

# CHAPTER THREE

## RECOGNITION OF SOVEREIGNTY

In this chapter I will first write about the fate which Kanhojirao met with and then continue with the narrative of the rest of the history of the Gaekwad dynasty from 1805 to 1875.

### **The Fate of Kanhojirao**

Kanhojirao was given permission to come back to the Baroda State and to live at Padra, a village not far away from the capital. In 1812 this agitated underhand plotter made his last ditch effort to create a disturbance in the Baroda State. Rani Takhatbai again became mischievous and provided encouragement to him in his plans to subvert the government of Baroda, but the genesis of the idea of making mischief took place in the mind of Jam Jesaji of Nawanagar, who had fallen out with the British, and wanted to deflect their attention by creation of a tumult in Gujarat. In accordance with the plan he gave a promise to Kanhojirao to assist him with money and arms and if he was successful in his endeavor the Jam asked Kanhojirao to cede to him the territories near Vijapur; but once he had given way to the British he swiftly ditched his unwise partner. Sitaram was aware of the conspiracy, but at the same time knew it was a futile one, and Rani Gahenabai said nothing with regard to it. The salient features of the plot were the following:—The money provided by the Jam was to be used to purchase the services of Mir Khan Pathan and also of the troops from Malwa and Gujarat; Ramdin Pathan was to provide assistance from Lunawara and Muhammad Abud from Dhar; the Kolis of Gujarat could not be seduced to rise, but, nevertheless, promises of succor came from Jamadar Umar who had with him an army of 1,000 original Arabs and from the powerful *thanedar* Abdul Rahman<sup>1</sup> “and the Kolis on the Mahi had none of the scruples of their brethren”.<sup>2</sup> At Padra Kanhojirao was in a state of readiness to advance with 125 cavalry and 150 infantry, and he had expectations of succor from some Arabs of Nawanagar. The Resident was absent from Baroda in Kathiawar, and the capital was without sufficient troops: the details of the plan were that the Kolis would attack the house of the minister; the Arabs would attack the Residency and the adjoining house of Gangadhar Shastri. Takhatbai would open a wicket-gate which would allow Kanhojirao and his

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<sup>1</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

adherents to enter the citadel of Baroda. But gradually the Residency became aware of all the details of the conspiracy and a few days before the plan to capture the capital was to be carried out, a small army under Captain Ballantyne, besieged Padra and took Kanhojirao into custody and the entire conspiracy failed. Shortly afterwards Kanhojirao was deported to Surat, from there to Bombay and eventually to Madras, from where he never came back.<sup>3</sup>

## **Renewal by the Peshwa of the Lease to the Gaekwad of the Ahmedabad Farm: 1804-14**

As a result of the Treaty of Bassein the British Government had attained an immense prestige and decisiveness of influence at the Poona Durbar. This was manifested in the success of Colonel Close in ensuring that Peshwa Baji Rao II renewed the farm of Ahmedabad to the Gaekwad for another ten years from the date of its expiry in 1804. The initiative taken and the role played by Colonel Walker in the matter should not be underestimated for he wrote in a dispatch to the Bombay Government dated 15 March, 1804 regarding the apprehensions in the Baroda Court on the reports circulating that the Peshwa intended to resume the lease of the Ahmedabad farm towards the end of the current season. He also wrote that in order to induce the British Government to coax the Peshwa to renew the Ahmedabad farm to the Gaekwad he had pressurized the Diwan of the Baroda State to disburse the arrears worth four and a half lakhs still due to the Peshwa. He further wrote that it was his guarantee on behalf of the Company that the sums would be recovered from the Gaekwad Government, that four of the leading banking houses of Samal Bechar, Mangal Parikh, Haribhakti and Parbhudas Sheth had agreed to give bills for this amount of four lakhs and a half due to the Peshwa. Colonel Walker knew that unless he could ensure that the lease of the Ahmedabad farm would be renewed to the Gaekwad State it would be unsafe to guarantee the shroffs that the money would be recovered from the Baroda State. He, therefore, requested the Governor-in-Council at Bombay to adopt suitable measures in order to ensure that the lease of the Ahmedabad farm was continued to the Gaekwad Government because this was the only means by which the Peshwa could recover the money due to him from the Baroda State. Colonel Walker also opined that the continuance of the farm of Ahmedabad to the Gaekwad

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<sup>3</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 108.

State was the only means of maintaining the serene environment of Gujarat which was likely to be interrupted by the establishment of another independent authority in Gujarat.<sup>4</sup>

There is no element of speciosity in Colonel Walker's treatise that it was necessary and desirable for the peace of Gujarat that the lease of the farm of Ahmedabad should be indefinitely continued in the House of the Gaekwads. It was based on his personal knowledge of the working of the system in practice for eight years. Commissariat, however, refutes Alexander Walker's treatise by arguing that a dual government at Ahmedabad of the Peshwa and Gaekwad operated peacefully for forty years from 1758 to 1798; therefore, writes Commissariat that Colonel Walker's apprehensions regarding the evils of a dual government had to some extent no foundation. Nevertheless, Commissariat admits at the same time that this harmony was preserved owing to "the short tenure and rapid succession of the governors sent from Poona whose main interest had been the collection of the revenues which they had farmed".<sup>5</sup> But this harmony was broken once Aba Shelukar entered the scenario. Aba Shelukar was a powerful, ambitious and intriguing *Sarsubahdar* who had at his disposal considerable military resources. Therefore, he came to Ahmedabad with a determination to drive the Gaekwad's *Sarsubah* from his *haveli* and attain undisputed control over Ahmedabad. Aba Shelukar would never have succeeded in his objective if Nana Phadnavis had been alive at this critical juncture in Gujarati history to support his partisan or if Baji Rao II would not have shown hostility towards his minister's nominee. Ultimately, it was the 40,000 strong army of the Gaekwad led by his renowned general Babaji Appaji who annihilated Shelukar's authority in Ahmedabad and made him a prisoner in the short campaign lasting four months in which the Baroda State incurred huge expenditure. Moreover, following the Treaty of Bassein signed in December, 1802 with Peshwa Baji Rao II the British East India Company acquired extensive territorial possessions in North Gujarat. Owing to the joint efforts of Raoji Appaji and Alexander Walker and the most complete friendship and cooperation between the Baroda State and the Company, North Gujarat was slowly becoming consolidated administratively. An important step in this process of consolidation was the lease of the Ahmedabad farm and the districts north of the Mahi to the Baroda State in 1800 and its renewal, under British guarantee, for ten years in 1804. This lease benefitted the people of North Gujarat and was essential for the progress and prosperity of the region. If the farm was resumed by the Peshwa and a third or as Colonel Walker writes

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<sup>4</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, pp. 842-843.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 857.

a 'foreign' political authority was introduced in North Gujarat, it was to be doubted whether either Baji Rao II who had recovered from his humiliating flight to Bassein in 1800, or his *amildar* would show the same cordiality towards the British Resident at Baroda as the Gaekwad and his officers had shown.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Termination of the Gaekwad's Lease of the Ahmedabad Farm, 1814**

As the date of expiry of the Gaekwad's lease of the Ahmedabad farm (June, 1814) drew closer both the British Government at Bombay and the Gaekwad authorities at Baroda became anxious for its renewal. They thus entered into an increased correspondence with the Resident at Poona exerting pressure on him to secure its renewal. At this time Mountstuart Elphinstone was the Resident at Poona having succeeded Colonel Barry Close on 28 February, 1811. On the other hand, Captain James R. Carnac was the Resident at Baroda having succeeded Colonel Alexander Walker who retired in 1810. According to the records, Peshwa Baji Rao II stubbornly refused to renew the lease because the vital issue of his sovereignty over Gujarat was at stake and would fall into disuse if he extended the lease any further. Moreover, Elphinstone, who was acting as a representative of the British Government, showed scrupulosity in honoring the terms of the treaty of 1804, and refrained from exercising political pressure on the Peshwa, which he could have done if he had wished in order to force the Peshwa to act in accordance with the Company's wishes and renew the lease of the Ahmedabad farm.<sup>7</sup>

When Elphinstone showed his skepticism at the renewal of the farm the Bombay Government passed a resolution and referred the Resident to a paragraph in the dispatch of the Court of Directors, dated 29 August, 1810, which would apprise him of the importance which the Honorable Court attached to renewal of that farm in favor of the Gaekwad, pointing out at the same time that the progress made in the civilization and improvement of the country, through the aid given by the British Government to the Gaekwad in controlling the disorderly habits of the people, particularly in Kathiawar would be seriously checked if the farm was not renewed.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, pp. 857-858.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 859.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 860-861.

From October, 1813, there was an assiduous and vigorous pursuit of negotiations between Elphinstone and the Peshwa and between the Bombay Government and the Residents at Baroda and Poona on the Peshwa's decision to resume the Ahmedabad farm from the Gaekwad. Captain Carnac wrote to the Bombay Government on 31 October, 1813 that it was in the best interest of the Company and the Peshwa that the lease of the Ahmedabad farm remained with the Baroda State. Captain Carnac further wrote that the Gaekwad's government had concluded by Colonel Walker's efforts, treaties with the chieftains of Kathiawar about tribute. These treaties had been guaranteed by the Company. All these treaties would be put in jeopardy should a divided government be introduced in Ahmedabad.<sup>9</sup>

In order to negotiate the extension of the lease of the Ahmedabad farm, Anandrao Gaekwad, the nominal ruler of Baroda sent Gangadhar Shastri, a dependent of his younger brother, Fatesingrao Gaekwad II to Poona. During his meeting with Mountstuart Elphinstone, Gangadhar Shastri suggested the Resident of Poona to exercise political pressure on the Peshwa in order to induce him to renew the farm. However, Elphinstone reminded Shastri that the Governor General, the Earl of Moira (afterwards the Marquess of Hastings) would never use intimidation as a method to achieve the goals of the Company and the Baroda State.<sup>10</sup>

On 10 May, 1814, Elphinstone read out a memorandum to the Peshwa suggesting the merits and demerits of extending the lease of the farm of Ahmedabad to the Gaekwad, but the Peshwa refuted every argument in favor of continuing the farm in the hands of the Gaekwad.<sup>11</sup>

Subsequently, on 27 May, 1814, Elphinstone sent a member of his staff, Captain Close to persuade the Peshwa to review his decision but his mission also failed.<sup>12</sup>

Eventually, Elphinstone conceded to the demands of Baji Rao II to terminate the Gaekwad's lease of the Ahmedabad farm and informed the Baroda government of the same.<sup>13</sup>

Elphinstone next proceeded to settle precisely the rights of the two Maratha States over Ahmedabad so that a consensus could be arrived at by both parties about the method of exercising them. He, accordingly, held consultations with the ministers of the two

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<sup>9</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 861.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 862-865.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 865-868.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 868-869.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 869-871.

governments who were in Poona at that time. In a report sent to the Bombay Government dated 12 July, 1814, he stated that, according to the Peshwa's minister, the government of Ahmedabad was vested entirely in his master's hands, but he allowed that the Gaekwad had a share in the collections, and was entitled to station a person in every public office to ascertain the amount of taxes, fees and other items of revenue collected, and thus to prevent any embezzlement of the Gaekwad's share by the Peshwa's officers. The Gaekwad's ministers claimed a larger share in the government of the city, but later the two agreed in their accounts, with the addition that the Gaekwad was to be in charge of one of the twelve gates of this capital.<sup>14</sup>

Disputes between the representatives of the Peshwa and the Gaekwad were, in accordance with Elphinstone's injunction to be submitted for arbitration to the Resident of Baroda. Elphinstone's injunction regarding the disputes arising between the Peshwa's and the Gaekwad's representatives was ratified by the Governor-in-Council at Bombay.<sup>15</sup>

The Bhadra Citadel was finally handed over to the Peshwa's officer on 23 October, 1814 on the auspicious occasion of Dussera reported Captain Carnac in a dispatch to Bombay dated 27 October, 1814.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, after an interval of fourteen years, Baji Rao II fulfilled his heart's desire and resumed the Ahmedabad farm and the rights of the Gaekwad over his *mahals* north of the Mahi which he had granted to the Gaekwad in acknowledgement of his services against Aba Shelukar in 1800. But the cardinal sin that Baji Rao II committed was in getting Gangadhar Shastri assassinated at the hands of vile assassins of his henchman Trimbakji Dengele in the holy city of Pandharpur on 19 July, 1815 which brought about his downfall. Within two years of the assassination of Gangadhar Shastri events took such a turn that Baji Rao II was forced to surrender all his rights in Gujarat and those of the Gaekwad in Ahmedabad to the British Government at Bombay in 1817.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 871.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 873.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 876.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## **The Treaty of Poona (June 1817) and End of the Peshwa's Rule in Gujarat**

The Treaty of Poona is an interesting treaty owing to the memorability of the political changes brought about by it in Gujarat in relation to the Peshwa's territories in that province. The treaty was signed on 13 June, 1817 by Elphinstone on behalf of the Company and by Moro Dikshit and Balaji Lakshman on behalf of Bajji Rao II. The Peshwa had been following a policy inimical to the interests of Gujarat since the murder of Gangadhar Shastri. Therefore, the prime objective of the treaty was to impose stringent circumscriptions on the Peshwa's power in India in order to preclude the perils arising from such a policy.<sup>18</sup> In order to appreciate this aspect of the treaty a brief reference to some of its salient articles will suffice:

1. "The first article declares that Trimbakji Dengle had by the murder of Gangadhar Shastri, the public minister of the Gaekwad, rendered himself obnoxious to public justice, and that it was the duty of both governments to inflict on him such punishment as would mark their detestation of his crime, and as he had escaped from the custody of the Company's government, and had added to his crimes by assembling banditti and committing various acts of plunder and murder, the Peshwa agrees to seize and deliver him up, until which time the family of Trimbakji was to remain as hostages in the hands of the Company's government.
2. By article 3 of the treaty the Peshwa agrees not to admit into his territory any subject of any European or American power without the previous consent of the British Government; and by the next article he engages not to maintain the *wakils* or agents of any other power at his court, nor to send any of his own to them, and not to hold any communication with any power except through the British Resident at his court. And further, the Peshwa, on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors, 'recognizes the dissolution in form and substance of the Maratha Confederacy and renounces all connection with the other Maratha powers, whether arising from his former situation of executive head of the Maratha Empire or from any other cause.
3. By another article Bajji Rao II agrees to place at the disposal of the British Government sufficient funds for the payment of a force of 5,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry, including a due proportion of ordnance and military stores (in lieu of the contingent of the same size which the Peshwa was bound to supply in time of war) in

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<sup>18</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 890.

addition to the subsidiary force agreed to under the supplementary articles to the Treaty of Bassein, signed at Poona in 1802. By the next article, 7, Baji Rao II assigns to the Company in perpetuity lands and revenues amounting to thirty-four lakhs for this purpose”.<sup>19</sup>

Along with the preceding terms, the Peshwa was forced to grant liberal concessions to the Gaekwad which were at the same time both stringent and humiliating, and they have been impugned as more calculated to drive the Peshwa to despair than to secure, as they professed to do, his future peaceable possessions of his real dominions. But, as the same writer points out,

“they were dictated to one whom no treaties could bind, under a perfect acquaintance with his long career of deception, intrigue and treachery, faithless alike to his own people and the English; that his aim, from the first, had been to throw off the obligations of the Treaty of Bassein, into which he had entered with apparent good faith; and that, in the face of the guarantee of the English, an unprovoked and deliberate murder had been committed, upon an envoy”.<sup>20</sup>

The Treaty of Poona was a watershed in the history of Gujarat because under three of its articles Peshwa Baji Rao II was impelled to surrender pragmatically his entire territory and tributary rights in Gujarat, though at this stage he could not have imagined in his wildest dreams that within a few months of the signing of this treaty his authority in the Deccan would also completely collapse.<sup>21</sup> I shall give below a summary of the clauses relevant to this aspect of the treaty:

1. “By article 5, the Peshwa renounced all future demands on Maharaja Anandrao Gaekwad, whether resulting from his supremacy as head of the Maratha Empire or from any other cause; and on the other hand the Gaekwad was discharged from all past claims and demands of the Peshwa on payment to the latter of an annual sum of four lakhs of rupees.
2. By article 7, and the schedule attached to the treaty, the Peshwa surrendered to the Company, besides other territory, the tribute of Kathiawar which was estimated, after deducting the expenses of collection, at four lakhs of rupees; and also all rights and territories possessed by him in Gujarat, with the exception of Ahmedabad, Olpad, and the annual payment due from the Gaekwad.

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<sup>19</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, pp. 890-891.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 891.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 892.



3. By article 15, the Peshwa agreed to grant the farm of Ahmedabad and its province (excluding his share of the tribute of Kathiawar), in perpetuity to H.H. Maharaja Anandrao, his heirs and successors on the same terms at which the farm had formerly been granted in 1800 by a *sanad* in favor of Bhagwantrao Gaekwad, i.e. for four and a half lakhs of rupees per year. The article proceeds to state that the same amount as formerly was to be paid for the farm by the Gaekwad, notwithstanding the separation of the tribute of Kathiawar, in consideration of the greatness of the actual revenue of the city and province of Ahmedabad, and the loss to which the Peshwa had been subjected by his renunciation of all future claims on the Gaekwad and by accepting an annual payment of only four lakhs in lieu of all past claims up to date”.<sup>22</sup>

The lands and revenues surrendered by the Peshwa to the Company are given in the schedule attached to the Treaty of Poona and in accordance with article 7 were estimated to yield thirty-four lakhs of rupees annually. These included Belapur, Atgaon and Kalyan in the North Konkan; the Peshwa's tribute of Kathiawar, and all the rights and territories possessed by him in Gujarat, with the exception of Ahmedabad and Olpad. Under these terms, Jambusar, Amod, Dehebara, Dabhoi, Bahadurpur, Savli, were granted in perpetuity to the Company, the cession to date from 5 June, 1817. These cessions led to the final collapse of the Peshwa's territorial acquisitions in Gujarat and the peninsula which began with the partition treaty of 1752 with Damajirao Gaekwad II. The successive treaties of Baroda, Bassein and Poona led to a substantial increase in the territorial possessions of the British in Gujarat. The *mahals* thus secured formed a consolidated block because they were carefully selected to be adjacent to the Company's existing territory.<sup>23</sup>

Elphinstone mentions while forwarding a draft of this treaty to the Bombay Government on 4 June, 1817, a few days before it was signed, that the treaty had indeed granted liberal concessions to the Gaekwad by resolving the long-standing disputes about the financial claims of the Peshwa and also adequately compensating the Baroda State for Gangadhar Shastri's murder. Elphinstone further points out that a very modest sum of four lakhs per annum had been settled to be paid by the Gaekwad to the Peshwa for all past claims as he secures a relief from the vexatious interference of the Peshwa in Ahmedabad and an exemption from claims which, after a careful enquiry, were estimated at 11, 54,000 rupees, at the lowest, and which his own minister was desirous to compromise by a cession of territory

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<sup>22</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 892.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 893.

yielding seven lakhs of rupees. Elphinstone also said that it would have been wise on the part of the Peshwa if he had demanded forty or fifty lakhs of rupees for past claims on the Gaekwad, “but the Peshwa’s treasury is full, ready money is no object to him and the offer of an immediate payment would have been much more repugnant to his wishes than a perpetual revenue”.<sup>24</sup>

Elphinstone makes the observation that it would have suited British interests better if they had secured the Ahmedabad farm for the Company instead of forcing the Peshwa to grant it to the Gaekwad; and it would have been financially beneficial to the Peshwa also who would have ceded a territory at a fair valuation. Moreover, Elphinstone writes that the British Government had made a big mistake because it had allowed the Baroda State to rent the Ahmedabad farm at three and a half lakhs below its actual value. The Resident of Poona, however, decided against taking this measure at this stage because only three years ago the British had persevered, although in vain, to persuade the Peshwa to renew the farm to the Gaekwad; and also owing to the fact that the Baroda State had specially demanded this territory as a reparation for the murder of its envoy, Gangadhar Shastri, by the henchmen of Baji Rao II.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, Elphinstone writes in his dispatch that the value of the Ahmedabad farm had not been made fully known to the Governor General because he had ordered it to be granted on former terms. Moreover, since he was aware of the anxiety of the Bombay Government to secure the rights of the Peshwa in Kathiawar he resolved to separate that source of revenue from the rest of the farm and take it as part of the cessions at such a valuation as should prevent the British suffering by the expense of the arrangements requisite to levy the tribute and to maintain the tranquility of the country. This led to the consolidation of British authority over the princely states of Kathiawar which had been tentatively established by Colonel Walker’s Settlement in 1807. The peninsula was thus freed from *mulukgiri* expeditions and inter-state warfare and peace and tranquility were ensured to the Bhumias of the region and their subjects in perpetuity.<sup>26</sup>

The ratification of the Treaty of Poona took place at Fort William, Calcutta, on 5 July, 1817 by the Governor-General-in-Council. Lord Hastings later wrote on 25 July to Sir Evan Nepean at Bombay where he referred to the expedient position in which they had placed the

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<sup>24</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 893.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 894.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Gaekwad by allowing him to commute the Peshwa's past claims on him for a payment of four lakhs of rupees per annum. He opines, however, that should this settlement fail through the perverseness or unreasonable expectations of the Government of Baroda, it would be necessary to bring to a close without delay the long-pending arbitration by the British Government of the Peshwa's claims so far as they related to the time past. He further points out that it would be advantageous to the Gaekwad if he was permanently relinquished from all the prospective claims of the Peshwa not only in monetary terms which at its lowest value amounted to three lakhs of rupees annually. Lord Hastings further states that it should be the aim of the British Government to completely exonerate the Baroda State from every kind of dependence on the Poona Court and if the Company succeeded in this enterprise it would invite the utmost gratification from the Baroda Court.<sup>27</sup>

In the month of July 1817 as soon as the stipulations of the Treaty of Poona were put in force, the Peshwa left Poona for his annual pilgrimage to the temples of Pandharpur, without accompaniment of the Resident, which restored the confidence of the British Government in him. He with immediate effect reduced his military, primarily his cavalry; but later on a discovery was made that he had paid every *silahdar* seven months' salary in advance and ordered him to stay at his village, and be ready to return when called upon, with as many cavalymen as he could enlist.<sup>28</sup>

From Pandharpur, the Peshwa, in place of coming back to his capital, made his way to Mahuli, a village near Satara, and a holy site at the junction of the rivers Yena and the Krishna. While he was staying there Sir John Malcolm reached Poona, having been appointed as Political Agent to the Governor General, he paid a visit to all the native courts of the Deccan for holding consultations with the Residents before commencing operations against the *Pindaris* in Malwa; and when the Peshwa heard of his arrival, he sent him an invitation for a conference at Mahuli.<sup>29</sup>

While conversing with Sir John Malcolm the Peshwa raised complaints about the dire straits to which he had been reduced by the Treaty of Poona and lost the friendship of the British which had been beneficial to both parties. Sir John Malcolm tried to comfort the Peshwa and told him that although what had already been forfeited could not be restored if he would cooperate with Lord Hastings in the upcoming operations against the *Pindaris* he could hope

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<sup>27</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 896.

