30 Sept 1806.
20. Ibid.
22. Ibid. Paper I.
24. Ibid. Paper 2.
27. Ibid. Paper I.
29. Ibid. Paper 2.
30. Ibid. Paper 2.
31. Ibid. Paper 2.
32. Ibid. Paper 1.
33. Ibid. Paper 2.
34. Ibid. Paper 2.
35. Ibid. Paper 2.
36 Ibid. Paper I.
37 Ibid. Paper I.
38 Ibid. Paper I.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid. GD 51/3/447 Haslewood to Hall Plumer, Madras, 2 March 1807.
44 Ibid.
46 Portland PwJb, f.227, Cradock to Bentinck, Feb.1807.
49 Ibid. f.1226.
51 Portland PwJb 687 Narrative of the Origin and Causes of the Disaffection of the Native Troops upon the Madras Establishment and also of those which occasioned the Mutiny of Vellore, n.d.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
Chapter 9: Historians of the Vellore Mutiny.
I

It must be conceded at the outset that the historiography of the Vellore mutiny is not extensive. The mutiny had a far greater impact amongst its contemporaries than it has subsequently made amongst historians. Works devoted entirely to the mutiny have been rare. No book has as yet been published which deals exclusively with the subject. There have, however, been a number of articles, and the mutiny has also been examined in unpublished Ph.D. theses.

What accounts for this comparative neglect? It is certainly not due to any lack of documentary evidence. There is an abundance both of official records and of private papers relating to the mutiny. Might it then be that the mutiny has not been considered an event of sufficient importance and significance to attract concentrated research? It seems most likely that historians have indeed ignored the Vellore mutiny on these grounds. In many ways it was an extraordinarily enigmatic affair. Brief, intense and ferocious, the mutiny lay outside the normal pattern of events in India in the early nineteenth century which witnessed the steady development of Company rule. Moreover, the causes of the mutiny have tended to inspire polemic rather than research. Before 1857, the issues raised by any debate over the causes of the mutiny were still very much current. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the history of British India was being written almost exclusively by Company servants. The humiliation which
the mutiny represented for the Company was not likely to have proved an attractive subject for such writers, particularly, perhaps, when one of the main participants in the events surrounding the mutiny was subsequently Governor-General of India until as late as 1835. In any case, it appeared to many historians that little in the subsequent history of British India depended upon the Vellore mutiny. It could easily be seen as a strange but isolated incident occurring in a Presidency which was increasingly becoming a backwater as the main current of Company rule began to flow from Bengal.

After 1857, historiographical neglect of the Vellore mutiny can be accounted for in a different way. Its own importance and the light which it could shed on its own period became submerged in a veritable deluge of work on the Indian Mutiny. A new, but very minor role was found for the Vellore mutiny. It became significant as a possible fore-runner for the far more widespread events of 1857 and 1858. Historians could now point to Vellore as an important precedent for discontent in the Company army. Moreover, Vellore offered some very alluring points of comparison: for greased cartridges could be read injudiciously shaped turbans; for Bahadur Shah and Nana Sahib could be read the Mysore princes. Early examples of sepoy superstition and malignant Muslim conspiracy could thus be conveniently cited. No full-blown study of Vellore took place to confirm such comfortable theories yet the supposed similarities with the
Indian mutiny were frequently emphasised. The fact that half a century and over two thousand miles lay between Vellore and Meerut was frequently forgotten.

II

In the nineteenth century, the first historical accounts of the Vellore mutiny were largely narrative in character. The dramatic recapture of the fort was highlighted, but little effort was made to analyse the causes of the revolt. Instead, the cause of the mutiny was generally deemed to have been either the turban or the Mysore princes, depending on the particular point of view of the historian. In this way, historians mirrored the reactions of contemporaries of the mutiny, and the argument which had so deeply divided the civil and military authorities in Madras was repeated in print.