<sup>28</sup> James Grant Duff (1918), *A History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, p. 407.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 407-408.

to be rewarded with territorial acquisitions for his fidelity. To this proposal he pretended to agree and thus deceived Sir John Malcolm who came back to Poona fully confident of the fact that Bajji Rao II would now espouse the British cause and had become a faithful ally so he should now be allowed to raise an army. Elphinstone, the more pragmatic of the two statesmen, while he did not oppose the recommendations of Sir John Malcolm was, nevertheless, skeptical about the Peshwa's intentions and said that with the advance of the division of General Smith to the border the denudative state of the Capital with only a handful of troops to protect it provided the Peshwa with the perfect opportunity to revolt.<sup>30</sup>

### **Affairs at Poona**

Baji Rao II did not come back to Poona until the end of September 1817. In the course of his stay at Mahuli he began to devise schemes for revolting against the Company; but Bapu Gokhale advised him to change his plans from being covertly hostile to overtly attacking the British as soon as all preparations were made. The fact that Sir John Malcolm had recommended him to enroll an army with the objective of helping the British in the war against the *Pindaris* excellently concealed his designs.<sup>31</sup> “Gokla was now the leader of all his measures”, writes James Grant Duff, “and Bajee Rao was induced to give him a formal writing under his own seal, which he confirmed on oath, binding himself to be implicitly directed by his counsel, and investing him with full powers of his government”.<sup>32</sup> The reason behind the adoption of this measure was not simply to ensure the fidelity of Gokhale, but as a way of diminishing the distrust which the *silahdars* had towards Bajji Rao II and was stipulation on which several *jagirdars* gave a pledge to support him in the upcoming war. This arrangement was not discovered until after the outbreak of the Third Anglo-Maratha War. Bapu Gokhale got tens of millions of rupees to provide assistance in preparing for war. From the first day when he decided to fight the British there was restitution by Bajji Rao II of the lands of many of his *jagirdars*, and for several years he had been trying earnestly to gain popularity among all classes of his subjects. He revealed to the Raja of Satara that he intended to wage a war against the Company and while he demanded that the Raja and his mother take an oath to keep the mission a closely guarded secret and support him in his endeavor, he put them and their entire family in solitary confinement in Vasota.<sup>33</sup> The

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<sup>30</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 408-409.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 409-410.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 410-411.

enrollment of troops by Baji Rao II was picking up speed; “his forts also were garrisoned, stored, and repaired; and orders were issued to prepare his fleet”.<sup>34</sup> Trimbakji Dengle enlisted many Bhils and Ramoshis to support the Peshwa and special envoys were sent to the courts of Nagpur, Gwalior and Indore and to Amar Khan.<sup>35</sup>

Reports that the Peshwa was attempting to tamper with the fidelity of the sepoys reached the British Government from every quarter; some of the sepoys rejected outright with indignation the excellent offers of the Peshwa; and others, under the pretense of acquiescence, reported the matter to their officers; but the scope of the underhand plots was not ascertainable, and they at length became frightening, even to those who were familiar with the loyalty of the Bombay sepoys, when the Peshwa threatened to begin to persecute the families and relatives of those sepoys who refused to forsake the British service.<sup>36</sup>

After Dussera things became interesting every day and by 25 October, 1817 troops began to pour into Poona day and night from every quarter. The army of General Smith was now distant from Poona and the arrival of the European regiment from Bombay was scarcely possible in less than ten days.<sup>37</sup>

For several nights deliberations were going on at the Shaniwarwada between the Peshwa and his advisers that they were in an advantageous position to astonish the Company’s troops before the European regiment arrived and for the accomplishment of this purpose, on 28 October, 1817, “their guns were yoked, their horses saddled and their infantry in readiness”.<sup>38</sup> Elphinstone received intelligence of this planning before midnight on 28 October, 1817. He accordingly acquainted Major J.A. Wilson, the officer in command of the European regiment marching from Bombay about how critical things were at Poona and asked him to hurry up.<sup>39</sup>

The next day (29 October, 1817) Bapu Gokhale recommended to the Peshwa not to delay the attack any further but Baji Rao II was hesitant stating that he required little more time to tamper with the fidelity of the sepoys; he had a mistaken belief that the European regiment was still far away and with each passing hour the strength of his army was increasing; thus the Marathas wasted another night in consulting each other, and at 4 p.m. on 30 October,

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<sup>34</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, p. 411.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 413.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 415-417.

1817, the European regiment arrived in the cantonment at Poona after greatly exerting itself. Elphinstone now decided to move his badly positioned troops to the village of Kirkee, four miles away from Poona, which General Smith had earlier recommended as the appropriate place to be brought under occupation in case of a perceivable breach of harmonious relations. The Company's troops in accordance occupied Kirkee on 1 November, 1817, and as the Residency was near the town, 250 men were sent to protect it. The Peshwa was informed of the intentional movement, but his army assumed that the British troops were forced to withdraw out of fear and consequently felt greatly encouraged. The Marathas now plundered the cantonment, attacked, wounded and robbed an officer en route to Bombay in broad daylight; the language of the ministers of the Peshwa lacked courtesy; his troops in every place began to behave insolently with individuals who passed by; and they continued to move forward defiantly.<sup>40</sup> "They proposed forming a camp", writes James Grant Duff, "betwixt the old cantonment and the new position, and a party of horse moved down for the purpose".<sup>41</sup>

## **The Battle of Kirkee**

The Peshwa finally commenced the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18) with the Battle of Kirkee which he fought with the East India Company on 5 November, 1817, in which he was badly defeated and fled from Poona which was occupied by the army of General Smith on 17 November, 1817.

With the commencement of hostilities the savage and spiteful character of the orders given by Baji Rao II previously became readily visible from the cruelties perpetrated in every direction, probably before the Peshwa could gain time to stop them. The Residency was looted and set on fire, and the library and private apartment of the Resident reduced to rubble; the Marathas robbed, beat up, and frequently mutilated the families and followers of the troops who were captured by them; the gardens were devastated, the trees uprooted, and the digging of graves begun. The Marathas perpetrated many other atrocities on the British people. They attacked and killed an engineer officer on survey; they kidnaped two brothers, the surname of whom was Vaughan, one of them being a captain in the Madras Army, who were traveling between Bombay and Poona, near the village of Talegaon, and although they offered no resistance, they were hanged in the most barbaric manner under the superintendency of a Brahmin named Babji Pant Gokhale. These acts of extreme wickedness,

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<sup>40</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 417-418.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

with the exception of the pillage of the supporters and servants of the British Government, were not committed under the sanction of Bapu Gokhale; but because he was invested with full ruling powers of the State, Elphinstone intimated him at the beginning of hostilities that any person, however high his rank, who awards the death penalty to a British prisoner, “should answer for it in his own person”.<sup>42</sup>

Two officers Cornets Hunter and Morrison belonging to the Madras Presidency, en route to Poona from Hyderabad escorted by a small number of troops, were attacked by the Marathas as they were approaching the former place, and after a resolute resistance, were forced to surrender, and were put in confinement in a hill fort; “some small parties who stood on the defensive in various situations, and surrendered on terms, were permitted to join the British camp”.<sup>43</sup> Among these people was the *munshi* of the Resident, who had an army of Arabs in his employment, and for several days resisted attacks on his house in the city, until Bapu Gokhale intervened and summoned him. During the course of their interview, in the presence of several individuals, Bapu Gokhale showed him the paper of the Peshwa entrusting him with entire powers of his state, and, after conversing for some time observed—“I have given you protection because your master was an old friend of mine; we are now enemies; the trial we have already had” (alluding to the action of the 5<sup>th</sup>) “has not turned out as I expected, but tell him we shall persevere, we may have taken our shrouds about our heads, but we are determined to die with our swords in our hands”.<sup>44</sup>

## **The Satara Proclamation**

When the Marquis of Hastings heard about the perfidious conduct of the Peshwa, in addition to the numerous evidences of his crafty and steadfast underhand plots against the British Government, he decided to abolish the dynasty of his family and to annex the State of Poona to the territory of the Company. He, however, reserved a small tract, adequate for the imprisoned Raja of Satara to lead a comfortable and dignified life and to counterbalance the remanent influence of the Brahmins. This was also done in order to placate the Maratha people and for keeping open employment opportunities for many people who would have found it difficult to subsist on their own and who would be unable to secure a livelihood under the British administration. Accordingly instructions were passed on to Elphinstone

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<sup>42</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 427-428.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 428-429.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 429.

investing him with full powers as the sole Commissioner for settling the territory which was to be conquered. There was a withdrawal of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> divisions of the Deccan Army, under General Smith and General Pritzler respectively, from the control of Sir Thomas Hislop and they were placed under the authority of the Deccan Commissioner. Elphinstone received these instructions early in January 1818, but owing to various reasons he decided not to promulgate them for a short period until there was an existence of conditions more favorable to the British cause and the Maratha people were convinced that it was advantageous to submit and hopeless to resist.<sup>45</sup> Up till now nothing productive had been accomplished in the pursuit of the Peshwa “excepting the political effect of holding him up as a fugitive”.<sup>46</sup> Whenever the British troops pressed to capture Baji Rao II, Bapu Gokhale, with all his light troops, would linger around the divisions in pursuit, who would fire shots from their matchlocks and throw rockets in favorable situations in order to cut off the cattle and baggage. Thus some skirmishes occurred between the British and the Marathas in which the latter got frequently injured from the shrapnel shells of the horse artillery but on the whole neither side was able to gain the upper hand.<sup>47</sup>

The unification of the two divisions took place at Rahmatpur and the whole force, now under the command of General Smith, made its way to Satara, which it was thought expedient to capture because of the important symbolic value attached to the occupation of that fortress in the minds of the Maratha people. The fortress offered hardly any resistance and was delivered up on the evening of 10 February, 1818, when the Union Jack was hoisted, but the very next day it was pulled down, and the Bhagwa Flag, or the standard of Shivaji and his descendants, was, with due forms hoisted in place of the Union Jack. The Deccan Commissioner contemporaneously published a manifesto known as the Satara Proclamation in the name of the British Government which represented in a succinct manner the behavior of Baji Rao II on the whole and stated the reasons as to why it had become the duty of the British to depose him from public authority; the exclusion of him and his family from all involvement in the affairs of the Deccan; to annex the State of Poona to the territories of the Company with the exception of a small tract which was given for the support of the Raja of Satara. It was proclaimed that the Company would not interfere with the doctrines of any religious sect; the Company would continue to respect all *watan*, *inam* lands, established pensions, and annual allowances provided there was a withdrawal of the owners from the service of Baji Rao II

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<sup>45</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 439-440.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



and retirement to their homes in two months from that date. There was an abolition of the practice of *ijara* and the hereditary district and village officers were told to keep the land revenue in reserve, else they would be forced to compensate for the payments; moreover, if they or any other *watandars* were found guilty of helping the dethroned Peshwa financially or otherwise, their *watans* would be proclaimed liable to forfeiture. The Company took no notice of the *jagirs* because it was well comprehended that they would be kept or restored in accordance with the willingness of the holders to shift their allegiance from the Peshwa to the new government and their retention would act as a powerful security for the loyalty of the claimants.<sup>48</sup>

## Affairs at Nagpur

When Appa Sahib of Nagpur received intelligence that the Peshwa had attacked British troops he surreptitiously decided to join the side of Bajji Rao II and made exertions to increase the size of his military. These preparations were perceptible to the Resident, Richard Jenkins, who sent a request to Colonel Adams that he leave a brigade of his division south of the Narmada and keep a part of it in readiness to march to Nagpur. This step was taken, however, only as a precautionary measure; Appa Sahib showed no other signs of hostility; contrarily he was lavish in his friendship towards the British, and spoke bitterly and with strong hostility against the perfidious behavior of Bajji Rao II in attacking them; but on the night of 24 November, 1817 he sent a messenger to apprise Jenkins of the arrival of a *khil 'at* and a *Jari Patka* from the Peshwa and the bestowal of the title of Senapati on him by Bajji Rao II. Despite the remonstrances from Jenkins, Appa Sahib went to the camp the next day to receive the insignia. On receiving the insignia the troops of Appa Sahib with immediate effect took up threatening positions near the Residency which forced Jenkins to seek the services of the brigade from the cantonment which was three miles west of the city. The next day hostilities rose to such an extent that it became necessary to make preparations for the defense of the Residency, and a special messenger was dispatched to seek the services of the 2<sup>nd</sup> division of the Deccan Army under General Doveton.<sup>49</sup>

The location of the Residency was on the western side of the city of Nagpur and a rocky hill which runs north to south called Sitabaldi separated it from the rest of the city.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 440-441.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 446-447.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 447.

## Battle of Nagpur

Hostilities soon commenced and owing to the pouring of reinforcements the strength of the army of the East India Company were significantly augmented and Appa Sahib was facing defeat by 15 December, 1817. On the morning of 15 December, 1817, Jenkins put forward the demand for the unconditional surrender of Appa Sahib, which also required the complete disbandment of his troops, the placement of his territory at the mercy of the Company, and to deliver himself up as a hostage; but he was contemporaneously told that if he complied with the demands, no harder terms would be imposed on him and he would be only required to cede territory equivalent to meet the cost of the subsidiary force, and his internal government would be controlled only to such an extent so as to preclude a similar perfidy in future. However, the officers and troops of Appa Sahib refused to allow him to surrender and eventually the fort of Nagpur was taken after bitter fighting.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, on 19 December, 1817, General Doveton worsted the enemy at Jabalpur and conquered the city, and in cooperation with Lieutenant Colonel Mc Morine was engaged in the occupation of the whole of the northern territory of Appa Sahib, with the exception of Chaurigarh and Mundela. The battle at the Capital ended with the Arabs capitulating and Man Bhat surrendering; however, because communications had been interrupted, Jenkins could not receive any instructions relative to Appa Sahib in case of surrender. Therefore, as a result of what he had already promised, even though the ruler of Nagpur had not adhered to the terms, Jenkins after considering all circumstances thought that the reinstatement of Appa Sahib was the duty of the British Government, but at the same time thought it was essential that there should be effectual control on his internal government. Keeping this in mind for securing the subordination of the Capital, the fortification of the hill of Sitabaldi was to be accomplished; the British troops were to militarily occupy the State of Nagpur completely; and a demand was made to cede territory worth about 24 lakhs of rupees which was equivalent to the full expenses of the subsidiary force. A treaty was accordingly drafted, and about to be sent to the ruler for his assent, when on 2 January, 1818, instructions were received by Jenkins from the Marquis of Hastings, which the Governor General had issued when he first heard that the ruler of Nagpur had defected before he was apprised of what had transpired after General Doveton had arrived. According to these instructions Jenkins was forbidden to reconcile with Appa Sahib, and directions were issued that the son of the

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<sup>51</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 447-452.

daughter of the late Parsaji Bhonsle, a minor, should ascend the throne, and the affairs of the state were to be entrusted to a regency, whose selection was to be made by the British Government. Subsequently, however, after consideration of the factors which had influenced the Resident's decision and respecting the moral obligation signified by the terms which had been offered to Appa Sahib if he personally surrendered the Governor General was persuaded to issue a confirmation of the terms of the treaty which Jenkins had drafted.<sup>52</sup>

## **Revolt of Appa Sahib and the Surrender of Baji Rao II**

Soon after his reinstatement on his throne there was a renewal of intrigues by Appa Sahib. He gave encouragement to the savage Gonds to revolt, clandestinely ordered his Killedars to offer resistance to the orders of surrender which had been granted by him in favor of the British Government, and sent an application to Baji Rao II to assist him. The arrival of this application was contemporaneous with an officer of Appa Sahib, Ganpat Rao, joining the Peshwa near Sholapur, and there was a frequent exchange of messengers begging earnestly for reinforcement of troops.<sup>53</sup>

After the discovery by Jenkins of the extraordinary perfidy of Appa Sahib, he took him into custody; moreover the British began to prepare to offer resistance to the advancing reinforcements towards the Peshwa. In the battle that ensued on the banks of the river Warda, a considerable number of troops of Baji Rao II were killed and he was nearly surrounded by the divisions of General Doveton and Colonel Adams. Before this event many of his *jagirdars* deserted him and a large number of them made use of this opportune moment and favorable circumstances to leave for their homes. The brother of the Peshwa, Chimnaji Appa, decided to flee to the south with Appa Desai Nepankar and Naru Pant Apte, and eventually delivered himself up to the troops sent by General Smith to check his advance. Colonel Adams, no sooner had the Company's troops stopped pursuing the Peshwa, made his way to the fortress of Chanda, which was in the possession of the partisans of Appa Sahib, and following a short siege succeeded in capturing the fortress. Baji Rao II who was being pursued by General Doveton, decided to flee in great anxiety to the north, and for six days his army suffered from severe fatigue and hardship. Although he held faint hopes of succor from Sindhia but he had finally made up his mind to deliver himself up to a British general. He made many offers of negotiation to Elphinstone but the Resident sternly told him that he

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<sup>52</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 452-454.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

would not be spared and that unconditional surrender was the only option. After again dispatching agents to Elphinstone and Jenkins, he continued to march northward, crossed the river Tapi on 5 May, 1818 and went towards Sindwa, where he had the intention of crossing the Narmada but Sir John Malcolm was present there to check his advance. He, therefore, dispatched his agent Anand Rao Chandawarkar with a letter to Sir John Malcolm. His agent arrived at the camp of General Malcolm at Mahu, near Indore on 16 May, 1818. Protracted negotiations began on both sides and Baji Rao II agreed to the renouncement of his entire sovereignty for himself and his family in the Deccan forever, to which place he agreed never to come back; he also agreed to deliver up Trimbakji Dengle and the assassins of the Vaughans and also separate himself from Ramdin and all outlawed rebels and *Pindaris*. After the protracted negotiations were over Baji Rao II finally surrendered to Sir John Malcolm on 3 June, 1818 and the Marquis of Hastings ratified the terms of the surrender, dethroned the Peshwa and pensioned him off to Bithur, a sacred place of Hindu worship, near Kanpur where he resided for the rest of his life.<sup>54</sup>

Ramdin agreed to surrender on being given a promise that he would be pardoned, but Baji Rao II failed to comply with one of the stipulations of the terms of negotiations by which he had agreed to surrender Trimbakji Dengle. He managed to escape in the southern direction, and for some time tried to gather followers, and remain in concealment as before; however, the agent of Elphinstone in Khandesh, Captain Briggs managed to discover his hideout, and he was finally captured by a party of irregular horse under Lieutenant Swanston in a well-planned operation in the village of Ahirgaon. He was subsequently imprisoned in the fort of Chunargarh in Bengal, where he remained for the rest of his life. The surrender of Baji Rao II marked an event of considerable significance in the history of British India.<sup>55</sup>

After Jenkins took Appa Sahib into custody the Governor General gave a formal order that he should be deported to Allahabad and put in solitary confinement there. In accordance with the order of Lord Hastings he was dispatched from Nagpur guarded by the sepoy of the Bengal corps with whose fidelity he tampered and as a result they gave him a military uniform of their regiment and disguised as a sepoy he fled to the Mahadev hills situated between Nagpur and the Narmada on the morning of 13 May, 1818 from where his dislodgment was impossible during the monsoon. Here Chitoo Pindari joined him “and the person of Appa

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<sup>54</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, pp. 473-477.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 477-478.