Two of the nineteenth century's most influential historians of British India, for example, adopted completely opposing standpoints on the causes of the Vellore mutiny. H. Wilson, in Mill and Wilson, The History of British India (1845), stated that, 'the essential and mainspring of the mutiny was religious principle'. While, in stark contrast, J.W. Kaye, in his Christianity in India (1859), wrote:

I believe that I should best convey my opinion of the connection of the Vellore massacre with the subject of this work by taking no further note of it. But although it was in no degree the result of Christianity in India, it was the cause of many grievous charges against Christianity in India.
Kaye believed that:

an insane hope engendered in the breasts of the princes of the house of Tipu — a hope of recovering their lost dominion in Mysore — was the origin of the movement.3

Wilson, on the other hand, vehemently denied such a possibility:

That the mutiny of Vellore was of a purely political character, and arose out of a conspiracy to replace a Mohammedan dynasty on the throne of Mysore — an opinion that was strenuously advocated by those who wished to shut their eyes against the evidence of its religious connexion — was wholly incapable of demonstration.4

Such contrasting views from the two historians may have revealed more about their own philosophies than about the causes of the Vellore mutiny. Wilson was determined to place the responsibility for the revolt on interference in the sepoys' religions. This reflected his sympathy for the utilitarian philosophy of the author whose work he was continuing, James Mill. Kaye was an evangelical. Christianity in India was a celebration of the achievements of European missionaries in India. Just as Charles Grant had done at the time, Kaye sought to show that the blame for the mutiny could not in any way be laid at the door of missionaries.

On the whole, Wilson's views were rather less intransigent than those of Kaye. While Kaye refused to countenance the possibility that fear of Christianity had played any part whatsoever in the revolt, Wilson argued:
It is a great error to suppose that the people of India are so sensitive upon the subject of their religion, either Hindu or Mohammedan, as to suffer no approach or controversy, or to encounter adverse opinions with no other arguments than insurrection and murder... It was not conversion that the troops dreaded, it was compulsion.

Kaye and Wilson were agreed, however, that the way in which the Indian troops were treated by the Company was a contributory factor in the outbreak of mutiny. Wilson was critical of the Company's failure to mount a proper investigation into the rejection of the new turbans by the sepoys in May 1806. He believed that had their complaints been fully examined at that time, it 'would in all likelihood have prevented the mutiny of July'. Wilson attributed this negligence to an excess of 'military absolutism'. Only after the mutiny had taken place, Wilson believed, did the military authorities realise the dangers of ignoring the Indian troops. They had then, he thought, over-reacted by exchanging the 'supineness of security for the restlessness of suspicion' and:

listened to every whisper of insurrection, trembled at every tale of tumult and massacre, and kept both themselves and their men in a constant fever of aimless apprehension.

Kaye remained fully convinced that the leadership of the Mysore princes had been the mainspring for the mutiny, but, in his History of the Indian Mutiny (1864), he conceded that the low status of the Indian troops.
particularly of the officers, had helped to create an atmosphere in which Muslim conspiracy could flourish.8

This view was also taken by S.S. Furnell in The Mutiny of Vellore, a short holograph on the mutiny which was produced in Madras circa 1840. Furnell acknowledged that the new turban had been widely seen as the cause of the mutiny, but he himself remained unconvinced:

The feeling against it was certainly far from universal; for in many instances much alacrity was shown in adopting it, and, after the mutiny, some corps requested permission to wear it as a testimony to their unshaken fidelity.9

Furnell had no doubts as to where the true origin of the mutiny lay. Not only did he consider the fact that Vellore was the residence of the princes to be of great significance, but he also argued that 'the whole neighbourhood swarmed with the creatures of the deposed family' and:

our ranks thus comprehended a body of men whose feelings and whose interests were arrayed against us... in the town and garrison of Vellore, their numerical strength was greater than that of the government that held them in captivity.10

Overall, Furnell's assessment of the Vellore mutiny is perhaps most remarkable for the complacent, racialist assumptions which it contains. Furnell wrote of:

an almost superstitious feeling of respect on the part of Indians for the people who within the compass of a very brief period of time, have, as if by enchantment, become masters of an empire splendid beyond comparison with any other held in a condition of dependency by a foreign state.11
Such fatuous self-confidence was to be punctured by the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The way in which British historians wrote of India was discernibly altered by that traumatic event. It became apparent that British rule in India depended not upon inherent racial superiority; nor upon Britain being a more advanced civilisation; but, more simply, upon sheer force of arms. This realisation was not solely due to the fact that the Indian troops had had the temerity to launch a full-scale revolt in Bengal. It was due also to the appalling atrocities that had taken place on both sides. British officers had shown themselves to be as capable of barbarism as the darkest of Indians. Moreover, the general public in Britain had shown a considerable appetite for revenge and there was no shortage of gory descriptions of the events of 1857 and 1858. 12