Sahib became a rallying-point for all disbanded and broken troops of the country”.<sup>56</sup> The negligent behavior which led to his escape caused much harassment to British troops because of rebellions in various parts of the country.<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, the widow of the late Raghuji Bhonsle adopted his grandson, a minor named Guzar, who assuming the name of his grandfather, ascended the throne of Nagpur. Although the widow was officially the Regent, during the minority of the ruler, the entire administration was run by the Resident in the name of the Raja.<sup>58</sup>

When the season improved the British assembled troops for a combined attack on the position of Appa Sahib but owing to the dexterity of Chitoo Pindari he managed to escape every time the British troops were closing in on him and he finally captured the fort of Asirgarh.<sup>59</sup>

General Doveton and Sir John Malcolm laid siege to the fort of Asirgarh which after a valiant defense of 20 days, surrendered to the British on 9 April, 1819. But Appa Sahib managed to escape from this fort also. From here he sought asylum in the Sikh kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839) where he remained for the rest of his life and the British ceased his pursuit since now he had become an insignificant person for them.<sup>60</sup>

## **Terms of the Supplemental Treaty of 6 November 1817 and the Cession of Ahmedabad to the British**

The Supplemental Treaty of Baroda concluded on 6 November, 1817 between the East India Company and Maharaja Anandrao Gaekwad, *Sena Khas Khel*, *Shamsher Bahadur*, is another landmark in Gujarati history owing to the important political changes brought about by it. It is called supplemental because its articles were settled in supplementation to the Definitive Treaty signed at Baroda on 21 April, 1805 in order to consolidate all foregoing engagements between the same parties. According to the preamble of the treaty the present articles were settled and the treaty signed by Fatesingrao Gaekwad II on behalf of the Maharaja and by

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<sup>56</sup> Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. III, p. 478.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 479.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Captain James Rivet Carnac on behalf of the Company. These two persons had been delegated with full powers and authority for the purpose.<sup>61</sup>

The principal articles of the treaty are given below in serial order:

1. "In order to provide for the interests of the allies in Gujarat and for the protection of the Gaekwad's dominions, the Company was to furnish an increase in the existing subsidiary force of one battalion of native infantry of not less than 1000 men, with two regiments of native cavalry.
2. In the event of war with any of the powers in India, with the reserve of a battalion of native infantry to remain near the person of the Maharaja, or such a number as may be necessary for the security of Gujarat, the residue of the subsidiary force, now composed of 4,000 native infantry, two regiments of native cavalry, and one company of European artillery, with the necessary ordnance and ammunition, was to be immediately put in motion for the purpose of opposing the enemy.
3. For the regular payment of the expense of the augmentation of the subsidiary force, the Gaekwad ceded in perpetuity to the Company all the rights he had obtained from the perpetual farm of the Peshwa's territories subject to the city of Ahmedabad, as secured by the Treaty of Poona, dated 13 June, 1817; and all the engagements to the Peshwa contingent on the farm of the said territories were to be performed by the Company.
4. As the *parganas* of Dabhoi, Bahadurpur and Savli, belonging to the Company, were, from their proximity to Baroda, peculiarly valuable to the Gaekwad government, it was agreed that these districts be made over to His Highness and his heirs in perpetuity and full sovereignty; and in exchange for these districts His Highness assured forever in full sovereignty his share of the city of Ahmedabad (with the exception of his fort or *haveli* and its dependent territory known as the Dascroi) as also a proportion of his share of the Petlad district contiguous to the Company's possessions. It was further agreed that the Gaekwad was only to maintain a force in the said *haveli* sufficient for the purpose of revenue collection and police, and his servants in the *haveli* were to conduct themselves with strict regard to the rules and regulations of the Company's government within the city of Ahmedabad. On the other hand, the Company promised that all persons or troops subject to His Highness's

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<sup>61</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 910.

authority at the *haveli* in Ahmedabad or the Gaekwad's Dascroi, were not to be amenable to the laws of the British Government, but were to be subject to the Gaekwad's authority, who agreed to afford satisfaction to the local authorities of the Company of adequate punishment according to its laws for any misconduct of his servants and dependents within the city of Ahmedabad.

5. As great advantage had been derived by the Gaekwad in territorial extent and population from the possession of Dabhoi, Bahadurpur and Savli by the exchanges stipulated in the foregoing article, His Highness agreed to assign territory in the vicinity of Surat, or from his portion of the *pargana* of Petlad, in exchange for the Mughlai dues of the Company from the districts belonging to the Gaekwad in the Surat *Atthavisi*.
6. By the terms of the Definitive Treaty of 1805, a number of *parganas* had been ceded in full sovereignty to the Company for the expense of a subsidiary force, but from the districts so ceded the *pargana* of Vijapur had later been exchanged at the British request for other districts. By the 6<sup>th</sup> article of the present treaty, this restoration of Vijapur to the sovereignty of the Gaekwad and the exchanges made for it were confirmed. At the same time, the Company agreed not to apply in future to the Maharaja or his heirs or successors for any further exchange of any of the districts ceded by the Treaty of 1805 'or for the exchange of any territory whatever'.
7. The Maharaja Anandrao having represented to the Company that there were two places sacred to Hindu religious worship on the island of Bet and in the province of Okhamandal (*viz.* Dwarka, etc.), and having expressed a desire that his government may be put in possession of these places, the Company agreed to assign the province of Okhamandal and the island of Bet with all rights of sovereignty thereof to the Maharaja and his heirs and successors in perpetuity. Moreover, the Gaekwad consented to allow all vessels belonging to the Company and its subjects as may frequent any of the ports and places under the Gaekwad's government, to pass and repass without hindrance; and a similar guarantee was given by the Company to the Gaekwad's ships and subjects frequenting any of the ports under the British Government.
8. The Gaekwad engaged himself, in case of war, to bring forward the whole of his military resources for its prosecution, and the Company agreed to take into account 'the pretensions of the Gaekwad Government to benefit by any future partition of territory acquired in foreign wars'. The Baroda ruler also bound himself to hold at the

disposal of the Company, to act with the subsidiary force wherever it may be employed, and to be subject to the general command of the officer commanding the British troops, a body of 3,000 effective cavalry, to be supported exclusively at the expense of His Highness's government".<sup>62</sup>

The Supplemental Treaty was to become effective after ratification by the Governor-General-in-Council although it had been signed at Baroda on 6 November, 1817. Though the Resident had negotiated the Supplementary Treaty of Baroda and consulted the Bombay Government in every step of negotiations, after three months of its conclusion we find that the Governor-in-Council opined that it was imperfect, had its limitation and wanted to modify it. Sir Evan Nepean wrote a letter dated 28 January, 1818 and covering 56 foolscap pages to Lord Hastings and dispatched a copy of the same to Captain Carnac in which he opined that several articles of the Supplementary Treaty of Baroda were objectionable. Lord Hastings, however, turned down the objections and ratified the treaty on 12 March, 1818 and enclosed the ratified instrument along with a letter from his camp at Masawali, dated 12 March, 1818. Adam, Secretary to the Supreme Government, apprised Francis Warden, the Principal Secretary at Bombay that Lord Hastings had ratified the Supplementary Treaty of Baroda signed on 6 November, 1817 by Captain Carnac on behalf of the Company and was enclosing the ratified instrument along with a letter which was to be presented to Fatesingrao Gaekwad II by the Resident under orders from the Governor-in-Council. The letter further states that Lord Hastings would give the reasons for his ratification of the treaty and would communicate his comments on the several objections raised by the Bombay Board's dispatch to Captain Carnac dated 28 January, 1818 at a later date.<sup>63</sup>

Three weeks later, on 4 May, 1818, the Governor General sent his comments on two of the articles of the treaty. Lord Hastings admitted that while he was not insensitive to the fact that how much inconvenience would be caused to the British Government if the Gaekwad retained the exclusive jurisdiction over his *haveli* at Ahmedabad and the Dascroi villages, but, he had, nonetheless accepted this clause of the treaty owing to the immense significance attached by Fatesingrao Gaekwad II to his ancestral property and the obvious influence that the Resident's concession on this point to his wishes had produced on his acquiescence to the rest of the treaty. Lord Hastings, however, also wrote that he would be delighted if on a favorable occasion; Captain Carnac could induce the Gaekwad to cede the *haveli* and the

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<sup>62</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, pp. 910-913.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 915.



Dascroi villages. The dispatch next expresses Lord Hastings' sorrow that owing to Fatesingrao Gaekwad II's apprehensions with regard to the future demands of the British Government he had secured the insertion in article 6 of a proclamation that no future proposals would be made for an exchange of territory. This clause, according to the Governor General presented a serious obstacle to future engagements which might be advantageous to both parties.<sup>64</sup>

When negotiations of the Supplemental Treaty of Baroda were drawing to a close, Elphinstone sent a dispatch on 22 October, 1817, to Bombay in which was enclosed a *sanad* from Peshwa Baji Rao II to the Gaekwad which said that the Peshwa had agreed to surrender his sovereign rights on his share of Ahmedabad and its district in perpetuity to the Company. On 29 October, 1817, Carnac also sent a dispatch from Baroda to the Bombay Government that Fatesingrao Gaekwad II had given him the papers for the surrender of the Ahmedabad farm and also of his sovereign rights over his share of Ahmedabad to the Company's government.<sup>65</sup>

### **Final Stage in the Transfer of Ahmedabad: Cession of the Gaekwad's *Haveli* and the Dascroi: 1818**

Captain James Rivett Carnac resumed fresh negotiations with the Baroda Court as soon as he received the dispatch from Bombay dated 28 January, 1818 and pressed the Regent Fatesingrao Gaekwad II to surrender the Gaekwad's *haveli* and the Dascroi region to the Company despite the clause in article 6 of the Supplemental Treaty of Baroda that the Company would demand no more cessions of territory from the Baroda State. After some initial resistance Fatesingrao Gaekwad II conceded to the demands of the Company and surrendered his ancestral *haveli* and the Dascroi region to the British on 15 June, 1818. Captain Carnac's dispatch dated 15 June, 1818 gives a graphic account of the negotiations which led to the cession of the Gaekwad's *haveli* and the Dascroi. A brief summary of the dispatch will suffice here.<sup>66</sup>

Initially, Captain Carnac writes that in the several meetings held in the public Durbar of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II he had to face opposition from the elderly relatives, especially the ladies of the ruling family, who prevailed on Fatesingrao Gaekwad II to deny the surrender of

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<sup>64</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, pp. 915-916.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 922.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 923.

the *haveli* and the Dascroi. The issues which the relatives of the Regent raised were the clause in article 6 of the Supplemental Treaty of Baroda according to which no further exchange of territory would take place between the British and the Gaekwad. Moreover, the *haveli* and the Dascroi had been studiously kept out of consideration in all the late discussions by which the Gaekwad had made extensive cessions and substitutions of territory. Besides, the *haveli* was a symbol of prestige for the Gaekwad dynasty and most of the *inam* villages as well as *dumala gaons* had been granted to the chief members of the Gaekwad family and the darakhedars from the Dascroi taluka.<sup>67</sup>

Thus we see that personal, political, sentimental and superstitious reasons all combined in the opposition offered to the Resident's proposals.<sup>68</sup>

In order to secure his objectives the Resident decided to meet the Regent at his private residence or at the gardens in the neighborhood and not in public Durbar. Captain Carnac accompanied by the Native Agent to the Residency, Dhakji Dadaji, met Fatesingrao Gaekwad II at his private residence to discuss the matter. They found that Fatesingrao Gaekwad II showed friendly sentiments towards the British and told the Resident that he was indebted to the British for their efforts in preserving the territorial integrity of the Gaekwad State. The Resident told the Regent that the cession of the *haveli* and the Dascroi taluka was entirely dependent on his free will and consent.<sup>69</sup>

The Resident then advanced two arguments to prove that the cession of the *haveli* and the Dascroi taluka would be profitable to the Baroda State. Firstly, the Resident said that a divided government at Ahmedabad would be a perpetual source of conflict between the Company and the Baroda State. Secondly, the Baroda State could save large sums which were being spent on maintaining the heavy military establishment for the *haveli* and the Dascroi taluka. These arguments seem to have made some impression on the Regent to cede the Dascroi taluka but not the *inam* and *dumala gaon* villages within it. However, Captain Carnac declined such partial concessions as it was undesirable that the Company possessions should be encumbered with grants of a foreign state.<sup>70</sup>

At this stage Dhakji Dadaji intervened and convinced the Regent that in return for the Dascroi taluka along with its *inam* and *dumala gaon* villages, the Company would cede to the

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<sup>67</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, pp. 923-924.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 924.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 924-925.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 926.

Gaekwad its share of the Petlad *pargana*. Fatesingrao Gaekwad II accepted this deal and ceded the Dascroi taluka but not the *haveli*.<sup>71</sup>

The next day the final discussions about the *haveli* were held in the Durbar where Fatesingrao Gaekwad II recalled the gallantry of his father, Govindrao Gaekwad, in defending the *haveli* against Aba Shelukar's troops and he was cheered by the Gaekwad family and his minister Vithoba Bhau. The Resident said that the atmosphere in the Durbar was not conducive for negotiations and he proposed that he would discuss his proposals the next day in the Durbar provided only those persons who were actually officers of the State should be present in the Durbar.<sup>72</sup>

The next day Captain Carnac made spirited arguments which convinced the Regent to cede the *haveli* to the British. Carnac reminded Fatesingrao Gaekwad II of the role the Company had played in preventing the Baroda State from inevitable extinction. This argument softened the hard stance that Fatesingrao Gaekwad II had taken with regard to the *haveli* and he agreed to cede it to the Company. Thus, the cessions of the *haveli* and Dascroi taluka were obtained by 15 June, 1818.<sup>73</sup>

However, Fatesingrao Gaekwad II died soon after signing the 'release notes' for the cession of the *haveli* and the Dascroi taluka on 24 June, 1818 and was succeeded by Sayajirao Gaekwad II as Regent to the nominal Maharaja Anandrao Gaekwad.<sup>74</sup>

In his dispatch dated 29 September, 1818, Captain Carnac forwarded, as desired by the Governor-in-Council, a complete schedule of the territories ceded in *jaidad* by the Gaekwad in terms of the Supplemental Treaty of 6 November, 1817. At the same time, he submitted the additional article to the treaty which had been formally executed by Sayajirao Gaekwad II, who had succeeded Fatesingrao Gaekwad II as *mutalik* or regent to the nominal sovereign Anandrao Gaekwad. This article was to the effect, that instead of the villages from the Gaekwad's share of the Petlad *pargana*, mentioned in article 4 of the treaty, the contracting parties had substituted the following arrangement, (including therein the cession of territory which by article 5 of the Supplemental Treaty was to be made to the Company on account of the Mughlai dues payable by the Gaekwad's districts in the Surat *Atthavisi*), namely, the

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<sup>71</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 926.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 926-927.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 927-928.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 930-932.

district known as the Gaekwad's Dascroi inclusive of *dumala* and *inam* assignments, with the *haveli* of the city, the *qasba* of Mota and the *pargana* of Tadkeshwar in the Surat *Atthavisi*.<sup>75</sup>

In return for relinquishing their share of the Petlad *pargana*, the British forced the Gaekwad to cede the *qasba* town of Umreth which was an insulated spot in the Company's territories. In this way British rule was finally consolidated in Gujarat.<sup>76</sup>

The additional article of the Supplemental Treaty of Baroda was ratified by the Governor General on 28 November, 1818.<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile, the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18) had erupted after the signing of the Treaty of Poona in which Baji Rao II had taken up arms against the British at the Battle of Kirkee (5 November, 1817) as a result of which the Company had dethroned the Peshwa and annexed the State of Poona. On 1 December, 1818, the British Government apprised the Gaekwad of the fact that since the Peshwa had been dethroned and his dominions annexed by the British; the Gaekwad was no longer required to pay the annual tribute of 4 lakhs of rupees to the Peshwa. This was also a reward for the Gaekwad's support to the British during the Third Anglo-Maratha War.<sup>78</sup>

Anandrao Gaekwad's death occurred on 2 October, 1819 and his successor was his younger brother Sayajirao Gaekwad II (1819-47) who had previously acted as regent.<sup>79</sup>

During Sayajirao Gaekwad II's reign a convention was concluded with Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, by which the Gaekwad Government agreed not to send any of its troops on *mulukgiri* expeditions to its tributary States in Kathiawar and Mahi Kantha and not to demand tribute from them except through the medium of the British Government. The latter in turn promised the procurement of the said tribute without any expenses to the Gaekwad Government in line with the perpetual settlement made with the tributaries in the years 1807-1808 and 1811-1812 respectively.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, p. 932.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 932-934.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 934.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Gense and Banaji, *The Gaikwads of Baroda*, Vol. I, p. xvii.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

The convention dated 3 April, 1820 was the last of the public engagements concluded with the British Government which involved any territorial change in the Gaekwad's dominions or an infringement on his sovereign rights or privileges.<sup>81</sup>

The Marathas invaded and subdued Gujarat and the vast majority of the people were by temperament so mild and submissive that the influence they exercised over their rulers was characteristically intangible.<sup>82</sup> In this short sketch of the Baroda State it is therefore impossible to define the vague power of the people, though full consideration should be paid to such a sentence as the following written by Colonel Walker: "Although the power of the Native Government was not limited by positive rules or laws, yet its conduct was restrained by customs and forms, which if they did not prevent oppression, confined its exercise, as in the common sentiment of the people there existed an implied engagement on the part of the Government not to transgress those usages. This, it is true, afforded a precarious and uncertain degree of security, but it commonly sufficed to prevent any general and flagrant act of oppression".<sup>83</sup> Proceeding onto the history of the Marathas in Gujarat, they came to the region as military soldiers the chief officer among whom was the Dabhade; however, subsequently the highest command over the army of the region passed into the hands of his lieutenant Damajirao Gaekwad II from his family. Initially, the Gaekwad was considered only first among equals; however, in times of disturbances and unrest if conditions are favorable for a man with great ability and energy, he can rise rapidly. Damajirao Gaekwad II was indeed a man of great ability and energy and circumstances were favorable for his rise and as he rose he pushed aside the claims of his contemporaries who had come to Gujarat along with him even though the military class still remained very powerful. But according to F.A.H. Elliot the power which a class of men exercises is different from that which an individual exercises and the basis of which is unity, "the offspring of mutual confidence".<sup>84</sup> Although the government of Damajirao Gaekwad II was strong, it was severely restricted by the Peshwa's greater power; but following his death disputes over succession arose among his sons. For some time, however, his capable son Fatesingrao Gaekwad I was able to contain this internal strife but with his death family dissensions resurfaced among the Gaekwads which might have given an opportune moment to the military class to acquire power. But as there was a lack of unity among this class it eventually led to the usurpation of its power by

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<sup>81</sup> Gense and Banaji, *The Gaikwads of Baroda*, Vol. I, p. xvii.

<sup>82</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 120.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 120-121.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

Arab mercenary troops. Nevertheless, the influence of the military class remained powerful, and although the power of the Peshwa had weakened considerably he continued to artfully exploit the situation in the Baroda State to his advantage from the day of the death of Fatesingrao Gaekwad I till the accession of Anandrao Gaekwad and during this feeble period the Baroda State not only faced the impertinent behavior of the Arab mercenaries but it was also perfidiously intruded by money-lenders. It was during this time i.e. during the reign of Anandrao Gaekwad in 1802 that British intervention was sought by the Baroda State which led to a revolution that dealt a lethal blow to the Arab mercenaries and the Peshwa and for some time to the military class and the class of money-lenders as well. The British intervention tremendously increased the power of the Maharaja and made him an absolute ruler with no constitutional checks placed on him while the Subsidiary Alliance with the British Government led to the doom of the military class sooner or later. The Maharaja of Baroda who had attained his sovereignty was now required to deal with only one other force, namely, the East India Company, which had acted as its savior during perilous times and without whose support he could not remain on the *gaddi*. During the first twenty years of the nineteenth century after the signing of the Subsidiary Treaty, British intervention was welcomed by the Baroda State. This was the period when the dismissal of the Arab mercenary troops, repression of a rival party in the family, removal from the incubus of money-lenders, freedom from the suzerainty and eventual crushing of the enemy, the Peshwa and the partial reduction of the army which humbled the military class was taking place. But subsequently the course of events took such a turn that the revolution was led to another course which abruptly ended it. The Third Anglo-Maratha War led to the galvanization of the military class and the rapid disappearance of dangers and difficulties, political as well as financial made the Maharaja of Baroda more confident of himself so that now he would no longer tolerate British interference as patiently as he had during the initial period. When he was still very young, Fatesingrao Gaekwad II paid heed to the advice of two men of immense ability, Colonel Walker and Gangadhar Shastri. But when Colonel Walker left India and Gangadhar Shastri was killed by vile assassins of the henchman of Baji Rao II, Trimbakji Dengle, he made an assertion of his independence, so in place of “rigid economy and military reduction, we find that there was a tendency to deal surreptitiously with money-lenders and to stay reform in the army”.<sup>85</sup> This tendency was, of course, unquestionable and the Bombay Government decided to postpone its plan of withdrawing from actively interfering in the

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<sup>85</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 122.

internal affairs of the Baroda State. This decision of the Bombay Government did not amicably settle matters but led to breach of harmonious relations between the Baroda State and the Bombay Government. The character of the new Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad II was primarily responsible for this violent rupture. From the accession of Sayajirao Gaekwad II the history of the Baroda State gets altered because the Maharaja endeavors to get rid of foreign intervention and deal on his own with his financial difficulties, “but the military class does not profit by this except so far as the sovereign desires”.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, an effort was made with resoluteness by Sayajirao Gaekwad II for the repression of the influence of ministers without whose aid the sovereign was unable to act since the accession of Govindrao Gaekwad. The long reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II is ample proof of what terrible cost a Native ruler was ready to incur in order to “act independently of Residents, ministers, and guaranteed subjects”.<sup>87</sup>