So emotive a term did 'mutiny' become in relation to India that, in some accounts, the events at Vellore appear to have been embellished by completely unconnected occurrences which took place during the Indian Mutiny. There was certainly a remarkable discrepancy between the descriptions of the Vellore mutiny given by J.W. Kaye in History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-1858 (1864-76) and W.F. Butler in A Narrative of Historical Events connected with the 69th Regiment (1870). Both contained remarkable inaccuracies. Kaye still maintained that the behaviour of British soldiers in India had been in the main civilised and chivalrous. This led him to assert, completely erroneously, that in the aftermath of the Vellore mutiny,
'Gillespie ... would not soil his victory with any cruel reprisals'. Butler, on the other hand, positively relished the slaughter which Gillespie had unleashed at Vellore, describing events there in some detail — and with a considerable sense of drama:

Between the great pagoda and the eastern rampart there was situated a large oblong court in which the English soldiers had been accustomed to exercise at the game of "fives" when the rays of the sun grew less intense.

Into this court, the mutineers, to the number of three hundred, were now placed; they filled almost the entire space between the walls, and the dense dark mass reaching to the extremity of the flagway, had around it, upon three sides, lofty walls; and upon the fourth a wall less lofty, but more impassable, a living wall of steel from the centre of which protruded the muzzles of the galloper guns.

The order given to the dismounted troops, who stood around these guns, was one apparently easy of fulfilment; it was to fire until the living crowd became a heap of dead; but it is said that half an hour afterward there were arms moving and a few bodies writhing amidst the confused shapeless mass of black corpses which lay four and five deep upon the flagged floor of the blood-saturated fives court. 14

Apart from exaggerating the numbers put to death in this manner, Butler's account concurs with eye-witness accounts of the aftermath of the mutiny.15 In other ways, however, his narrative of events was wildly inaccurate. For example, he justified Gillespie's vengeance by reporting that the sepoys had indulged themselves in a wholesale slaughter of women and children:
it was easy to shoot English soldiers as they lay asleep in their beds, but it was easier still to cut down frightened women and dash the brains from helpless children in the detached bungalows of the cantonment. So the sepoys revelled in this particular species of Indian bravery, as fifty years later they revelled in similar atrocities on the banks of the holy Ganges.16

Butler went on to assert (showing a fine regard for social niceties) that 'nearly all the ladies, women and children in the fort and cantonments were shot down or butchered in cold blood'.17 In fact, a number of women and children later provided invaluable eye-witness accounts of the mutiny and there were very few fatalities indeed amongst them. Butler's account was mistaken, therefore, but the flavour of 1857 is unmistakeable.

The most reliable history of the Vellore mutiny written in the nineteenth century is to be found in W.J. Wilson, History of the Madras Army (1882-1887). Although almost entirely narrative in character, Wilson's account was well-researched and drew on a number of the official records relating to the event. Lengthy quotations from these documents helped him to give an accurate factual account of the mutiny. Wilson did not seek to confirm any preconceptions in his interpretation of the mutiny. He succeeded instead in giving an even-handed version of events, without attempting to draw unwarranted conclusions. In a sense, however, this is both a strength and a weakness of the work since he made no attempt to resolve the ambiguous findings of the Commission of Enquiry, being
content to quote from it without attempting any form of objective appraisal.18

III

At the beginning of the twentieth century, H. Morris, in *Life of Charles Grant* (1904), faithfully reflecting the views of his subject, attributed the outbreak of the mutiny to the Mysore princes.19 But by then his was a lone voice. The generally accepted interpretation of the causes was now that the turban had inflamed the religious sensibilities of the sepoys. Indeed the matter appeared settled. In the 1920s both the *Oxford History of India* (1923) and the *Cambridge History of India* (1929) gave only the briefest of passing mentions to the Vellore mutiny. Neither troubled to debate further the causes of the affair. The *Oxford History* saw the event as no more than an isolated, internal military disturbance, and it asserted that:

The childish regulations about the sepoys' dress and sectarian marks were more than enough to account for the tragedy, without seeking any further explanation.20

The *Cambridge History* gave a detailed account of Company rule in South India at the beginning of the nineteenth century but the Vellore mutiny did not even rate a mention in this discussion. Instead, it was referred to only in a chapter on the Indian Mutiny and then in only the most fleeting manner.21

In the second half of the twentieth century, however, there has been a tendency amongst historians to reappraise
the importance of the revolt at Vellore. It has come to be seen as an important event in its own right. For example, A. Embree, in Charles Grant and British Rule in India (1962), has suggested that 'the Vellore mutiny was the most profound shock British power in India had received since the fall of Calcutta in 1756'.