## **The Reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II (1819-47)**

### I

After the death of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II his widow Radhabai wanted to become a *sati*, but she was persuaded against becoming one by Major Carnac who allowed her to adopt a son from the Gaekwad family, but not one who could make legitimate claims to be a successor of Anandrao Gaekwad because an express stipulation had been made that only the private property of his father should be inherited by the lad. Takhatbai had children; however, since she was not Anandrao Gaekwad’s legal wife, hence they could stake no claims to the *gaddi*. The undisputed heir to the throne of the Gaekwad dynasty was the younger brother of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II, Sayajirao Gaekwad II, who was only 19 years old then, and the Bombay Government without hesitancy acknowledged him Regent. The objections rose by Radhabai and Takhatbai were overruled. Even then the aspirations of Radhabai had the support of the Diwan Vithalrao Bhau, all the ministers and darakh-dars and also of the widow of Govindrao Gaekwad, Rani Gahenabai because this clique could foresee that the young prince Sayaji would go on to become a strong ruler and not a puppet in their hands.<sup>88</sup> There is a letter (Letter No. 125 of the Bombay Political Department to Simson dated 28 February, 1821) from the Selections of the Baroda Residency Records which is a representation made

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<sup>86</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

by Annapoornabai, the mother of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II, in which she makes pretensions to the *gaddi* of the Baroda State on behalf of her adopted grandson, Govindrao, and solicits British help in the matter. However, from the tone of the letter it is clear, as Elliot also states, that the British were in no way going to arbitrate in the matter or entertain the pretensions of Govindrao since he was the adopted son of Radhabai and could only ask Sayajirao Gaekwad II to restore the *nemnuk* of the family of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II.<sup>89</sup>

Their assessment was correct, for Sayajirao Gaekwad II turned out to be one of the most remarkable rulers of the Gaekwad dynasty whose distinguished quality was his intense and deep affection for power. At this time the Resident only knew him as a youth who was studious, kindly and quiet who constantly applied his mind to business and was unusually sober in his private life and these good qualities distinguished his career.<sup>90</sup> “But who could then guess”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “how great would be his tenacity of purpose, how jealous his suspicion of all about him, to what strange lengths his avarice would take him, for his love of saving and hoarding dominated his liking for display, or what would be the result of a strong will and good abilities enlightened by a limited education?”<sup>91</sup>

It seemed destined that Sayajirao Gaekwad II should quarrel with his powerful allies at the beginning of his reign. He stood solitarily in the midst of men and women who had a deep-seated aversion against him and he felt that the Bombay Government grudgingly supported him on the throne and moreover also held the belief that the Baroda State had not received fair treatment since the extinction of the Peshwa’s rule at Poona. Since the latter point has a connection with past events so Elliot writes about it first. It is a widely known fact that during the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18), the Peshwa of Poona, the Bhonsle of Nagpur and the Holkar of Indore fought the British for the very last time and that the British were actively supported in this war by Fatesingrao Gaekwad II. Not only was there a deployment of a large part of the subsidiary force of the Baroda State in Malwa but there was maintenance by the Gaekwad of a large cavalry force known as *Gaekwad Horse* which cost the State immensely. The cavalry force was maintained not merely during the course of the war, but for some time after it had ended too. The second reason for Sayajirao Gaekwad II’s anger against the British was that it was expressly stipulated in the Supplemental Treaty of Baroda that the Gaekwad had a solemn right to take part in the conquests made during the course of the Third Anglo-

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<sup>89</sup> G.B. Pandya, ed. (1958), *Gaekwads of Baroda: Maharaja Sayajirao II, A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1830 (Selections from the Baroda Residency Records)*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>90</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 124.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.



Maratha War as a reward for cooperating with the British during the year 1817-18, for which he had incurred a cost of over 40 lakhs. Notwithstanding, the Gaekwad benefitted from the war only in so far as he was exempted from paying a tribute of 4 lakhs to the Peshwa which was stipulated in the Treaty of Poona; nonetheless, this advantage which he gained was the indirect result of the annexation of Poona by the Company rather than from the acquisition of territories made by it during the course of the war. One more indirect advantage which the Bombay Government took into account that accrued to the Baroda State as a result of the war and is also a historical fact that after the end of the Third Anglo-Maratha War, Gujarat was forever freed from the peril of an external invasion or plunder from a foreign power.<sup>92</sup>

There was another cause of Sayajirao Gaekwad II's restlessness. Soon after the acknowledgment of his Regency on 2 October, 1819, Anandrao Gaekwad, who had for some days abstained from consuming opium expired, "his head resting on a stone from religious motives, his eyes fixed on the treasure room which was the centre of his more earthly longings".<sup>93</sup> The treasure room became the pivot around which a long, verbose, and trivial family quarrel followed. Radhabai had issued threats of becoming a *sati* in order to gain something; Takhatbai issued similar threats after the death of her husband but since her earnestness was doubtful, the Resident paid no heed to them and further recommended her not to disclose to Sayajirao Gaekwad II the ridiculous claims she was making for herself and her sons. Moreover, she advanced pretensions on the contents of the treasure room by claiming that they were the private property of the late Maharaja. Sayajirao Gaekwad II said that they were the property of the State and therefore for few months the treasure room was guarded by British soldiers (although the room had a back entrance which was clandestinely used by the Maharaja). Eventually the Governor of Bombay had to come to Baroda in order to settle this matter and other outstanding disputes within the royal family. Rani Takhatbai and her two sons were given a British guarantee and a *nemnuk* was settled on them but the two sons separated after the death of their mother. The first son of Rani Takhatbai was a worthless youth named Balwantrao who during the years 1819-20 made pretensions to the *gaddi* but subsequently was trapped in debt because he did not pay attention to his work and got immersed in enjoyment and till his death gave immense trouble to his British protectors. The second son Pilajirao incurred the wrath of Veniram, a minister of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, inasmuch as he refused to bribe him, and as a result Veniram wreaked vengeance on him by

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<sup>92</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 125.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp. 125-126.

first robbing him and then ordering two of his servants to be murdered. Hence, these two rivals of Sayajirao Gaekwad II did not have a happy ending.<sup>94</sup>

Very few people who showed hostility towards Sayajirao Gaekwad II had a happy ending and here is another example of a man who persisted in his revengefulness. Radhabai made claims to the *gaddi* on behalf of her son, Govindrao, whom she had adopted and since he was a true Gaekwad his claims were legitimate and he frightened Sayajirao Gaekwad II in so far as the Maharaja developed a profound indignation against him. Since Radhabai and her advisers were foolish enough to refuse to accept a proviso that Govindrao being the adopted son of Radhabai was not entitled to succeed to the *gaddi* Sayajirao Gaekwad II also withheld the *nemnuk* of Radhabai and Govindrao. The British withdrew their guarantee to the mother and son until in 1826 they agreed to waive their pretensions and as a result received their *nemnuk*. However, owing to the refusal of Sayajirao Gaekwad II to fulfill the promises made by him and his obstinate will to retain in prison numerous dependents of Govindrao who were arrested by him at last a fight ensued between the two cousins. Govindrao increased his guards by a substantial number and began listening to marriage proposals with a lady of the royal family of Gwalior whilst Sayajirao Gaekwad II did not allow him to enter the city of Baroda and consequently on 22 July, 1829 a riot occurred. Govindrao took shelter in a house in close proximity to the Residency, which belonged to Captain Ballantyne, and assembled a force of some 800 or 1,000 retainers around himself and the Maharaja, on the other hand, blockaded them with his troops. The situation remained like this for six months with the Resident refusing to intervene or ameliorate the state of affairs; as a result the processions on the festivals of the Ganapati and Dussera were unable to take place. Eventually, the Governor of Bombay, Sir John Malcolm, who visited Baroda in 1830, ordered the immediate dismissal of the retainers of Govindrao, and the lad was transported to Surat. Although his *nemnuk* was continued, a large amount was deducted for debts incurred by him, and a fine was imposed on him for cruelly mutilating one of his servants. In 1835 he was moved to Ahmedabad where the two cousins fell out more frequently and Sayajirao Gaekwad II succeeded in obtaining the property of both the widows of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II. He remained imprisoned at Ahmedabad till 1856 when he was delivered to the Gaekwad Government for paying attention to the idle talk of soldiers who intended to mutiny against the East India Company. By this time he was in an abject state of poverty, and was afflicted by leprosy and had

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<sup>94</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 125-126.

become insane. Thus, the career of another enemy of Sayajirao Gaekwad II came to a calamitous end.<sup>95</sup>

There are many letters concerning the above incident in the published primary source *Gaikwads of Baroda: Maharaja Sayajirao II, A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1830 (Selections from the Baroda Residency Records)* edited by G.B. Pandya which are mentioned below:

1. There is a letter in the selections from the Baroda Residency Records (Letter No. 192 dated 23 July, 1829) which vividly describes the helplessness of the Resident when Govindrao made a forced entry into the capital along with his retainers and started residing in the house belonging to Captain Ballantyne and the Maharaja blockaded them with 500 of his troops. The letter is written by the Resident himself in which he writes that he was approached by Naropant, a confidential *karkun* of Sayajirao Gaekwad II to compel Govindrao to surrender and place himself at the mercy of the Maharaja. The Resident writes that he apprised the *karkun* of the fact that he did not possess ample powers to intervene in the matter and things could only ameliorate if the Maharaja honored the agreement of 1826 and paid the family of the late Fatesingrao Gaekwad II their *nemnuk*.<sup>96</sup>

The Resident further writes that instead of honoring the agreement of 1826 Sayajirao Gaekwad II had for many months endeavored to create discord between Radhabai and Govindrao in which he had obtained partial success. He had bribed a *karkun* in the employment of the family of the late Fatesingrao Gaekwad II for the purpose of separating Radhabai and her adopted son by falsely promising Govindrao that he would restore his *nemnuk*. Govindrao, who at that time was residing in the palace of the Maharaja, on discovering the deceit of Sayajirao Gaekwad II left the palace and instead of going to his own house started residing in the mausoleum of his father Fatesingrao Gaekwad II.<sup>97</sup>

The Resident concludes the letter by stating that the fracas in the city of Baroda could only end if Sayajirao Gaekwad II would abide by the humane desire of the Court of Directors and honors the memory of his late brother who had helped the British during the Third Anglo-Maratha War and relieve his family of its difficulties.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>96</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

1. In the next letter (Letter No. 194 dated 9 September, 1829 addressed to the Secretary to the Honorable Governor, Poona) the Resident writes to the Governor of Bombay that Naropant, the confidential *karkun* of the Maharaja visited the Residency on the pretext of accompanying Narayan Rao, who was acting as a deputy of Sayajirao Gaekwad II and was ordered by the latter to write on behalf of the Resident asking him for his attendance at the Durbar on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi and for felicitating the Maharaja on the birthday of his son. Soon after Narayan Rao had left Naropant offered his apology for showing the audacity for blocking the road between the Camp and the Residency telling the Resident at the same time that he was merely a servant carrying out the orders of his master. Subsequently, Naropant produced a memorandum from the Maharaja addressed to the Resident asking for his reply. The Resident told Naropant that although he lamented such an unusual mode of communication, nonetheless, the contents of the memorandum would decide whether he needed to reply to it or not. When Naropant read out the memorandum it contained allegations by Sayajirao Gaekwad II against the Resident accusing the latter of instigating Govindrao's retainers to create a tumult when the Maharaja's uncle Jagtab Mama along with his retainers was going to immerse the idol of Lord Ganesh in the river Vishvamitri as a result of which they had to abandon its immersion giving a warning to the Resident at the same time that a similar tumult would occur when the idol of Lord Ganesh belonging to Govindrao would pass through the streets where the residence of the Maharaja is located for immersion in the Bhimanath Tank. And for all these disturbances he would hold the Resident solely responsible. However, the Resident told Naropant that such false and baseless allegations did not warrant his reply.<sup>99</sup>
2. The next letter is from the Bombay Castle (Letter No. 195 from Charles Norris to the Political Department dated 21 September, 1829) in which Charles Norris writes that he has received directions for the acknowledgment of the receipts of the dispatches from the Political Department dated 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Instant, Nos. 327, 329 and 330 with regard to the differences that exist between Sayajirao Gaekwad II and Govindrao springing from the Ganapati Festival and make the Political Department aware of the

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<sup>99</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, pp. 19-20.

fact that the Governor-in-Council has given his approval of the actions of the Political Department on the occasion.<sup>100</sup>

3. In the next letter (Letter No. 196) from the Baroda Residency to Charles Norris dated 28 September, 1829 the Resident complains that Sayajirao Gaekwad II is taking no steps to make a settlement with the young Prince Govindrao and of late has busied himself in performing sacrifices aimed at bringing about the death of those persons with whom he is angry. The Resident further writes to Charles Norris that he shall in future throw light on the character of the Maharaja but in the present state of affairs he is unable to secure information on the subject.<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, the Resident writes to Charles Norris that unless the circumstances change he will not permit the British troops to attend the procession on the occasion of Dussera since he is apprehensive of the fact that similar disturbances are likely to occur as the ones that occurred during the Ganapati Festival.<sup>102</sup>

4. The next letter (Letter No. 197) is concerned with Sayajirao Gaekwad II and the Ganapati Festival. It is written by Charles Norris to the Political Department dated 13 October, 1829 from the Bombay Castle. In this letter Charles Norris writes to the Resident that he has received directions for the acknowledgment of the receipt of his letter dated 28 September which states that Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad II had written to him another letter in which he complained about his behavior on the occasion of the Ganapati Festival which the Resident found discreditable to transfer and to make the Resident aware of the fact that the letters of the Maharaja, no matter how much indecent they might be, must be transferred to the Bombay Government since the Resident is not permitted to use his own discretion whether to forward or withhold any letter from the Gaekwad. It is for the Bombay Government to decide the consideration and merit such letters deserve, and to pass a verdict on the style and terms of such communications, the very reasons behind the decision of the Resident for withholding it.<sup>103</sup>

In the second part of the letter Charles Norris informs the Resident that when this letter reaches him the festival of Dussera will have elapsed and that the British Government has come to the conclusion that if Sayajirao Gaekwad II applies for customary guards the East

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<sup>100</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, p. 20.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

India Company will not refuse unless the Resident can satisfactorily prove that like at the feast of the Ganapati Festival they might get involved in the noisy quarrels and brawls as a result of the real state of affairs of parties at Baroda.<sup>104</sup>

5. In the subsequent letter (Letter No. 198) from the Baroda Residency addressed to Charles Norris dated 24 October, 1829 the Resident observes that the Maharaja is holding him responsible for all the troubles he is facing. The Resident writes that his erstwhile letters are proof of the fact that he has acted in accordance with the orders of the Governor-in-Council and maintained strict neutrality.<sup>105</sup>

The Resident in this letter describes certain *ryots* who are known as *Satars* or the common singing and dancing women of the city who perform every year in the palace of the Maharaja, the house of the family of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II and other members of the Gaekwad family during this time of the year. The Resident writes that Radhabai in accordance with customary practice summoned these women and Sayajirao Gaekwad II exasperated with her for sending her sons some attendants of the Maharaja forcibly took hold of these women and as a result the retainers of Govindrao collided with the men of Sayajirao Gaekwad II and in consequence of the brawl that followed these women were released and Govindrao was sent back to his mother. One of the men of Govindrao who was wounded in the fray was paraded by the Maharaja throughout the city and from the Court to the Residency with a message asking the Resident for the expulsion of Govindrao from Baroda. However, the Resident writes that since he did not possess the authority to intervene and thought that the man should not have been brought to the Residency in such a manner, he merely repeated his previous answer and asked for the man to be taken back.<sup>106</sup>

Next, the Resident writes that he has not violated any instructions and that Sayajirao Gaekwad II himself did not think that it was essential for him to invite him to attend the Dussera Durbar and so the Resident writes that he also thought it was not necessary for him to volunteer for accompanying the Maharaja.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, the Resident writes that he shall abstain from describing the behavior of Sayajirao Gaekwad II of late in contriving against the life of the Gentlemen and other people associated with the Residency nor try to depict the horrible ceremonies which he is in the habit of performing daily. They are the topic of public conversation in the city and it is

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<sup>104</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, p. 21.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

adequate to say that they are full of impurity and that had the Resident not convincingly believed the facts he would not have imagined that the nature of human beings could be so morally depraved, had the behavior of one Native Prince not been almost similar.<sup>108</sup>

6. In the next letter (Letter No. 200) to the Political Department from the Bombay Castle dated 25 November, 1829 the Governor-in-Council requests the Resident to apprise Sayajirao Gaekwad II of the fact that the Bombay Government considers his conduct against Govindrao to be extremely lamentable and expects him to act in the spirit of his alliance with the British Government and desist from violent acts intended to disrupt the public peace, especially since the Governor intends to leave Bombay for Baroda in two or three weeks.<sup>109</sup>

The Resident is also directed to apprise the Maharaja of the fact that if he acts contrarily to the desire expressed by the Governor it will be construed as disrespect on the part of the Maharaja to the wishes of the Bombay Government.<sup>110</sup>

The Governor-in-Council also requests the Resident to apprise Govindrao of the fact that the Bombay Government expresses its disapproval of his attitude of opposition towards his Maharaja and if he by his conduct causes any disturbance of the public peace of Baroda the Bombay Government will forfeit his membership of the Gaekwad family.<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, the Governor-in-Council asks the Resident to abstain from communicating any further with either party with regard to the disputes existing between them and to call upon, if essential, the commanding officer of the subsidiary force to augment the strength of his escort for the purpose of protecting the Residency, but to abstain from reinforcing the strength of the army of either party.<sup>112</sup>

7. There is a translation of a letter (Letter No. 498 of 1826-58) which is the last letter concerning Govindrao in which a guarantee by the British to Govindrao is confirmed. The letter is a translation of a document which Lord Clare, Governor of Bombay, presented to Sayajirao Gaekwad II on 27 March, 1832 at Baroda on behalf of the British Government which describes an agreement reached between the two

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<sup>108</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, p. 22.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

Governments with respect to the punctual payment of the *nemnuk* which the Maharaja had granted to his cousin Govindrao.<sup>113</sup>

The document goes on to state that Sayajirao Gaekwad II had signed an agreement with the British Government acting upon the advice and consent of James Williams, Resident at Baroda on 28 April, 1826 or Chaitra Vad 7<sup>th</sup> Samvat 1882 whereby a settlement was brought about for the regular payment of a *nemnuk* of 12,400 rupees on an annual basis to Govindrao by Sayajirao Gaekwad II after deduction of the sum already paid. The Maharaja was asked to pay the remainder and in future pay the *nemnuk* on a regular basis annually by ordering his banker every six months through the medium of the British Government so that it could be cashed without deduction of a commission as percentage. The *nemnuk* was to be paid to Govindrao for the rest of his life and after his death it would be reverted back to the Gaekwad Government.<sup>114</sup>

The British Government acknowledges the fact that Govindrao has opposed the Gaekwad Government and hence it is their duty to forbid him from entering the dominions of the Gaekwad without obtaining his forgiveness and that he ought to be forced to dwell permanently at Surat or some other place lying within the dominions of the British as would be suitable for his safe custody. The document further states what has already been written by F.A.H. Elliot that when the death of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II occurred his widow Radhabai wanted to become a *sati* and in order to dissuade her she was allowed to adopt Govindrao and it was stipulated at that time that the child could not make pretensions on her property. A settlement of a *nemnuk* of 10,400 rupees was made on Radhabai on 28 April, 1826 Chaitra Vad 7<sup>th</sup> Samvat 1882 which the Gaekwad Government is obliged to pay to her after deduction of what has been paid of this sum up to the present time. The allowance must be paid punctually in the future on an annual basis by ordering the banker to deduct the amount. The *nemnuk* was to be paid to Radhabai throughout her life and subsequent to her death it would be reverted back to the Gaekwad Government.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, p. 13.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 13-14.



In future if Govindrao or Radhabai oppose the Gaekwad Government again there will be forfeiture of their *nemnaks* with the voluntary agreement of both Governments. 27 March, 1832 Phagan Vad 11<sup>th</sup> Samvat 1888.<sup>116</sup>

To return to the reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, the virtual commencement of which took place before the death of Anandrao Gaekwad, one may recall that he stood alone among men and women who hated him and felt that the British did not extend their full support to him. As a young Maharaja, Sayajirao Gaekwad II was in need of an adviser, and it is indeed unfortunate that he chose one of the most adroit knaves in India, firstly because his dishonesty drew his attention and secondly because he was a favorite of the Resident, Major Carnac, and the Maharaja held the belief that he exercised immense influence over him. Gangadhar Shastri was succeeded by Dhakji Dadaji, and the meritorious career of the former was so disastrously obscured by the knavery of the latter, that in 1820, the Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone was constrained to write, “the Resident’s intercourse with the Gaekwad is sometimes carried on by means of a minister under the influence of the Resident, of all courses the most invidious and the least successful”.<sup>117</sup> In fact, the continuous resentment that existed between Sayajirao Gaekwad II and the British Government was because both sheerly misunderstood each other and this misunderstanding was artfully exploited by a trickster like Dhakji Dadaji to swindle both governments.<sup>118</sup>

In 1816, Dhakji Dadaji was chosen as a successor to Gangadhar Shastri to the post of Native Agent to the Durbar; but what was worse he also secured his appointment as *potedar* in place of Haribhakti much against the wish of the then Maharaja, Fatesingrao Gaekwad II. Dhakji Dadaji succeeded in becoming the *potedar* of the State because he had apparently persuaded the Resident that by his meticulous management of the financial affairs of the State and lowering the interest rate he had brought about a reduction in its debts, “which, at the end of 1816, were supposed to amount to less a sum than Rs. 94, 69,664 by nearly forty lakhs, that is, to Rs. 54, 97,690”.<sup>119</sup>

It was a cardinal sin to permit the same man to hold both the posts of Native Agent and *potedar* as this combination gave ample opportunities for fraudulent behavior; and to make a man like Dhakji such a powerful person in the State was wrought with danger. In the

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<sup>116</sup> Pandya, *Gaikwads of Baroda*, p. 14.

<sup>117</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>119</sup> *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, p. 398.

beginning Dhakji had one immense problem to surmount; he was penniless and could not disburse the sums required by the State; he therefore induced the Resident that as it was Maharaja Fatesingrao Gaekwad II's wish he should ask Mairal Narayan and Haribhakti to disburse equal sums along with him in the concern. In reality, both of these bankers made disbursements worth 8.5 lakhs each, while Dhakji being a pauper advanced nothing. In the same manner this man of penury entered into partnership with Ratanji Kahandas in taking up the Kathiawar *potedari* in which in reality Ratanji Kahandas supplied all the funds.<sup>120</sup>

The State was apparently in an advantageous position during Dhakji's *potedari* because he charged only 9 per cent interest instead of the former rate of 12 per cent for the loans disbursed during the year and he even went to the extent of frightening the Baroda bankers by asking them to lower their interest rates otherwise he would borrow money from foreign financial institutions. However, Dhakji's moderation proved to be illusory, because in reality he was a fraudster who deceived both the State and the people. During Dhakji's tenure of Native Agent and *potedar* the *ijaradars* were under compulsion forced to pay him a percentage so that the payment of revenues to them at a fixed date was guaranteed. He deposited this revenue paid by the *ijaradars* into his private account. Moreover, as a habit he refused to cash the Durbar notes unless he was paid a high commission. Eventually, when Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad II ascended the *gaddi* of Baroda he revealed to the Governor of Bombay the corruption that Dhakji Dadaji had indulged in.<sup>121</sup> The new Maharaja proved that, "under the term of brokerage, he had embezzled Rs. 2, 75,000 and that after appropriating Rs. 1, 90,000 he had entered into the accounts that he had paid this sum to Fatesingrao Gaekwad II's creditors".<sup>122</sup>

The Resident was entirely oblivious of all this speculation and corruption of Dhakji Dadaji. The Resident, Captain Carnac, was under the illusion that the debts of the State were rapidly being extinguished and in a letter dated 14 February, 1819, he wrote that the State would be free by the end of that year.<sup>123</sup>

It is indeed unfortunate that Sayajirao Gaekwad II wanted such a man to become his Minister and because the Bombay Government refused permission to him to be a servant of both governments, Dhakji in September 1819 decided to work for the Maharaja and on 12

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<sup>120</sup> *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, p. 398.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 398-399.

October, 1819 was appointed Diwan. He managed to acquire from the Maharaja *inam* villages worth 30,000 rupees and his salary amounted to 1 lakh. However, Dhakji Dadaji could not retain his office for long, although he professed falsely to support Sayajirao Gaekwad II against the claims of Radhabai and Takhatbai and since a large number of grievances soon sprang, they led to suspicions arising within the official circles of the Bombay Government, who was not at all happy with the appointment to such an extent that they proposed to the Maharaja in January 1820 that Dhakji Dadaji should be forced into retirement. Sayajirao Gaekwad II accepted the proposal with joyfulness because he was now disillusioned by the influence exercised by Dhakji Dadaji at the Residency.<sup>124</sup> “But the pecuniary embarrassments of the State and other reasons”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “at this time necessitated the first of a remarkable series of visits made by certain Governors of Bombay to Baroda, and to describe Mr. Elphinstone’s visit, Dhakji’s history must for a time be dropped”.<sup>125</sup>

Mountstuart Elphinstone, who had been made Governor of Bombay in 1819, paid a visit to Baroda in April 1820 when it was discovered by him that although in February 1819 Captain Carnac was hopeful that by the year-end the debts of the State would be completely extinguished and it would possess a surplus, in reality, the State debt was 1, 07, 66,297 rupees. Of this amount a sum of more than 27 lakhs sprang from the Third Anglo-Maratha War, arrears for the army in 1817-18 were found to be amounting to over 25.5 lakhs and the arrears for the troops in Kathiawar and Rajpipla amounting to over 10 lakhs. The truth of the matter was that certain items of expenditure had been concealed from the Resident, and the payment of the troops had been allowed to fall into arrears, partly because of the refusal of the bankers to disburse money at the low rate of interest forced upon them by Dhakji Dadaji, and partly because they had no faith in this minister and were unable to comprehend what kind of situation would arise in the future in this type of an atmosphere. In order to surmount these difficulties a proposal was drawn up to raise three loans:<sup>126</sup> “1<sup>st</sup> one of half a crore of rupees, to be paid off at the rate of 12 lakhs a year: 2<sup>nd</sup> one for the Kathiawad debts, amounting to 20 lakhs, of which 3 lakhs were to be paid off yearly: 3<sup>rd</sup>, a third potadari loan was to be raised of 30 lakhs for the expenses of the current year, the whole of which was to be annually repaid”.<sup>127</sup> In order to fulfill the repayment of these annual sums of 45 lakhs the

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<sup>124</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 129.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-131.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

bankers were granted *varats* or letters of credit on different *ijaradars* or revenue farmers of various *mahals*, with the interest on all three being 10.5 per cent “i.e. a mean between Dhakji’s low rate and the normal high rate of 12 per cent”.<sup>128</sup> After being initially hesitant Sayajirao Gaekwad II came to an agreement over the “potadari loan and to pay off 12 lakhs on a loan of 50 lakhs and as much as he could on Hari Bhakti’s loan of 42 lakhs, i.e. 3 lakhs, and as 14 lakhs were due to Sir John Malcolm for the Malwa forces, they were to be re-paid with interest after 12 months”.<sup>129</sup> The Maharaja was hopeful that the revenue of the State would amount to at least 71 lakhs and the expenditure would amount to about 56 lakhs, so that the State would possess a surplus of 15 lakhs. In order to bring down the expenses of the State, Sayajirao Gaekwad II drew up a proposal to cut the allowance of his ministers by one-third. But he was refused permission to implement this proposal since all his ministers were under British guarantee and the proposal was postponed for the time being which annoyed the Maharaja to a great extent. Thus early in his reign he had drawn up a proposal to reduce the allowances of persons protected by the Resident. Mountstuart Elphinstone gave permission to the Maharaja for bringing down the entire expenditure of his fleet, “quite a modern item”,<sup>130</sup> but there was a blatant refusal on the part of the Maharaja to reduce the number of his troops, and Mountstuart Elphinstone remarked, “the abuses in the army are almost inherent in its nature and are not to be removed without a sort of revolution, not only in the army, but the State. As there are few Jagirs in the Gaekwad’s territory, the income of his chiefs is almost entirely derived from their military pay and perquisites, which again are connected with the superior rate of pay to the men belonging to the greater Sardars and to the loose system of muster in use in this State”.<sup>131</sup> For the introduction of a better system of muster the appointment of European officers was a must but there was no doubt regarding the unpopularity of such a step. So the British did not insist upon this reform and thus gave permission for the persistence of this old evil.<sup>132</sup>

There was an absolute necessity for Sayajirao Gaekwad II to have a minister with good qualities in order to keep the financial system of the State healthy by keeping the expenditure to a bare minimum and choosing an immaculate man became the next topic of deliberation.<sup>133</sup> “Before relating what was done”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “let us now follow to

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<sup>128</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 131.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-132.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

its end Dhakji's career, the man who had been in the main responsible for the present difficulties".<sup>134</sup>

Sayajirao Gaekwad II was certainly pleased to be relieved of Dhakji as minister, but it was his obvious wish that this man should not continually be an encumbrance on the State. Dhakji, on the other hand, was shamelessly presumptuous and voluble and put up a fight in order to secure his own interests. It was his ardent desire to retain the *potedari*, a business in which he had never invested a farthing, and in the end decided to sell his share for 1.75 lakhs, when, as has been previously narrated, six of the chief bankers resumed the *potedari*, the annual limit on which in future was placed at 30 lakhs. He was, however, allowed to retain his *inam* villages worth 30,000 rupees annually. The Maharaja was angered at these promising terms being offered to Dhakji Dadaji and therefore made allegations based on good evidence against the fraudster that he had peculated vast sums of money and there was moreover a flagrant refusal on the part of Sayajirao Gaekwad II to pay Dhakji Dadaji 1.75 lakhs. Once the Bombay Government was convinced of his knavery it imposed a penalty of 7.75 lakhs on him for peculation and his bahandhari was also withdrawn. He was, however, permitted to disgorge the sum from his agent Umia Shankar, who was as much of a scoundrel as Dhakji Dadaji, and in the end the Bombay Government canceled his *sanad*. Subsequently, he went to Bombay, and there importunately requested before the Court of Directors to ask Sayajirao Gaekwad II for the restitution of his *inam* villages (1835) and in the end succeeded in his scheme by impelling the Maharaja to restore them with all interest (1840). But Dhakji was still hopeful of getting back his 7.75 lakhs with interest and an opportunity presented itself when his old patron Major, now Sir James Carnac, was planning to visit Baroda as Governor of Bombay. At this time he ingeniously planned to swindle Sayajirao Gaekwad II. He convinced him that he would prevail upon Sir James Carnac to give him concessions in matters which were causing anxiety to the Maharaja if he agreed to pay him a bribe of 5 lakhs. He not only secured this sum but 12.5 lakhs were promised by Sayajirao Gaekwad II to him if he successfully represented his case before the Governor of Bombay. But it was obvious that the Governor did not concede to the demands of Sayajirao Gaekwad II and Dhakji did not speak a word to Sir James Carnac except importunately telling him in the most impertinent manner to request the Maharaja for re-employing him. Sayajirao Gaekwad II became suspicious of the fact that Dhakji Dadaji was taking undue advantage of him and sent two agents of his favorite Gopal Mairal to Bombay in order to conduct a probe into the

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<sup>134</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 132.

matter. They were bribed by the arch-fraudster and they gave their recommendation owing to which 5 lakhs of the 12.5 lakhs promised to Dhakji were deposited in his account. Nevertheless, Sayajirao Gaekwad II felt after some time that he was being swindled; so this time he asked Harilal, the agent of his own brother-in-law, the Killedar of Baroda to go to Bombay to probe the matter. Although Dhakji was unable to bribe this man, he was nonetheless successful in casting him into prison by falsely implicating him in a case of debt. Subsequently, however, the whole plot was uncovered before Sayajirao Gaekwad II and the Bombay Government. The whole plot included the complicity of the notorious Baba Nafada, who in 1837 was involved in a conspiracy to ruin Goraji Pol and in about 1846, after a speculation of large amounts of money, in the virtual murder of the child of his master, Samal Bechar, the banker. Perhaps, what excites the curiosity of the historian is the fact that even after knowing the full truth of the corrupt and nefarious activities that Dhakji Dadaji had indulged in the Bombay Government persisted in its demands that he should retain his *inam* villages till he died in 1846. One need not wonder therefore that despite all his notoriety Dhakji Dadaji remained a favorite with the Bombay Government.<sup>135</sup>

Neither is it peculiar that in 1820 Elphinstone had a wish that a good minister should help Sayajirao Gaekwad II with his administration nor the fact that Sayajirao Gaekwad II wanted to select one on his own. It is indeed unfortunate that the Maharaja chose a man in the entire country whom Elphinstone could not approve of. This man was Sitaram whom the Bombay Government had exiled following the murder of Gangadhar Shastri since he was involved in it. Notwithstanding, Sitaram continued to remain a pet of the Baroda Court, and in 1816 his *nemnuk* was raised by 20,000 rupees by the then Maharaja Anandrao Gaekwad. He was also a particular favorite of Sayajirao Gaekwad II who frequently consulted him and put up a fight for his retention at Baroda till he died in 1823. Seemingly angered by the fact that he could not have him as minister Sayajirao Gaekwad II pretended to show indifference towards the next appointment, and gave his apathetic consent when Babaji's son Vithalrao Bhau was nominated, the very man who had extended his support to the claims of Govindrao to the *gaddi*. Although Vithalrao secured the appointment he was unable to exercise any power at any time because another Vithalrao called Diwanji was appointed along with him and subsequently the latter sidelined the former. The death of Vithalrao Bhau occurred in 1828 and Sayajirao Gaekwad II, who held a grudge against him, inflicted a relentless persecution on his adopted son Bhaskarrao, the more so because he was protected by the British, a

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<sup>135</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 132-133.

protection he was undeserving of since he was a foolish man with a cruel instinct. Like other opponents of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, he had to fall prey to the hatred of the Maharaja and to the malice of Veniram, a glaring instance of how useless the Bahandhari system was.<sup>136</sup>

Thus Vithalrao Diwanji succeeded in becoming minister. Brilliant services were rendered by him to the State in the Kadi War and in Kathiawar, first as a lieutenant of Babaji, when he defeated and took Malharrao Gaekwad as prisoner, and soon after as a deputy and successor to Babaji. It was during his tenure of the post of Subah which was marked by unscrupulousness that there was an increase in both the revenues as well as the territories of the State. However, he indulged in several unjustifiable intrigues in order to place himself in a dominant position over the Kathiawar chiefs of which the British officers were oblivious while owing to his seemingly cooperative nature and agreement on several issues he became a favorite of the British Government. For some time Sayajirao Gaekwad II was very happy with Vithalrao Diwanji and fixed his *nemnuk* at 60,000 rupees which was under the guarantee of the British Government, whilst the rest of his allowances were in excess of 65,000 rupees. But, with the passage of time, Sayajirao Gaekwad II became suspicious that Vithalrao Diwanji was not entirely subservient to him and willingly listened to the suggestions made by the Resident, and his affection soon turned into a deep-seated aversion; however, subsequently his feelings changed and on 1 April, 1827, he raised the allowances of his minister to 1,05,000 rupees.<sup>137</sup>

What led to a breach of harmonious relations between Sayajirao Gaekwad II and Vithalrao Diwanji will be delineated later. Presently we return to one more thing that resulted from the visit of Mountstuart Elphinstone.<sup>138</sup>

In 1820, Elphinstone stated that the commission which was formed at Baroda, under the supervision of the Resident, had ended in form and substance, because it was formed only owing to the weakness of Anandrao Gaekwad, and in future the Maharaja in person would run the government of the State. At the same time the Governor gave a warning to Sayajirao Gaekwad II that he should be sincere in paying his debts, fulfilling his engagements, dealing openly with the British Government, and abstaining from any intercourse with foreign States. The engagements mentioned by Elphinstone above were those pertaining to the ministers, the bankers and tributary States who had been given a guarantee by the British. Most of the

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<sup>136</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

quarrels which occurred during the long reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II arose from his negligence of his engagements with guaranteed ministers and bankers, which one must confess were inherently flawed and there was an extremely stringent enforcement of them by the British Government. On the other hand, the Gaekwad Government took no initiative to deal openly with the British Government, especially with regard to financial matters. The peril of Sayajirao Gaekwad II not fulfilling his engagements with the tributary States was less likely because the Gaekwad had agreed at this time to withdraw his troops from Kathiawar and Mahikantha, and all political relations with the tributary States had been brought to an end with the British Government giving its consent for the collection of revenues without charging anything to the Gaekwad Government. But even on this engagement too, quarrels did spring.<sup>139</sup>

The quarrels arose from the changes that had occurred in the administrative set-up of the Baroda State with the commencement of the reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II. The Resident was not required any longer to actively participate in the government, even though he was to be familiarized with the financial health of the State, and on special occasions to advise the Maharaja, or to communicate the advice of the British Government. The Native Agent was relegated to an altogether subordinate position. With the exception of foreign affairs, the Maharaja was independent and had the right to select his own minister in consultation with the British Government. In short, the reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II commenced with prosperity; it is true, he had debts to pay but there was a clear way out of them that was not tiresomely long; he had engagements with guaranteed ministers and bankers, but they were not as burdensome as compared to what his predecessors had faced; the Maharaja was not completely liberated from the clutches of the East India Company but enjoyed more independence than his brother and father. There were, nevertheless, few issues on which friction and conflict occurred between the Gaekwad and the British Government.<sup>140</sup>

## II

Though Sayajirao Gaekwad II and Mountstuart Elphinstone had settled most of the outstanding issues, on a few of them an understanding could not be arrived at and as the final decision on these was not in favor of the Baroda State it offended the Maharaja immensely.<sup>141</sup> “Chief among these”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “was the refusal on the part of the Bombay

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<sup>139</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 135.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., pp. 135-136.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 137.



Government to recognise any claims of the Gaekwad for the *Ghasdana* tribute in that part of Kathiawad which had belonged to the Peshwa, and some similar claims in the Kheda collectorate in the districts originally formed in the Ahmedabad direction, and in the dominions of the Nawab of Cambay”.<sup>142</sup> Lack of space inhibits one to write about these issues in detail; but what is worthwhile is that when the Nawab of Cambay refused to give his assent to the demands of the Gaekwad the Bombay Government was impelled to permit the latter to make a show of force against the Nawab who was protected by them. In 1814, there was seizure of seventeen villages belonging to the Nawab by the Gaekwad and the appropriation of their revenue by the latter for four years. In sum, there was a confiscation of three lakhs worth of revenue. However, in 1821 Elphinstone took the decision that there should be a reduction in the claims of the Gaekwad which amounted to 25,000 rupees annually to 4,200 rupees, that there should be a restitution by the Gaekwad to the Nawab of “a large portion of the three lakhs as well as the confiscated villages”<sup>143</sup> but the Gaekwad should be allowed “to retain a sum of money sufficient by its interest to indemnify him for the future”.<sup>144</sup> The Gaekwad, on the other hand, had expectations of being granted much better terms, and it can be said without doubt that had the British not succeeded at this juncture in ushering in a revolution in Gujarat’s history, the tax would have been transformed into a regular tribute. Nonetheless, the Baroda State had in the years gone by been able to gather the tribute only four times, and on every occasion there had been a remonstrance from the Nawab against the Baroda State’s forcible exaction of the tribute.<sup>145</sup>

One must bear in mind how in the above mentioned case and in many other ways there was a twofold effect on the Baroda State when the British established their power in Western India. On the one hand there was an end to the intrusions of the Peshwa and the Baroda State emerged as a sovereign state with the Gaekwad securely seated on the *gaddi* in accordance with the clauses of the treaties he had signed with the British. On the other hand the British tried to preclude the extension of the Gaekwad’s influence in Kathiawar, the Mahi and the Rewakanthas, and in the neighboring tributary States. In 1818, there was an appointment of a Political Agent for the protection of young Fateh Khan, the ruler of Palanpur, as well as Radhanpur and other petty States on the border of the Rann of Kutch, Sindh and Marwar. In 1825, a Political Agent was also appointed in Sindhia’s Pavangadh, Panchmahals, Baria,

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<sup>142</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 137.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., pp. 137-138.