J. Rosselli, in Lord William Bentinck, The Making of a Liberal Imperialist 1774-1839 (1974), also emphasised the significance of the mutiny. He remarked that 'the Vellore mutiny came as a great shock. For the British it was one of the traumatic experiences that punctuated their stay in India'.

T. H. Beaglehole, in Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras 1792-1818 (1966) saw the mutiny as an important catalyst in bringing about a major reappraisal of the aims and methods of the Madras government:

> It was probably the mutiny rather than the actual minutes, reports and letters on administration, which brought the nature of the administrative system into discussion.

With P. Mason, A Matter of Honour (1974), there is, however, a reversion to what may be termed the historiographical norm for the Vellore mutiny. That is, Mason interpreted the event only in the context of the Indian Mutiny. Further, he attempted to identify a 'Pattern of Mutiny' in the various revolts that took place in the Indian army and the Presidency armies which preceded it. The model which Mason constructs is based on three major foundations. These were: 1) an unsettling factor from outside the army itself; 2) mistrust by the sepoys of
their European officers, often due to the arrogance of newly arrived officers from Britain; 3) an internal military grievance relating to the sepoys' condition of service. 25

Such a combination of events, Mason argues, could disturb the customarily cordial relationship between European and Indian soldiers and lead to a complete breakdown of trust. At Vellore, according to Mason, the new turban, castemark and ear-ring regulations were the military grievance; the Mysore princes constituted the external factor, and the necessary deterioration of relations between sepoys and officers had been evident. 26

Mason's model does not, however, stand up to detailed examination. It is at best questionable whether it really advances an understanding of the Vellore mutiny. It can, after all, be argued that Mason is doing no more than describing the usual situation of the Company army. The Mysore princes had been resident at Vellore for five years at the time of the outbreak of the mutiny. In that time, they had not greatly troubled the British authorities and there had been very little alarm concerning a possible conspiracy. They were not, therefore, a new factor. The same criticism can be applied to the other external factors which Mason believed helped to bring about other mutinies in the Indian army. The crop failures, heavy taxation and fears of impending enforcement of Christianity to which he refers may be said to constitute perennial facts of life in India, and they were
certainly not peculiar circumstances surrounding outbreaks of mutiny.

Equally, with regard to the breakdown of trust which Mason sees as an integral part of mutiny amongst the sepoys, it is very difficult to assess how far this may have happened and how far it can be said to have been an exceptional circumstance. There is such an extreme shortage of documentary evidence concerning what the sepoys felt about the rule of the Company at any given time that there is no way of knowing how much or how significantly their views on their European officers may have fluctuated. It is the kind of conclusion that can only be drawn with hindsight. And it is something of a truism to suggest that relations between sepoys and their officers had deteriorated, when approximately eight hundred men perished at Vellore.

In much the same way, the third element in Mason's model also defies quantification. There is no doubt that the dress regulations and the new pattern of turban which the military authorities sought to introduce constituted a major source of irritation to the sepoys. Hence their strong protest in May 1806. Yet military grievances were a permanent feature of life for the sepoys. For example, they were constantly kept in arrears of pay. This in itself can be seen as a standing military grievance which might at any time have sparked off a mutiny, without any further harshness of treatment being necessary.
It can be asked indeed, if Mason's model were correct, why the Indian army was not in a permanent state of disaffection and mutiny. The most impressive aspect of Mason's assessment is that it is a serious attempt to understand the way in which the ordinary Indian troops thought and behaved. The most serious flaw is that the model fails to take account of differences in time and in geography. There is an erroneous underlying assumption that all sepoys of whatever region and period would have reacted in the same way to a given set of circumstances. Vellore, Barrackpore and the widespread outbreaks of 1857 are treated as though they were all only aspects of the same event. The result confuses rather than clarifies the causes of the different mutinies.