Rajpipla and Chhota Udaipur. This Political Agent had the power to act as a mediator between the Gaekwad and his Mewassi subjects of Savli, Sankheda, Tilakwada and other places. Till the time of the British intervention there were incessant gains and losses, intrusions, disputes regarding tributes, and so on; after their intervention there was a thorough investigation and settlement of all claims forever.<sup>146</sup> “It is no wonder”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “that many hopes and ambitions were doomed to suffer sore disappointment, and that the arrest of old habits seemed in itself a hardship which made men overlook advantages which were in reality of much greater importance”.<sup>147</sup>

One may now come back and describe the internal affairs of the Baroda State. Rani Gahenabai exercised tremendous influence on the mind of Sayajirao Gaekwad II till her death which occurred several years after the visit of Mountstuart Elphinstone to Baroda, and this influence was aimed at the encouragement of the already powerful inclinations of the Maharaja to hoard treasures by receiving presents for appointing farmers and remitting revenue and fines of criminals. In fact the Maharaja had such an anxiety to accumulate wealth that he turned aside the revenues from being spent for the welfare of his subjects. This policy adopted by the Maharaja may seem superficially dishonest, but it was in reality driven by the desire to get rid of the British intervention and oversight, of the Bahandhari system and the incubus of bankers who were extended support by a foreign power. Whatever may be the reasons behind this policy, one thing is true, that Sayajirao Gaekwad II was not at all serious about keeping his promises to pay off the guaranteed debt and subsequent to the year 1823-24 the situation became so embarrassing that it became necessary for the Resident to offer the Maharaja some very distasteful advice. He advised him “to pay off a portion of the debts from his private treasury which he could easily afford to do”,<sup>148</sup> for while he was busy amassing wealth for his private treasury, there was a rapid disorganization of the public finances. Although there was a point-blank refusal on the part of Sayajirao Gaekwad II to follow the advice given by the Resident, James Williams, yet the Resident knew that besides jewels worth 55 lakhs and the property which the Maharaja had inherited from his forefathers, he had by this time already collected treasure worth 44 lakhs. James Williams was under the obligation to send more depressing reports of the persistent refusal of the Maharaja to pay the guaranteed debts until the year 1827, after Gahenabai had died. But after the death of Gahenabai, in his dispatch dated 31<sup>st</sup> of May, Williams stated that Sayajirao

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<sup>146</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 138.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

Gaekwad II had given his consent to the “issue of septennial lease of the mahals to respectable men, chiefly the great State “creditors”.<sup>149</sup> This was considered a great reform by the Resident: for the disorganization of the finances of the State arose from a decrease in revenues than the increase in expenses; and this decrease resulted from giving annual leases of *mahals* to dishonest men. These men succeeded in obtaining the lease of the *mahals* at low rate by offering private *nazaranas* to the Maharaja and hence were supported by him and subsequently unleashed their rapacity on the *raiyyat*. What Sayajirao Gaekwad II could not reconcile his mind to was the fact that he would lose these private *nazaranas* if the men he used to choose were substituted by guaranteed State creditors: and we can comprehend this<sup>150</sup> “from the vague charges he made later on against the Acting Resident, Mr. Willoughby, and the native agent Sarabhai: (whom he asserts Lord Clare to have dismissed in 1832) of sending to Bombay all sorts of accusations against him and his vakils in 1827”,<sup>151</sup> that his mind was extremely vexed.<sup>152</sup>

In this situation, Sayajirao Gaekwad II became angry with and suspicious of his own minister. We have mentioned previously that on 1 April, 1827, Vithalrao Diwanji enjoyed the favor of his master, but subsequently extremely harsh treatment was meted out to him by the Maharaja. He was dismissed from his post by Sayajirao Gaekwad II by the end of 1827 and the Maharaja proclaimed that he never had the desire to raise his salary or consented to the issue of septennial leases of the *mahals*, but that Vithalrao Diwanji had acted collusively with Willoughby in order to betray his interests. The dismissal of Vithalrao Diwanji was followed by all kinds of intrigues, and the minister, having lost his honor and reputation, nevertheless enjoyed the support of the British Government, and began to raise loud complaints that attempts to murder him were being made. These intrigues had a disastrous outcome because in 1828 Veniram Aditram and Prabhakar Dixit, the latter commonly known as Bhau Puranik were chosen by Sayajirao Gaekwad II as his advisers and the advice of the former misled the Maharaja to break the agreements by which he was bound and convince him to unleash a relentless persecution of those of his own subjects who were protected by a British guarantee. Bhau Puranik was moderate and retrogressive, however, Veniram, during his ten-year long tenure as Diwan of the Baroda State was mainly responsible for creating hostile feelings leading to consequential quarrels between Sayajirao Gaekwad II and the Bombay

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<sup>149</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 139.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-140.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

Government. Gopal Atmaram, who secured appointment as joint minister in 1829 and was in retention of his post till his ouster by the underhand plots of Veniram in 1833, would have given advice to the Maharaja to pursue a more amicable course<sup>153</sup> “for his character formed a pleasant contrast to that of the man who supplanted him after a trip to Calcutta to push Sayaji’s interests there”.<sup>154</sup>

Mountstuart Elphinstone was the Governor of Bombay until 28 November, 1827 and up till the end of his term of office he treated Sayajirao Gaekwad II who was inherently touchy and suspicious courteously and with patient self-control. He told him, for example, that he was fully entitled to debar Vithalrao Diwanji from enjoying his *nemnuk*; he candidly and attentively heard his course of action to pay off the great loan in two years “by drafts on the revenue and by a running loan”<sup>155</sup> at the same time giving him a definite warning that any unduly bold method to solve the financial hardships of the State might cause it to enter into such an embarrassing situation which would impel the Bombay Government to forcibly takeover from the State and exclusively manage the revenues of the State by itself. But in 1827 Sir John Malcolm succeeded Mountstuart Elphinstone and the new Governor ushered in a new policy. Sir John Malcolm decided to exercise the strictest coercion in order to break the hauteur of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, and he would have been successful in his objective if his tenure as Governor had not ended abruptly. He was succeeded by Lord Clare who expressed an unfavorable opinion of the strictest actions taken by his predecessor and reversed them thus depriving them of the good results they might have brought, though bitter feelings between the two governments lasted. Lord Clare tried to accomplish by persuasiveness and courteous behavior what Sir John Malcolm had failed to achieve by compulsiveness; however, he did not completely succeed in his endeavor and eventually the long struggle was brought to an end by a fourth Governor, Sir James Carnac.<sup>156</sup>

When Sayajirao Gaekwad II decided to pay his debt to the guaranteed bankers in full so that interest did not accumulate Elphinstone expressed his approval of the measure rather than refuse acceptance of the proposal. It is unbelievable why these State creditors refused to accept lump sum payment and instead insisted on being paid at interregna specified when the septennial leases were drafted. Yet it was because of the refusal of the State creditors to accept lump sum payment that the Bombay Government demanded that the debt should be

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<sup>153</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 140.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p. 141.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

paid by Sayajirao Gaekwad II in installments, and it was this issue which eventually breached the harmonious relations between the Baroda State and the Bombay Government. Furthermore, by the end of 1827, Sayajirao Gaekwad II forsook the guaranteed State *potedar* Haribhakti “and began to draw cheques on other houses and to assign revenue for the payment of these drafts”.<sup>157</sup> The Bombay Government remonstrated before the Maharaja in vain for a long time and at last Sir John Malcolm was impelled to adopt the milder of the two courses which the Court of Directors had authorized him to select, that is, he decided not to undertake the management of the entire State, but instead on 28 March, 1828 he issued a proclamation announcing<sup>158</sup> “the temporary sequestration of certain resources and territories of the Gaekwad State. The above sequestration has in view only the fulfilment of the pecuniary engagements made with the bankers under the guarantee of the British Government; but when that object shall have been attained, it will remain to consider of the reparation which may be due to itself for expenses, and take ample security against any future violation either of the terms of treaties, or of pledges and guarantees given to individuals”.<sup>159160</sup>

At this time a step was taken that might lead to curiosity. The Governor ordered the State creditors who were mainly the holders of septennial leases to abandon their leases informing them simultaneously that the Bombay Government would refund the losses which would thus accrue to them as a result of the abandonment of the leases and eventually Lord Clare laid down that Sayajirao Gaekwad II was under the obligation to pay the State creditors over seven lakh rupees. After the sequestration of the above *mahals*, Sir John Malcolm paid a visit to Baroda on 28 December, 1829 and then issued orders to Sayajirao Gaekwad II for the maintenance of his Contingent of Horse on a better footing, for signing a commercial treaty with the British, and for reformation of his coinage. “But the condition of even two-thirds of the Contingent Horse”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “left so much to be desired in the mind of Sir John Malcolm that a little later he sequestered certain other districts in order that out of their proceeds the force might be more regularly paid, while it was placed under the supervision of British officers”.<sup>161</sup> Now before 1830, three of the State creditors, Khushalchand, Samal Bechar and Mangal Parikh had agreed to comply with the demands of the Maharaja, and as a

<sup>157</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> The list of *mahals* first sequestered was: Petlad, Bahiyal, Kadi, Dabhoi, Bahadurpur, Sinor, Amreli and Sianagar. The sequestrations also included the tributes of Kathiawar, Mahikantha, and Rewakantha and other sources.

<sup>161</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 142-143.

result some of the confiscated districts of 1828 were restored to the Baroda State. In order to pay the Contingent Rs. 10,03,747 were needed: therefore Petlad and Bahiyal which were the districts first sequestrated were again confiscated from the Baroda State in 1830, and along with them were added those mentioned in the footnote.<sup>162</sup> The Court of Directors, however, expressed their disapproval of the second sequestration on 31 October, 1832 and thus it was not long lasting.<sup>163</sup> There is a large collection of letters of correspondence in G.B. Pandya's published primary source the name of which has been mentioned above concerning the Gaekwad's debt and events leading to sequestration and its aftermath which are mentioned in *Annexure II*.

In the meanwhile the rupture between the Gaekwad State and the Bombay Government grew wider with each passing day and on 1 December, 1830 James Williams was ordered to go away from Baroda and assume the post of Political Commissioner of Gujarat. Residing at Ahmedabad he was to continue exercising all the powers of Resident, being ordered still: "to superintend the strict fulfilment of the treaties of subsidy and alliance".<sup>164</sup> Simultaneously, there was an incorporation of subsidiary force with the northern division of the Bombay Army, with headquarters at Ahmedabad. When Williams went to Ahmedabad according to the orders of the Governor the guaranteed bankers who were the great creditors of the Maharaja went with him. May be they were fearful to stay on at Baroda, but it is certain that their departure had a ruinous effect on their business for a time, and it led to an effectual retardation of any rapprochement between them and the Maharaja.<sup>165</sup>

Meanwhile, Vithalrao Diwanji, after being dismissed by the Maharaja, was offered protection of the Bombay Government. There was an extension of a fresh British guarantee to him as well as a bestowal of a pension. He was given the post of manager of the sequestrated *mahals*. Moreover, he was given assurance by the Bombay Government that he would retain the tenure of certain villages he held in *jagir* in Kathiawar; and finally, the Bombay Government exercised the power given to it by the treaty of 1802 and confirmed in 1830 the *nemnuk* guaranteed to him in 1821. Besides, his *paga* was secured to him and the Bombay Government also gave recognition to his adopted son, Krishnarao. Nonetheless, there was a

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<sup>162</sup> Patan, Visnagar, Vadnagar, Vijapur, Sankheda.

<sup>163</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

flagrant refusal on the part of the Maharaja to give acknowledgment to the adopted child and thus no *nazarana* was paid.<sup>166</sup>

### III

The ensuing struggle between the Bombay Government and Sayajirao Gaekwad II alarmed a party in the Baroda Durbar in so far as on 16 February, 1831, the Political Commissioner of Gujarat, James Williams, stated as a fact that some relatives, and even some wives of Sayajirao Gaekwad II had hatched a conspiracy to arrest the Maharaja, to inflict punishment on his favorites and advisers, and if he still did not leave his stubbornness, to declare his son, Ganpatrao, the Maharaja of Baroda in his place. The plot failed and led to the execution of some of the principal parties involved in it: nonetheless, fortunately for Sayajirao Gaekwad II Sir John Malcolm went away from the country in 1831 and his successor Lord Clare followed a policy of appeasement which formed a sharp contrast to that of the previous Governor.<sup>167</sup>

Lord Clare paid a visit to Baroda twice; the first time in November, 1831 for six days, merely<sup>168</sup> “to establish an amicable understanding, and to effect a personal reconciliation between the heads of the two governments by showing a disposition on Lord Clare’s part to treat the Raja with the utmost consideration and respect”;<sup>169</sup> the second time from 22 March to 6 April, 1832, when major points of dispute were settled.<sup>170</sup>

During his first visit Lord Clare discovered that the Maharaja had an anxiety to pay off at once all his debt to the guaranteed creditors and also that the guaranteed creditors who were bankers in Baroda, had an equal anxiety to come to terms with Sayajirao Gaekwad II, and to come back to their homes and businesses. Haribhakti for example, had lent the prince some 20 or 30 lakhs of rupees, and so long as he lived in Ahmedabad, he did not have any hope of getting back one anna of the total amount. Sir John Malcolm had demanded assertively that the repayment of the creditors should be done in fixed installments; however, Lord Clare, on the other hand, argued that this was not necessary. When Sayajirao Gaekwad II had made the proposal before Mountstuart Elphinstone to make a lump sum payment to clear all his debts and the Governor had not expressed his disapproval of the proposal, the only condition being that the State should not as a result of that incur new and larger debts. In Lord Clare’s opinion

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<sup>166</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

the guaranteed creditors might now be safely repaid after being allowed to comply with the demands of the State, and that the Bombay Government should stop prying into the matter any further once it had been reassured that the expectations of the creditors were met. Thus an obnoxiously long dispute ended: three of the creditors had during the tenure of Sir John Malcolm agreed to comply with the demands of the State and on 9 April, 1832, Haribhakti, Gopalrao Mairal, Ratanji Kahandas and Ratanji Manikchand proclaimed themselves to be satisfied and destroyed their deeds. The Governor took no notice of the actual amounts paid, though the debt nominally amounted to 38, 77,659 rupees and the ascertainment of only one point was made, namely, that Sayajirao Gaekwad II had handed over 25 lakhs from his private treasury.<sup>171</sup>

It is true that after one or two years had passed, Colonel Outram asserted that “the payments to the Baroda bankers were reported to be fictitious, those who held our pledges preferring to trust to the Gaekwad”.<sup>172</sup> But Lord Clare did not speak at length on this aspect of the case as on the vexatiousness and uselessness of the British intervention.<sup>173</sup> “The sequestration”, he wrote, “had taken place in March 1828 and it was then calculated that five years would suffice to clear off the debt. But in 1832 Mr. Williams thought that five more years would be required, and he (Lord Clare) did not see when an end would come to the divided government of districts, where the rule *de jure* belonged to the Gaekwad and that *de facto* to the British, where one power could not and the other would not punish offenders, so that there was perfect immunity of crime and unbounded licence which would eventually demoralize the population”.<sup>174</sup> The step was now taken by the Bombay Government to liberate itself from its obligations to the guaranteed creditors and within fifteen days starting 5 April, 1832, the restitution of Petlad, Dabhoi, Bahadurpur, Sinor, Kadi, Sankheda, Bahiyal, Sianagar and Vadnagar to the Baroda State took place.<sup>175</sup>

The paying off of debts to guaranteed bankers was not the only dispute in the Baroda State. The State owed large amounts to persons with no guarantee and there was a just refusal on the part of Lord Clare to take these cases into account. Haribhakti, for example, now issued a declaration that when Mountstuart Elphinstone in 1820 supposed that Sayajirao Gaekwad II had classified all his debts before him, he had hidden one item, namely, that he owed to

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<sup>171</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 147.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., pp. 147-148.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 148.



Haribhakti 40.5 lakhs of rupees. Balwantrao Gaekwad put a claim of Rs. 11 lakhs; the farmers of septennial leases which had been thrown up on the advice of Sir John Malcolm put a claim of Rs. 7 lakhs. Lord Clare, therefore, decided that the British Government after a thorough supervision of the State debts would have to force the Maharaja to repay nearly 61 lakhs of rupees. He, however, was satisfied after demanding a promise from Sayajirao Gaekwad II that the debts would be cleared in one year. Moreover, on two issues, Lord Clare was not willing to take a decision himself and therefore referred them to the Court of Directors. Sayajirao Gaekwad II was adamant and refused to pay Vithalrao Diwanji a farthing, and the proceeds of his *nemnuk* amounted to over 1,35,000 rupees, the cost of governing the confiscated districts had climbed to over 68,500 rupees and the Maharaja having withdrawn his own *sibandi* from the sequestrated districts, the British feared that these districts might be seized by a foreign power; so they decided to send their own troops for the occupation of these districts which cost them over 1,20,000 rupees. One thing was clear that the State was still in debt and Lord Clare's endeavor to settle matters once and for all did not meet with success.<sup>176</sup>

It remains to add that Sayajirao Gaekwad II himself made the suggestion that Rs. 10 lakhs should be deposited by him in a British treasury which the Bombay Government was entitled to spend if the punctual payment of the Contingent Force was not adhered to. After acceptance of the money, for which no payment of interest was to be made, and the exaction of a promise that the maintenance of the Contingent Force would be on a healthy footing in the future, there was a restitution of the remainder of the confiscated districts to Sayajirao Gaekwad II by Lord Clare. The Government of India gave approval to the proceedings of the Governor on 6 June, 1832 and the Court of Directors on 6 November, 1833. The Court of Directors even gave a suggestion that there should be a restitution of the 10 lakhs to the Maharaja; however, this was not accomplished till 1841 and meanwhile fresh quarrels arose between the Baroda State and the Bombay Government.<sup>177</sup>

Thus it appeared that the Bombay Government and Sayajirao Gaekwad II had become good friends. Although there was a continuation of James Williams as the Political Commissioner of Gujarat (the post was not abolished until after the Resident, Boyd, died in 1844), he, nevertheless, came back to Baroda by the end of 1835. The approval of this measure was given by the Court of Directors on 13 February, 1838, and it was written that all should be

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<sup>176</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 148.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

done “which was necessary for the purpose of retracing an ill-advised step. We consider the residence of the Political Commissioner at the Gaekwad’s court, and frequent personal communication between him and that prince essential”.<sup>178</sup> The Bombay Government made a wise resolution to ignore matters in which there was no involution of it until this time. There was a clear discernment of the fact that getting involved in the management of the finances of the Maharaja did not yield good results. The Bombay Government decided to let people who possessed a British guarantee to fend for themselves and the British Government did not extend its protection to any new person. Hence, a fresh start was given to Sayajirao Gaekwad II; and if he had not thrown all caution to the wind he would not have fallen out with the British within one or two years.<sup>179</sup>

The period between the visit of Lord Clare in 1832 and the visit of Sir James Carnac in 1841 was when he entered the most into hostilities with the British Government. Gopal Atmaram, it has been stated previously, was supplanted by Veniram in 1833, and as he had the backing of knaves like Bapu Argade, Baba Nafada, Ganeshpant and Bhau Puranik, was able to retain his influential position with the Maharaja till the year 1839. It was between 1833 and 1839 that he instigated the Maharaja to treat the Bombay Government with utter disregard, so that on 11 August, 1837 the latter recorded that “in no less than 305 cases the applications of our officers for “redress from injuries sustained have either been refused or “evaded”.<sup>180</sup> Sir Robert Grant, in consequence, quoted approvingly, certain remarks passed by the Bombay High Court regarding matters of police in Gujarat and acted in their spirit in other directions. “The ostensibly improved feeling between the Gaekwad Government and our own has been unproductive of any amelioration in the state of things in Gujarat. The object in view for us, therefore, is to make a thorough change from supineness to activity, from indifference to energy, without further waiting”.<sup>181</sup>

In the midst of February 1838 the *pargana* of Navsari was confiscated by the Bombay Government and the latter retained it for three years. Mancherji Karsetji, the *desai* of Navsari, was the Baroda State’s first subject to receive a British guarantee. This guarantee was not, however, precisely hereditary. Sayajirao Gaekwad II deprived a successor of this Mancherji of his hereditary property in 1829 because the settlement of his accounts was pending. There was an intervention by the Bombay Government on behalf of this man, and Sayajirao

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<sup>178</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 149.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

Gaekwad II gave a promise to Lord Clare that he would settle the matter within one year. However, the Maharaja showed utter negligence in fulfilling his promise and this was the first step taken in the course that Sir John Malcolm once followed in order to bring Sayajirao Gaekwad II to his knees, the commencement of fresh sequestrations.<sup>182</sup>

The famous 28 “demands” which preceded the sequestration of the Petlad district will be mentioned in this history of the Baroda State so that one may form some idea of what occurred during the reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad II between the years 1832 and 1841.<sup>183</sup>

The first regarded an incident which should be deplored. On 17 August, 1833 and subsequent to that, a man named Vallabhdas Manikchand, an opium broker, who had since time immemorial been living in Baroda, although he was a British subject, raised a complaint with the Resident that sixteen of his relatives had been jailed inasmuch as the minister Veniram’s friend had initiated judicial proceedings against his brother. Not just the Resident, but in July 1834 even the Governor General exerted pressure on the Maharaja for the release of these prisoners; but there was a blatant refusal on the part of Sayajirao Gaekwad II to comply with the order. Soon the matter turned into a tragedy when the petitioner committed suicide because he was unable to tolerate the misfortunes surrounding him any longer. The death of this obscure man led Sir Robert Grant, the Governor of Bombay, to use Draconian means to bring Sayajirao Gaekwad II to his knees.<sup>184</sup>

The most important demand that the Bombay Government made on Sayajirao Gaekwad II was to deprive the minister Veniram Aditram of his post of Diwan. He was in accordance with the demand sacked on 28 November, 1839 and on 24 February, 1840 the Maharaja made a formal announcement to the Bombay Government that there should be no re-employment of this man in the future. When Sir James Carnac paid a visit to Baroda in 1841 and urged the prince not to talk to Veniram, Sayajirao Gaekwad II made a proclamation that he had now developed a hatred for him, and that in future he had a wish to do without a minister altogether. Sir James Carnac granted this request, “so long as His Highness should continue on good terms with the Resident, listen to his advice and avoid all breach of engagements”.<sup>185</sup> As the prince had made concessions on this point, the abrupt dismissal of other advisers of the Court, only lesser rogues than Veniram Aditram, namely, Bapu Argade, Baba Nafada,

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<sup>182</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 150.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

Ganeshpant, and Bhau Puranik was not demanded by the Bombay Government; but the prince was given a warning that “they were not to interfere in any matter in which the British Government or any of its guarantees were concerned”.<sup>186</sup>

A number of demands were the result of the unrest in Kathiawar. Robberies had been committed by some Waghers of Okhamandal in the territories of the Jam of Nawanagar; elsewhere another Wagher chief had been driven to “take the road”;<sup>187</sup> there had been a foul murder committed and the Gaekwad officer in charge of Okhamandal was encouraging piracies. There was oppression of some of the guaranteed chiefs in the peninsula by another Gaekwad officer in Kathiawar; a settlement with certain Kathis had yet to be carried out and so on. One of the prominent demands of the Bombay Government therefore was that the administration of the portion of Kathiawar which belonged to the Gaekwad should be more efficient.<sup>188</sup>

The Bombay Government also demanded that the Maharaja should cooperate in matters of policing and compensate for past acts of gross negligence on the part of the Gaekwad officers (the former point never was really settled). The Bombay Government also demanded that Sayajirao Gaekwad II should take measures to preclude offenders who are subjects of the British Government from taking shelter within the territories of the Baroda State which is testimony to the fact of how monstrously insecure life and property were during those years within and along the frontiers of the Baroda State.<sup>189</sup>

Finally, Sayajirao Gaekwad II was forced to give recognition and confirmation to all the guarantees of the British Government inclusive of those made to Gangadhar Shastri, Dhakji Dadaji and the *desai* of Navsari, and “to agree to all the measures which had been adopted by the British Government for affording satisfaction to those individuals of their claims”.<sup>190</sup> In addition, there was energetic support by the British for the rights of the family of Subhanji Pol, once upon a time commander of the Kheda fort and subsequent to its surrender to the British, the possessor of the British guarantee notwithstanding the pilferage of the prince and the notorious Baba Nafada’s misappropriations. Moreover, the British Government impelled Sayajirao Gaekwad II to give an allowance to Gopalrao Ganpatrao Gaekwad, the son of *jagirdar* of Sankheda, who had been treated badly by the Maharaja inasmuch as he was his