IV

Since 1947, of course, Indian nationalist history has developed. Revolts against the British Raj have naturally attracted the attention of Indian historians. At first, in common with their western counterparts, they tended as a rule to see Vellore as a small scale version of the Indian Mutiny. For example, R.C. Majumdar, History and Culture of the Indian People (1963) stated that:

One of the most serious expressions of discontent and disaffection, which bears a very close resemblance to the mutiny of 1857, so far as the genesis is concerned, was the mutiny at Vellore in 1806. It was caused by what the sepoys regarded as an affront to their religion.28
Similarly, S.N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (1957), made only a passing reference to the Vellore mutiny in the introduction to his book. He cited Vellore as the 'first offence to the religious prejudices of the sepoys'.

Two articles on the mutiny by Indian authors also appeared. C.S. Srinivasachari, 'The Vellore Mutiny of 1806: A New Study of its Origins' (1948) was, in fact, no more than a reiteration of evidence and arguments already presented by British historians. The article is useful as a brief survey of some previous interpretations of the causes of the mutiny, but it breaks no new ground whatever.

A more lively line of argument was taken by H. Chaudhuri, in 'The Vellore Mutiny: A Reappraisal' (1955). The author emphasised the changes that fifty years had brought about in both India and Britain and thus rejected any comparison between the Indian Mutiny and the Vellore mutiny. As to the causes of the Vellore revolt, Chaudhuri adhered to the belief that European missionaries, 'riding roughshod over the religious sentiments of the people', had provoked the mutiny. He was not, however, able to produce any new evidence to substantiate his argument. Moreover, he also argued that the failure of British revenue policies to win the approval of the Indian people had contributed to the outbreak and had brought about a deep disenchantment with Company rule. Yet Chaudhuri further believed that the Mysore princes had played a very important part in organising the mutiny, and
ultimately his conclusions are unclear since little effort is made to differentiate between all these factors.

One of the most interesting and original interpretations of the possible causes of the mutiny has been made by K. Rajayyan, in *The South Indian Rebellion 1800-1801* (1971). Rajayyan argues that the Vellore was a final effort by rebels who had, through a concerted alliance throughout South India, attempted to overthrow the rule of the Company:

The patriots involved in the South Indian Rebellion made a valiant but final endeavour when they recouped their eclipsed energies in the organisation of a mutiny in 1806.32

Yet the Vellore mutiny lies outside the major parameters of Rajayyan's research for his book, and he is not able to document his interpretation convincingly. His views on the mutiny are perhaps coloured by his findings on the extent of opposition to Company rule in 1800-1801. They are not the result of careful research into the mutiny itself.

A truly methodical approach to the records concerning the Vellore mutiny has, however, been evident in two Ph.D. theses submitted by Indian researchers within the last fifteen years. The first of these was by Gupta, 'Lord William Bentinck in Madras 1803-1807' (1969). Two full chapters are devoted to the mutiny, particularly, of course, to the way in which it affected Bentinck himself. The thesis does not, however, by any means constitute an exhaustive study of the mutiny. Gupta comes to the
conclusion that the Mysore princes were largely responsible for the mutiny, but the evidence on which she bases her findings is neither complete nor convincingly presented. No analysis is attempted of the evidence given to the various enquiries into the revolt. As a result, the many contradictions which they contain are not successfully resolved. 33

P. Samuelraj, 'The Vellore Mutiny and Related Agitations 1806-07' (1971), is by far the best researched piece of writing on the mutiny which has as yet been done. Samuelraj draws extensively on the wide range of records available relating to the mutiny and succeeds in compiling a convincing narrative of the events which occurred during those years. The novelty in the thesis lies mainly in the details provided of the 'related agitations'. It is less concerned in making an analysis of the mutiny itself, though Samuelraj's conclusions are almost diametrically opposed to those of Gupta. He argues that the new turbans and dress regulations were sufficient in themselves to account for the mutiny. No credence is given to the idea that the Mysore princes were responsible for the revolt. 34

For an appropriate final comment on the Vellore mutiny and on its historiography, it is necessary to return to Rosselli, Bentinck's most recent biographer. He neatly sums up the problems that faced those who investigated the mutiny at the time and that have continued to face those who have attempted to write its history:
Vellore remains unexplained. That in itself is a large part of its historical significance. The exact causes of the mutiny may yet be persuasively worked out. Meanwhile what is striking is the inability of the British at the time to plumb them. Against the dozens of British voices, angry, troubled or cocksure, Indian witness was largely silent . . . . Vellore showed that the British — so lately established — could not foretell what would happen in the depths of the Indian sea, and could not afterwards know for sure why it had happened. 35
NOTES to Chapter 9

3 Ibid, p.248.
7 Ibid. Vol.VII, p.100.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
15 For 2 other accounts of the same incident see IOL Pittman and Skelton papers, Eur E 334123 Lt Keighley to ? Vellore, 10 July 1806, and J Blakiston, Twelve Years Military Adventure, (London, 1829), p.295.
16 Butler, op.cit., p.34.
17 Ibid. p.35.
18 W.J. Wilson, History of the Madras Army, (Madras, 1882-87), Vol.III, Chap.XVII.
26 Ibid.
28 R.C. Majumdar, History and Culture of the Indian People, (Bombay, 1963), Vol.IX, p.428.
35 Rosselli, op.cit., p.144.
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Agnew Papers  MSS Eur E 313.
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Fowkes Papers  MSS Eur E 10.
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Gwillim Papers  MSS Eur C 240.
Munro Collection  MSS Eur F 151.
Pittman and Skelton Papers  MSS Eur E 334.
Letters between Warren Hastings and Randolph and Elizabeth Marriott  MSS Eur C 133.
Newspapers: The Times and The Madras Courier.

NLS
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Hannay Collection GD214.
John MacGregor Collection [186/125]
Baird of Elie Papers GD147.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amir</td>
<td>a title borne by certain Muslim princes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>arrack</td>
<td>a spirit obtained from the fermented juice of cocoa and other palms, as well as from rice and jaggery sugar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>arzee</td>
<td>document, letter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>betel</td>
<td>the leaf of the betel-pepper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhang, bang</td>
<td>hemp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birmah, brahmin</td>
<td>the highest or priestly caste of Hindus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byce, vsyas</td>
<td>the merchant caste of Hindus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caffer</td>
<td>an infidel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>chatties</td>
<td>earthen water-pots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chitterah</td>
<td>the warrior caste of Hindus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chuckler</td>
<td>a low, South Indian caste, usually cobblers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chunam</td>
<td>a species of limestone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>dewan</td>
<td>prime minister of an Indian state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>doolie</td>
<td>a litter or covered carriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>durbar</td>
<td>a reception or levee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>creese</td>
<td>a dagger.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakir</td>
<td>religious ascetic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>havildar</td>
<td>a non-commissioned Indian officer, approximately equivalent to a sergeant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hirkarrah</td>
<td>an informer or messenger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jemidar</td>
<td>a commissioned Indian officer of the second highest rank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>killedar</td>
<td>fort commandant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>lascars</td>
<td>camp followers or menial servants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>mir, meer</td>
<td>a minister of state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>muhal sera</td>
<td>palace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>murda admian</td>
<td>human being.</td>
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<tr>
<td>murdannah</td>
<td>male establishment, a gathering of men.</td>
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<tr>
<td>nabob</td>
<td>a Muslim prince or noble; later applied to Europeans who had made their fortunes in the East.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nawab</td>
<td>an Indian prince or noble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>pagoda</td>
<td>an Indian coin bearing the figure of a temple.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>palankeen, palinkeen, palanquin</td>
<td>a carriage borne on poles on men's shoulders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>pettah</td>
<td>a township.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pilau</td>
<td>a spiced dish of rice mixed with fruit, nuts and occasionally meat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polygar, poligar</td>
<td>local chieftain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purdah</td>
<td>state of seclusion for Muslim women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riotwari, ryotwari, raiyatwari</td>
<td>a system of land-holding where the peasant has tenure directly from the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sardar</td>
<td>a general term for Indian officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soodorah, sudra</td>
<td>a member of the fourth Indian caste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subidar</td>
<td>the highest rank of Indian officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topi</td>
<td>a hat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakeel</td>
<td>an agent or representative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vellum</td>
<td>the water in which rice has been cooked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zemindar</td>
<td>an official responsible for farming revenue from land held in common by cultivators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zillah</td>
<td>an administrative district or locality.</td>
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</table>