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<sup>186</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 151.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

rival Govindrao's brother, that he had actually gone out, or taken the road, as it was termed (bharvatai).<sup>191</sup>

Such was the state of affairs at Baroda post the settlement of Lord Clare; the Bombay Government had utterly failed in its endeavor to influence Sayajirao Gaekwad II to come to terms by means of gentle persuasion which demonstrates the correctness of the step taken by the successor of Sir Robert Grant to bring the Maharaja to his knees so that he hastily complied with the demands of his powerful ally.<sup>192</sup>

#### IV

The purpose behind making Sir James Carnac the Governor of Bombay was to bring to an end the disputes with the Baroda Durbar, because it was justly supposed that his long relationship with the Gaekwad made him exceptionally experienced.<sup>193</sup>

On 6 August, 1838, the Bombay Government, realizing that gentle means would not bring Sayajirao Gaekwad II to his knees gave a suggestion to the Government of India for the sequestration of the district of Petlad after issuing a notification to the Maharaja that he would be granted one month for compensating all British claims or demands. The Governor General-in-Council gave approval to the suggestion on 30 August, 1838, adding that if by adopting such harsh means also Sayajirao Gaekwad II remained stubborn he "should be deposed and his son elevated to the Raj in his stead provided his character gave fair promise".<sup>194</sup> The sequestration of Petlad took place on 1 November, 1838, as the proclamation on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the same month made known to all, because "after many years of useless discussion His Highness had been granted one month, within which period he was to satisfy certain demands. The demands had not been satisfied, and so the district had been sequestered: if in two months more compliance had not been made, the district would be wholly forfeited".<sup>195</sup> On 12 February, 1839, the Government of India issued a notification that with regard to Sayajirao Gaekwad II, Petlad had been "absolutely and entirely forfeited".<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

But on 28 November, 1839 Sayajirao Gaekwad II went to the Residency and said that he was determined to make up for his past wrongdoings and give satisfaction to all the British claims and demands. Indeed, the long bitterness was now nearing an end, and in the years 1840-41 the 28 “demands” were all or nearly all were given satisfaction in full though perhaps few of them were passed over. The Resident, James Sutherland, worked hard and yet satisfactorily in order to fulfill the orders of his Government and the promises of the Maharaja, work which he could not unfortunately complete. During those tumultuous years three Residents died at Baroda one after another, over a period of seven years; the veteran James Williams in November 1837, James Sutherland, who succeeded him, in June 1840 and W.S. Boyd in August 1844.<sup>197</sup>

Within this period, that is, on 26 January, 1841, Sir James Carnac paid a visit to Baroda and before 8 February his settlement was completed satisfactorily. After the Maharaja gave a promise not to oppressively treat any of his subjects in the recently confiscated districts of Petlad and Navsari, Sir James Carnac ordered to withdraw the forfeiture of these districts, and on 1 February, 1841 restored to the Gaekwad his tributes in Kathiawar, the Mahi and the Rewakantha. He also refunded the security deposit of ten lakhs of rupees that Sayajirao Gaekwad II had made in 1832 in the British treasury so that the contingent was punctually paid. Gujarat Irregular Horse which was raised in March 1839 in order to punish Sayajirao Gaekwad II for the poor state of his contingent was not disbanded; and with Petlad now being restored out of the revenues of which the cavalry contingent had been paid, the Maharaja gave his consent to an annual payment of three lakhs for maintaining it. It would have been ideal for him to get rid of this military encumbrance forever, and both during Sir James Carnac’s visit and later, his supplications for the abolishment of this tax, which he considered disgraceful, were a cause of pity. However, this tax was not abolished until the accession of the second son of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, Khanderao.<sup>198</sup>

If one has to reflect on the settlement effectuated by Sir James Carnac one must not only take into account the 28 demands of the Bombay Government but also the 36 counter demands of the Maharaja for which the Governor gave a promise that he would consider. Several vexatious issues were also settled during this period. Up till now it had been customary for the British authorities and British troops to participate in the Ganapati and Dussera festivals: but it was now settled once and for all that taking part in the religious side of the processions

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<sup>197</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 156.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

was unsuitable to the professionalism of British officers and soldiers. It was indeed disgusting for the Maharaja when it was pronounced authoritatively that in the future these ceremonies should take place in some selected spot and the usual honorary salute should be given to the person of the Maharaja only. It was also pronounced that in future the Maharaja should not gift any dresses of honor to the Resident and the latter will not present the former with similar tokens of friendship.<sup>199</sup>

There was an abolition of a custom which was already in the process of becoming extinct, which, nonetheless, was significative of progress. The Resident James Sutherland heard of a widow of a Ratnagiri Brahmin committing *sati* but did not inform his Government and Sayajirao Gaekwad II until on 13 April, 1840, the Maharaja gave his consent and issued a proclamation whereby the abetment of *sati* was outlawed, and the exemplary act was promptly followed by the chiefs of the Rewakantha. This exemplary step was followed by another progressive step a few years later. In March 1847, a British subject who lived in the Baroda camp, by caste a Koki, sold his six or seven-year-old daughter to a man of his own caste but without his wife's permission and subsequently departed hastily with the money. Another case followed and the resulting commotion in the public led to the enactment of a law prohibiting the sale of Hindu children to Muslims and also any sale without the express consent of the Huzur (26 June, 1849, *vide* also Article 9 of the Definitive Treaty of Baroda, 1805 and Regulation 14, 1827).<sup>200</sup> "While on this subject, it may be noticed", writes F.A.H. Elliot, "that on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1853, the High Court of Directors instructed district officers to refuse to surrender fugitive slaves and fugitive wives and to refer claimants to the Civil Court. A certain check or supervision was thus placed on the practice of mild slavery".<sup>201</sup> It must, however, be admitted that children in Baroda who were sold as slaves received good treatment and were made household servants for life.<sup>202</sup>

### **Bahandhari System**

According to V.K. Chavda, "Bahandhari is the Gujarati word for guarantee".<sup>203</sup> Bahandhari System did not evolve under the British but was already in vogue when they entered the scene. They not only took over the guarantees given by the Arab mercenaries but also gave new ones. This system brought them into conflict in 1840 with the then reigning Maharaja

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<sup>199</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 157.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-158.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>203</sup> V.K. Chavda (1982), *Modern Gujarat*, p. 136.

Sayajirao Gaekwad II (1819-47) who protested that the Gaekwad Princes, the Diwans, the Bankers and certain native officials of the British Residency who had been given guarantees by the British showed disrespect towards their sovereign and behaved insolently with him.<sup>204</sup>

In due course of time the British also realized that some of the persons whom they were protecting were worthless creatures and withdrew the guarantees. The remainder became a source of abuses and corruption in the State.<sup>205</sup> “It is well-known”, writes V.K. Chavda, “that the famous *Khatpat Report* of the British Resident Col. Outram in 1851 revealed a number of such abuses in the State, for which he blamed even the Bombay Government for not taking more stringent measures to meet this sorry state of affairs. As a result of this stricture Dalhousie was directed to take charge of the relations between the British Government and the Baroda State”.<sup>206</sup>

## **The Reign of Ganpatrao Gaekwad (1847-56) and the Introduction of Railways in the Baroda State**

Sayajirao Gaekwad II's death occurred on 19 December, 1847. Of the five legitimate sons that Sayajirao Gaekwad II had the four eldest were the children of his first wife Chimnabai, and in addition he had three illegitimate sons. The legal successor to the deceased Maharaja was certainly Ganpatrao who was thirty years old and his second son, Khanderao was ten years younger to Ganpatrao. Khanderao Gaekwad did subsequently accede to the *gaddi* owing to the death of the son of Ganpatrao in May 1847. The successor to Khanderao was the fourth son of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, Malharrao, because Khanderao died without leaving any heir, and before he died, the death of the third son of Sayajirao Gaekwad II, Anandrao, had occurred.<sup>207</sup>

Ganpatrao Gaekwad was totally different from his father and in one way better than his successor because he was not a spendthrift. Few years prior to his accession Ogilvie had written of him that he was “weak, dissipated and indifferently educated, that he was not on good terms with his father, whom he had intrigued to supplant”.<sup>208</sup> However, in 1851, this criticism was mitigated slightly by Colonel Outram; he thought that he was indeed feeble but

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<sup>204</sup> Chavda, *Modern Gujarat*, p. 136.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 172.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.



did not have bad intentions, though it could be said beyond doubt that he had fallen too much under his minister's influence.<sup>209</sup>

Allusion must be made to the lack of education among the Gaekwads. Since the reign of Damajirao Gaekwad II no Gaekwad ruler had decided to leave Gujarat with the exception of making an appearance at Poona, and that restricted to their little State, the Gaekwads were cut off from the outside world. From the records of Captain French, Acting Resident, we come to know how he convinced Maharaja Ganpatrao Gaekwad to read some books, to forsake the idea that London was somewhere south of Calcutta, and to buy a costly toy in a model steam engine. Subsequently, the Maharaja traveled; his successor Khanderao Gaekwad went to Bombay to meet the Duke of Edinburgh, and eventually his young adopted son Sayajirao Gaekwad III traveled not only to Bombay, but Delhi and the great towns of Hindustan.<sup>210</sup>

There was a growing insularity of the Gaekwads from the outside world before the reign of Sayajirao Gaekwad III but the British Residents made incessant efforts to bring them into contact with it. Maharaja Ganpatrao Gaekwad was gifted with a toy-engine by Captain French and this officer introduced the railways into Gujarat which transformed the nature of the Gaekwad State as it led to a complete revolution in its trade, politics and customs.<sup>211</sup>

In 1853, a group of engineers commenced surveying the countryside between Bombay and Gujarat with the objective of constructing a railway line. When work was begun at Surat the necessity of making the line pass through Baroda territory was found and the authorities accordingly started negotiating with Ganpatrao Gaekwad. In 1856, the Maharaja willingly surrendered in full the land needed for the railway line, his only condition being that the owners of private (not *khalisa*) land should be sufficiently compensated and the Baroda State should be adequately protected from any loss which might accrue to its revenue in transit duties. The British Government readily accepted these conditions but while it agreed to compensate the owners of private land, an understanding on indemnifying the State for loss in transit duties could not be arrived at. In 1859, Khanderao Gaekwad agreed to be indemnified for loss in transit duties on an annual basis. Although it suffered a loss in transit duties the Baroda State stood to correspondingly gain also from the introduction of railways. The coming of the railways augmented the exports and imports to and from the State and it led to an increase in custom duties which balanced out the loss in transit duties. Therefore,

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<sup>209</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 172.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-173.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

with the accession of Sayajirao Gaekwad III the State administration forsook all claims for indemnification for loss in transit duties.<sup>212</sup>

This was the commencement of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway (the first train running in 1860), but neither was there any investment of State money in it, nor were there any direct advantages which the State could reap from its construction. Contrary to this it had to surrender its sovereign rights over the land set aside for the construction of the railroad and also its rights over the administration of justice both civil and criminal within the limits of that line. However, the indirect advantages reaped by the State were so immense that when in 1877 the British Government planned the extension of the railroad from Ahmedabad to Rajputana, the administration of Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao gave the land needed in Baroda territory free of charge to the British Government. Although sovereignty over such land was not granted, the right to administer justice on this land was given as long as the railroad might last, however,<sup>213</sup> “the right to tax through traffic was surrendered”.<sup>214</sup> Thus, the construction of the line extending between Ahmedabad and Palanpur was on the metre gauge.<sup>215</sup>

Besides rendering help to the British Government in laying down railway lines, there was a conversion of a tramway into a railroad, 20 miles in length between Dabhoi and the Miyagam or Karjan Station on the Bombay-Baroda and Central India Railway by Malharrao Gaekwad in 1872-73. The cost of the line to the State exchequer was Rs. 3, 73,400 or in accordance with some other calculations Rs. 4, 02,109; the gauge of this line was the smallest in India not exceeding 2.5 feet. “Even in 1876-77, on the most favourable reckoning, the return on the capital invested”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “was not much over 2.50 per cent”.<sup>216</sup> Yet the usefulness of small feeders to the trunk line was so immense in opening up traffic in a State where construction and maintenance of cheap roads was impossible that Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao constructed narrow gauge lines connecting Dabhoi with Bahadurpur on the east, Chandod on the west, and Baroda on the northwest. The construction of these lines which were 35.5 miles in length on completion cost the State exchequer Rs. 6, 83,398.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 173.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-174.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

Nothing notable happened during the reign of Ganpatrao Gaekwad and the death of the Maharaja occurred on 19 November, 1856.<sup>218</sup>

## **The Reign of Khanderao Gaekwad (1856-70)**

Maharaja Ganpatrao Gaekwad died without leaving a legitimate male offspring and therefore his successor was the eldest of his brothers, who was surviving, Khanderao Gaekwad. Unlike his predecessor and his successor “he was a man of bodily and mental energy, sometimes self-willed, was very shrewd and observant, and took a large share in the administration, had a mind open to kindly impressions, and was actuated by generous impulses”.<sup>219</sup> This is what the Resident wrote at the commencement of the reign of Khanderao Gaekwad, but the remark needs to be amplified. He was beyond doubt physically energetic and strong for he had a love for playing all games and extreme passion for hunting. But there exists a possibility for a prince to become indulgent even in manly exercises; money was lavishly squandered in the construction of the palace at Makarpura owing to its proximity to the deer-preserves, and the deer-preserves were guarded with such fierce protection that it proved detrimental to many people. It is also beyond doubt that the prince was energetic mentally too, was astute and diligent, his memory was retentive, and he possessed other good mental qualities as well; however, it must be admittedly said that he had received the imperfect training of his predecessors. “His willingness to enter on a new course”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “to remodel the army, to reform the revenue and the judicial system, to start great public works, and so on, served therefore rather to point out the direction which reforms should take than to inaugurate a revolution which to be useful or permanent required to be radical”.<sup>220</sup> It is rather unfortunate that two things were lacking in the reign of Khanderao Gaekwad which precluded it from being one that would have benefitted his subjects. Firstly, his ministers and advisers were not competent men and some of them were wicked also; and secondly the Maharaja aspired for pomp and splendor rather than looking after the welfare of his people. It is also true beyond doubt that he was driven by generous impulses and these often led to extravagant squandering of money; and if he gave grand rewards to personal friends and retainers, or provided a great but momentary entertainment to the people of Baroda by a marriage of pigeons or some such extravagancy, the perpetual results of his actions were very small. One must remember this because what often has been the fate of royal families in

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<sup>218</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 180.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

history was the fate of the family of Govindrao Gaekwad. One man had to pay the price for not only his own defects, but also the defects of his forefathers.<sup>221</sup> “It is not a gain to be the heir of a princely line”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “or the representative of a system, if there are vices in the line and faults in the system”.<sup>222</sup> The commencement of the reign of Malharrao Gaekwad was good and he should be given credit for building the Sur Sagar tank, the High School, and fostering the growth of other schools of a more indigenous nature. While historians have accused Malharrao Gaekwad for persecuting the family and followers of Khanderao Gaekwad, his ancestors Govindrao Gaekwad, Kanhojirao and Sayajirao Gaekwad II had set precedents for him and the long and severe imprisonment at Padra was responsible for the faults in his character. Being suddenly made the Maharaja of Baroda from a prisoner at Padra, the deeds of Malharrao Gaekwad may seem extremely immoral and spiteful, but exposing the defects of Gaekwad princes had been the habit of British Residents and some of the actions for which Malharrao Gaekwad is painted as a villain had been committed before.<sup>223</sup>

One of Khanderao Gaekwad’s distinguished services to the British early in his reign must be described. One year after his accession the Revolt of 1857 broke out and there was an existential threat to British rule in India. Among all the princes of India none stood more steadfastly loyal to the British and more enthusiastic to support their cause than the Gaekwad.<sup>224</sup>

In 1857, the British regular troops were forced to withdraw from Gujarat in order to suppress the rebels in Hindustan, and insubordinate classes in the Mahi and Rewakanthas saw this as an opportune moment for the creation of disturbances in Gujarat. However, Khanderao Gaekwad deployed all available troops at his disposal in such a manner that there was no tumult in Gujarat and appreciating the services rendered by the troops, Sir Richmond Shakespeare wrote, “the Contingent was kept up in a state of thorough efficiency, they have had an extraordinary amount of work, attended with much fatigue, exposure and expense to themselves, all of which they have cheerfully done”.<sup>225</sup> In appreciation of the services rendered by the Maharaja the British Government rewarded him in 1858 and the nature of reward may be gathered from the following extract from a resolution passed by the

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<sup>221</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-184.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

Government of India: "In consideration of the unswerving attachment and active assistance of H.H. the Maharaja Khanderao, without which our hold on the whole of Western India would have been most seriously compromised, the exaction of the annual sum of 3 lakhs for the maintenance of the Gujarat Irregular Horse, a fine imposed on Khanderao's father in 1839, and considered in the light of a public disgrace, was remitted with retrospective effect from the date of His Highness' accession".<sup>226</sup> Besides materially benefitting from his services to the British during the Revolt of 1857, Khanderao Gaekwad's request of being gifted with morchals or fans made from the feathers of a peacock was also granted, and in a *sanad* dated 11 March, 1862, the right of adopting a child or successor was bestowed upon him too.<sup>227</sup>

After reigning for 14 years Maharaja Khanderao Gaekwad suddenly expired during the most important phase of his life at his palace of Makarpura on 20 November, 1870. Fortunately for him, during his reign there was a period of prosperity in agriculture thus keeping his subjects happy and in turn making it possible for him to meet his heart's desire for pomp and splendor by the imposition of taxes on them which after a few years were found to be unbearable and heavy. Colonel Barr delineated his reign as reformatory and progressive; however subsequent denouncement does not support such a view. Of course, he attempted reforms, but there was lack of dexterity in them and they were in a sense superficial and devoid of any solid value, and the latter part of his rule was of such an evil nature that it does not command the respect of an impartial historian.<sup>228</sup>

### **Malharrao Gaekwad (1870-75)**

"Neither individuals nor governments", writes F.A.H. Elliot. "become suddenly vicious. If some great unexpected crime startles the world, subsequent examination discloses a gradual descent to the depth of infamy which appears to law-abiding men to be too low for anything but imagination to reach".<sup>229</sup>

Fatesingrao Gaekwad I entered into a conflict with his brother Govindrao Gaekwad and the latter subsequent to his accession to the *gaddi*, expelled altogether the followers of his brother. Kanhojirao when in power treated his relatives with the utmost brutality, and Sayajirao Gaekwad II had no compunction but hatred for those of his family members who

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<sup>226</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 184.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

devised schemes to remove him forcibly from power. The internal strife, family dissensions, and disputes over succession among members of the House again and again drove the Gaekwads to commit the worst umbrages. Gangadhar Shastri was not the only one to fall prey to this power struggle; it should not be taken jocularly that Maharaja Ganpatrao Gaekwad got a forged letter intended ostensibly from his minister to his brother and successor which threatened him that he would meet the same fate which Fatesingrao Gaekwad II had met during his youth. In this mad power struggle which lasted for years the exercise of restraint was considered most vexatious; and it is possible that the Gaekwads occasionally employed morally offensive means to rid them of the annoying advice of an honest or stubborn Resident. If Colonel James Outram managed to escape those of his opponents who were busy machinating against him with as little injury as possible to himself, others like James Williams were not so lucky and fell prey to the conspiracies hatched against them. “Bad means, we say”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “had been used to get power, and to what useful or honourable ends had the power thus obtained ever been put?”<sup>230</sup> When the death of Anandrao Gaekwad occurred his eyes were fixed on his much-loved jewel room, Sayajirao Gaekwad II hoarded private treasures which Khanderao Gaekwad squandered away in pomp and splendor or in handing them over to favorites and Malharrao Gaekwad went to the extent of frittering it away among the most despicable creatures. However, the Gaekwad rulers should not be entirely blamed for these evils. While it is true that the responsibility of the administration lies with the ruler but the Gaekwads were trained in such a manner that they were always surrounded by people with ignorance and rapacity whose only objective was to acquire the largest possible share of the spoils. Relatives, servants, ministers, favorites, religious and military blood-suckers, money lenders, jewelers, and courtesans formed a crew of infamy whose bad deeds haunted the State till the accession of Sayajirao Gaekwad III in 1875 and the beginning of the administration of Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao.<sup>231</sup>

“There is generally a gradual approach to a catastrophe”, writes F.A.H. Elliot, “but often as the end comes nearer the downward rush is terribly rapid, and a sort of madness drives the criminal now, as it were, the victim of fate, on to headlong destruction. This was the case with Malharrao, whose deeds were the bad but not unnatural outcome of the past, for the

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<sup>230</sup> Elliot. *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 241.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., pp. 241-242.

circumstances which directly led to his deposition were not isolated or exceptional or the results of any strange mischance”.<sup>232</sup>

In 1857, Malharrao Gaekwad, who was 25 years old at that time was involved in creating social unrest in Gujarat by attempting to pillage Ahmedabad in which he was actively helped by the Kolis of the Vijapur district and of the British district of Kheda. A part of the conspiracy was to create a tumult in the country north of the capital and then to approach threateningly on Baroda and overthrow the ruling Maharaja Khanderao Gaekwad. No action was then taken to make Malharrao Gaekwad bite the dust because to the British he seemed to be intellectually deficient to be perilous. Nonetheless, in 1863, he hatched a second conspiracy to kill his brother by sorcery, poison or shooting. And again he was saved by Colonel Wallace in the same way as Sir Richmond Shakespeare saved him in 1857 because “he was intellectually feeble and apparently irresponsible for his actions”.<sup>233</sup> The main accused who was bribed to commit this unlawful act was a military man who eventually disclosed the entire conspiracy and then had a narrow escape from the retribution exacted by the accomplices of Malharrao Gaekwad who made an attempt on his life by shooting at him as he lay on his bed. Consequently owing to this conspiracy Malharrao Gaekwad was put in solitary confinement as a state prisoner in Padra. It was from his jail at Padra that he was set free to ascend the throne of the Gaekwad dynasty and one of his first decrees was to release his accomplices involved in the plot just mentioned. In 1867, whilst he was still in solitary confinement at Padra, his confidential attendants hatched a fresh conspiracy against Khanderao Gaekwad. It was, however, fortunate that it was uncovered and as a result some of the criminals involved in the plot were executed while others were imprisoned. On 12 March, 1867 the last person in the history of India was executed by trampling under the foot of an elephant in Baroda, and on that occasion the Gaekwad promised the British Government that the infliction of this terrible mode of death penalty will not be carried out on any person in future.<sup>234</sup>

When the death of Khanderao Gaekwad occurred, Colonel Barr hurried to Padra and told Malharrao Gaekwad that he should immediately come into the Capital. He was indeed the late Maharaja’s only brother who was alive; but, as the widow of Khanderao Gaekwad, Maharani Jamnabai said that she was pregnant, the British Government could only

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<sup>232</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 242.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp. 242-243.

conditionally sanction his accession, till it came to the knowledge of everyone whether the baby she was going to give birth to was a boy or a girl (1 December, 1870).<sup>235</sup>

Colonel Barr appreciated some of the early efforts of Malharrao Gaekwad and it is possible that the latter also at the outset of his reign tried to make conciliatory gestures towards the British Government. Nor should there be any refrainment on our part from conferring a word of approval on the aged Gopalrao Mairal who was appointed as his Diwan by Malharrao Gaekwad since he was a gentleman who commanded immense respect in Baroda because he possessed many qualities that are greatly appreciated by Indians. While it is true that he was at the helm of affairs for little more than a year, and owing to his advanced age he was rendered incapacitant of vigorously administering the State, but Malharrao Gaekwad was confident of him. It is a matter of immense pleasure to state that he was the solitary one among all the Diwans and karbharris to have served the Baroda State for a long time and risen to the top of its administration and died a natural death while still holding office, and without suffering disgrace.<sup>236</sup>

When Malharrao Gaekwad became Maharaja of Baroda he was fully determined to seek retribution for the sufferings he had borne. Even the widow of Khanderao Gaekwad, Maharani Jamnabai was frightened of Malharrao Gaekwad and demanded a safe asylum for herself so that her unborn child could see the light of day and the British Residency granted her asylum where on 5 July, 1871, a girl named Tarabai was born. Six months after the birth of Tarabai, Jamnabai was granted permission to leave Gujarat and at that time she thought that she was leaving the State forever. A just complaint was raised by the Rani Rahamabai also that she had been badly treated. Malharrao Gaekwad dealt with the favorites and dependents of Khanderao Gaekwad in a Draconian manner. They were all sacked and fired and Malharrao Gaekwad justified their expulsion on the plea that the State had to repay a debt of at least two crores of rupees. However, their expulsion had such a sweeping effect that large sums were saved annually by the State, sums that were, nevertheless, promptly spent in other directions. But there was one man whom Malharrao Gaekwad particularly hated. This man was Bhau Shinde, a friend and councilor of the late Maharaja who had told the British Government insistently not to release the prince from imprisonment. After the accession of Malharrao Gaekwad he was imprisoned and was never to leave the prison alive; subsequently on 1 May, 1872 he was poisoned in a Draconian and brutal manner along with two other

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<sup>235</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 243.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.



favorites of the late Maharaja, Govindrao Naik and Raoji Master. It is hardly essential to add that the entire wealth of the family of Bhau Shinde was confiscated.<sup>237</sup>

Although the plea of Malharrao Gaekwad that the State was in debt was true, subsequent to that he did hardly anything for the reformation of the finances of the State. The estimated revenue for the year 1870-71 was Rs. 1, 37, 00,000 while the expenditure on the army and for the Devasthan, Dharmada and State establishments amounted to Rs. 1,15,00,000; but at the same time the Maharaja spent enormously on his private needs. As the Commission that sat in 1874 said: “During the last six or seven years of Khanderao’s life, Government, bad as it was, underwent a decadence: the proceedings of the chief were more arbitrary than previously, new cesses and levies were imposed without consideration of the previously heavy assessments to which the rayats were subject, and the collection of the government dues was enforced by the local officials by harsh and compulsory measures”.<sup>238</sup>

But Malharrao Gaekwad had no serious intention of reforming the finances of the State, and as the question of revenue is a significant one, the following remark is quoted at length: “During the time of the rebellion in the United States, the prices of Indian cotton rose to an extraordinary degree from 1 or 1.5 anna to a rupee in the pound. The Baroda State includes a large extent of ground suitable for the growth of cotton and in consequence of the rise of price, the cultivation of cotton greatly increased, and a very remunerative crop was produced. During this period the cultivators were able to pay a very high assessment, and in 1864 a revenue settlement was introduced upon the basis of the high cotton rates then in force. The expenditure of the State was recklessly increased. On the close of the American war the price of cotton fell, but the land settlement remained in force. The government demand upon the agriculturists became continually more difficult to meet, and the measures of the government grew more severe. Much good land had to be abandoned, the arrears at the close of St. 1930 had amounted to 70 or 80 lakhs, and the last instalment of that year was almost wholly unrealized”.<sup>239</sup>

On 25 July, 1874 instructions were issued to the Resident to advise Malharrao Gaekwad, amongst other things “to prohibit the barbarous processes for realizing revenues, and to remove the causes of discontent by a moderate and equitable land settlement”.<sup>240</sup> The

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<sup>237</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 244.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

Maharaja felt offended by the advice and soon matters worsened instead of improving. Eventually when Sir Lewis Pelly took control of the government in his own hands, he issued a proclamation in which he promised to reduce the rate of assessment wherever it was equitable, remitted arrears for five years St. 1923-27 in absolute terms, and for the years St. 1928-30 the government would not demand arrears till it had enquired into the matter fully. Despite these sweeping measures, the peasants could no longer bear the brunt of evils of the past, resulting in depopulation of entire villages and a passive resistance by the raiyat in the entire State to the demands of the government.<sup>241</sup>

There is no better way of understanding how disorderly the State finances had become than to recall that in 1875 when the reign of Malharrao Gaekwad ended the receipts of revenue of the State amounted to only Rs. 94 lakhs while the expenditure had been Rs. 171 lakhs. The distinction between the Gaekwad's private property and the revenue supposed to be devoted to the needs of the State had narrowed down to such an extent that subsequent to Malharrao Gaekwad's arrest the public treasury was found to contain a few thousand rupees only while Rs. 40 lakhs were found concealed in some corner of the palace, and it was readily perceivable that there had been private remission of other large sums abroad.<sup>242</sup>

In addition, Malharrao Gaekwad in the course of his short reign was not only increasingly severe in maintaining the high rates of assessment his brother had imposed on the raiyat but reprehensibly employed the old means of the Gaekwads in order to raise money. There was already a heavy burden of taxation on the raiyat; but he increased their burden additionally by imposing a heavy "accession *nazarana*" on them. Moreover, he imposed a heavy tax of the same nature on the *vahivatdars* and this social class not being a respectable one recovered their losses by extorting ten times more money from the poor peasantry and when the peasants complained against the *vahivatdars* to the Maharaja he was not prepared to listen because these men had by means of *rassad* purchased the *ijara* and consequently the right to embezzle money.<sup>243</sup>

Finally, Malharrao Gaekwad was unscrupulous in his dealings with bankers who had traditionally supplied the State with ready money in the hope of bargaining with new men and in the most despotic manner of usurping the property of *inam*-holders and holders of hereditary emoluments. By this kind of despotic behavior Malharrao Gaekwad incurred the

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<sup>241</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 245.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

hostility of a multitude of people which included the common subjects, the *sardars* and the military class, the bankers and moneyed men, and eventually the grief of these political, social and economic classes reached the British Government's ears.<sup>244</sup>

## **The Deposition of Malharrao Gaekwad**

One must allude here to the men surrounding Malharrao Gaekwad inasmuch as a lot depends on whom an irresponsible prince chooses as his chief ministers. Nimbajirao Dhavale was sacked by Malharrao Gaekwad from his post of minister one month after his accession and Hariba Gaekwad with the assistance of Bhikoba Anna, conducted the work until the appointment of Gopalrao Mairal as the Diwan in March 1871, a man who has been honorably mentioned previously. However, the person whom the prince appointed as his chief private adviser was Balwantrao Raurkar. Although he was well-intentioned, but, nevertheless, ineffective or unwise and did not possess a strong personality. But the successors of these people were men of a worse character leading to deterioration in the character of the reign itself: Sayaji Nana Saheb Khanvelkar was appointed Diwan and Bapujirao Mohite Senapati. These two men were the brothers-in-law of Malharrao Gaekwad and if the latter exercised little influence, the former was given immense powers which he wickedly used since his policy was guided by ignorance and avarice. Hariba Gaekwad was appointed Revenue Commissioner, and this man had a reputation of being a cruel officer whilst the person who served under him Narayanbhai Lalubhai was a creature without any merit and had been formerly fired from the British service. Vasuntram Bhau who was an agent of the Maharaja and was appointed controller of banks, was a man having no scruples while the Court was composed of other members like Govindrao Mama, Balwantrao Dev and last but not the least Damodar Pant.<sup>245</sup>

Before the important events leading to the deposition of Malharrao Gaekwad can be delineated one necessary remark needs to be made. The Maharaja of Baroda was an independent prince, but in accordance with the stipulations of the treaties signed between the Baroda State and the British Government the latter had the right to exercise certain amount of restraint on the person of the Maharaja. However, there is no explanation for the scope and the degree to which the British Government could intervene if the proceedings of the Gaekwad were characterized by reprehensibility and mischievousness. However, it would not

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<sup>244</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 246.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

be improper to assert that if we consider the relations between a very weak and a very strong government, the British Government had for many years prior to the accession of Malharrao Gaekwad exercised the right to advise and check the Gaekwad with immense moderateness and very pacific Residents had over the years given a thorough explanation of this prudent policy to the Maharajas of Baroda. After much delay the Bombay Government came to the conclusion that the appropriate time for intervention had come and it led to the appointment of a Resident who was zealous and would quickly expose all wrongdoing.<sup>246</sup>

Colonel Phayre reached Baroda on 18 March, 1873, and on 22 March learnt about the flogging of eight men on the streets of Baroda; some of whose death had occurred consequently and while others was nearing death. These men were accused of poisoning a servant of the Maharaja. A few days later the news about the open rebellion of five thakurs of the Vijapur district on the pretext of blatant refusal on their part to pay the accession *nazarana* came. Other complaints came in rapid succession and the Resident heard them patiently. Finally when the Resident had represented all these matters in the proper quarters the Government of India appointed a Commission of Enquiry to meet in Gujarat in order to resolve the complaints of British and Gaekwadi subjects and to look into the state of the contingent. Colonel Meade, the President and Mumtaz-ud-Daulah Nawab Faiz Ali were appointed as representatives of the Government of India, while Mr. Ravenscroft and Colonel Etheridge were selected to represent the Government of Bombay.<sup>247</sup>

This Commission sat for the first time in Baroda on 10 November and for the last time in the same city on 24 December, 1873, but sent the report of its views to the Government of India two months later. The enquiry was conducted with immense moderation and with no intention of unnecessarily intervening into the details of the Gaekwad Government and referring all grievances of individuals to the Maharaja. Although the Commission acquitted the Government of the Gaekwad of notably ill-treating the British subjects it discovered that the charge of Colonel Phayre of general bad governance was proved. Moreover, other charges like reducing on a large scale the followers of the late Maharaja, the accession *nazarana*, rural distress, the unscrupulous and despotic dealings with State and other bankers, with the relatives and followers of Khanderao Gaekwad and with the large number of *inam*-holders were also leveled against Malharrao Gaekwad. The Commission also found out about the personal ill-treatment of many people. For instance, Malharrao Gaekwad had forced

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<sup>246</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 249-250.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

married and unmarried women of respectable families to become “Loundis” or his household slaves. In other words, in the Baroda State respectable women were forcibly abducted and impelled to become prostitutes.<sup>248</sup>

Giving approval to the suggestions of the Commission, the Government of India abstained from interfering with the authority of the Maharaja, but, nevertheless, issued a warning to him (25 January, 1874) that he was to be held responsible, and called upon him within a short period (17 months, i.e. 31 December, 1875) to thoroughly and permanently reform the Government of the Baroda State. An urgent request was also placed before the Maharaja to fire a number of high officials who were ill-advising him and to abide by the recommendations of the Bombay Government in the appointment of his chief minister.<sup>249</sup>

Malharrao Gaekwad however did not make any spirited attempt at reforming the Government of the Baroda State and the method which he used to avoid the dismissal of his old minister, Sayaji Nana Saheb Khanvelkar, by making him the Pratinidhi was not cordially acknowledged by Colonel Phayre (13 August, 1874). The arrival of Dadabhai Naoroji whom Malharrao Gaekwad had chosen to administer the Baroda State assisted by four or five other Parsi gentlemen was not welcomed by Colonel Phayre because he thought that they would not be granted adequate powers to reform the administration.<sup>250</sup>

Briefly, the Resident and the Maharaja did not get along with each other and there was an incessant passage of hostile communications from the Residency to the Palace on a multitude of different issues. At last the Government of India decided to remove Colonel Phayre and appointed in his place, as Special Commissioner and Agent to the Governor General and not as Resident acting under the orders of the Bombay Government, Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly (25 November, 1874).<sup>251</sup>

In the meantime a man who delineated himself as the husband of the kept mistress of the Maharaja, Laxmibai, made an appearance in March 1874 and supplicated the Resident to recover his wife. While the charges made by the man in his supplication were still under investigation, the Maharaja on 7 May tied the knot with Laxmibai who had been *enceinte* for two months; the Resident, however, had been ordered by his Government not to attend the wedding which occurred in the town of Navsari where the Maharaja at that time had been

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<sup>248</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., pp. 251-252.

residing. On 16 October, 1874, Laxmibai gave birth to a boy; but as the veracity of his legitimacy was questionable he did not receive the honors generally reserved for the heir-apparent from Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly who was at that time residing in Baroda.<sup>252</sup>

On 2 November, 1874, Malharrao Gaekwad had made a request to the Government of India for the removal of Colonel Phayre from Baroda and on the 25 November, 1874 the actual appointment of Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly to the post of Special Commissioner and AGG at the Court of the Maharaja took place. In the interregnum between these two dates, that is, on 9 November, 1874, Colonel Phayre became suspicious that somebody was attempting to poison him. He had for a few days before 9 November feeling giddy and nauseating and soon realized that this had resulted from the sherbet made of pummalo juice which he had habitually been drinking every morning. On 9 November within a short time of drinking some of this mixture he suddenly felt squeamish and so got up and threw away a large portion of the remainder of the contents in the tumbler. On replacement of the tumbler he discovered that peculiarly dark sediment had collected at the bottom which immediately struck him might be poison. Without delay he sent the sediment for examination to Dr. Seward, the Residency Surgeon, who after examining it proclaimed that it was a composition of common white arsenic and diamond-dust.<sup>253</sup>

This suspicious activity was without delay reported to the Bombay and Central Governments although the plans of the Government of India were not altered as a result of this activity. When Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly reached Baroda he found the State in a crisis of epic proportions. The over-assessment of land revenue had made rural distress rampant, while the disagreements and disputes between the *sardars* and the Maharaja posed a grave threat to peace in the Baroda State. Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly was therefore forced to take the reins of the government into his own hands and ask Dadabhai Naoroji to quietly resign from his office. Eventually in December 1874 because of the testimony of two servants of the Residency a clue to the poison case discovered; Raoji, a havildar of peons, made a confession that he had mixed the poison into the sherbet; and Narsu, a jamadar of peons, after he had been promised that he would be pardoned, admitted that he had a hand in abetment of the crime because he had received a bribe from Malharrao Gaekwad to do so and that the Maharaja himself had presented the poison to him. Consequent upon this testimony and some other evidence, the Government of India proclaimed on 13 January, 1875, issuing a

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<sup>252</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 252.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

notification of the arrest of Malharrao Gaekwad, and the assumption on behalf of the Queen the administration of the Baroda State, pending the result of an enquiry into the proceedings of Malharrao Gaekwad.<sup>254</sup>

The basis of this action was not Municipal law; it was an act of State. The conduct of an enquiry was entrusted to a Commission which consisted of Sir Richard Couch, the Chief Justice of Bengal, as President; of Sir Richard Meade and P.S. Melville, and of two Native Princes and a famous man, the Maharaja of Gwalior, the Maharaja of Jaipur and Sir Dinkar Rao. This was not a judicial tribunal, but merely a committee whose job was to report to the Government of India their opinions or answers on four points regarding the extent to which Malharrao Gaekwad was complicit in attempting to poison Colonel Phayre.<sup>255</sup>

The Commission conducted its probe from 23 February to 31 March, 1875. The fourth count was, “that in fact an attempt to poison Colonel Phayre was made by persons instigated thereto by Malharrao”.<sup>256</sup> The English members of the Commission opined that Malharrao Gaekwad was indeed guilty of instigating servants of the Residency to make an attempt to poison Colonel Phayre. Two of the Native Commissioners found that Malharrao Gaekwad had proven guilty of minor charges, which need not be mentioned here, “but acquitted him on that count to which any great importance might be attached”.<sup>257</sup> The Government of India was unable to settle the case because certain points produced in evidence were contradictory and began the trial with the hypothesis that Malharrao Gaekwad was innocent. They, at length, on 15 April, 1875, sent a proposal to the Secretary of State to depose Malharrao Gaekwad and invite Sir T. Madhava Rao to administer the State and that Her Highness Jamnabai, the widow of the late Maharaja Khanderao Gaekwad, who had stood steadfastly loyal to the British during the Revolt of 1857, should be asked to adopt a boy from the Gaekwad family whose accession to the *gaddi* should take place at once.<sup>258</sup>

Her Majesty’s Government, however, viewed the case differently. It did not believe that Malharrao Gaekwad was guilty of instigating the servants of the Residency to make an attempt to poison Colonel Phayre and therefore rejected all the proceedings of the Commission, but decided to depose the Maharaja on different grounds which will now be mentioned expressly. On 19 April, 1875 the Government of India proclaimed that Malharrao

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<sup>254</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 253.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., pp. 253-254.

Gaekwad was deposed, “not that the British Government have assumed that the result of enquiry has been to prove the truth of the imputation against His Highness, but, having regard to all the circumstances relating to the affairs of Baroda from the accession of H.H. Malharrao, his notorious misconduct, his gross misgovernment of the State, and his evident incapacity to carry into effect necessary reforms”.<sup>259</sup>

In accordance with the proclamation there was a quiet deportation of Malharrao Gaekwad to Madras on 22 April, 1875, where he stayed for the rest of his life, enjoying a very comfortable income and accompanied by his family. No opposition to the action of the British Government took place during the course of the trial either by the people or the troops in Baroda. But a few days after he was deposed, that is, on 28 April, a serious insurrection occurred in Baroda where an attempt was made to place the son of Malharrao Gaekwad by Laxmibai on the *gaddi*. The rebellion was, however, easily subdued after Sir Richard Meade sent down from the camp a force of artillery, infantry and cavalry which occupied the city. Only two other appalling incidents took place in the time period between the deposition of Malharrao Gaekwad and the accession of Sayajirao Gaekwad III. One was the suicide committed by Morarrao and the other a very weak revolt by his brother Sadashivrao, both aspiring for the *gaddi* despite not being eligible. Sadashivrao was subsequently deported to Banaras where he resided for the rest of his life under surveillance. Both these men were the sons of Govindrao who was the adopted son of Radhabai, the widow of Fatesingrao Gaekwad II, and the condition of adoption being that Govindrao should inherit the private property of the Regent only and not make pretensions on the throne of the Gaekwad dynasty.<sup>260</sup>

### **Accession of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III**

After the deposition of Malharrao Gaekwad, the widow of the late Maharaja Khanderao Gaekwad, Maharani Jamnabai returned to Baroda on 2 May, 1875 and the next day entered the palace of the Gaekwad dynasty. On 27 May, 1875, Gopalrao, a twelve-year old boy from the village of Kavlane in Khandesh, who traced his descent from Pilajirao Gaekwad, was adopted by Maharani Jamnabai and he ascended the throne of the Gaekwad dynasty and was given the title of Sayajirao Gaekwad III (1875-1939). At the Delhi Durbar of 1 January, 1877, where Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, the title of *Farzand-i-Khas-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia* (own favored son of the British Empire) was conferred on young Sayajirao

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<sup>259</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 254.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., pp. 254-255.



Gaekwad III while on 6 July, 1878 there was an investiture of Maharani Jamnabai with the Imperial Order of the Crown of India.<sup>261</sup>

On 16 May, 1875, Sir T. Madhava Rao was formally appointed as the Diwan of Baroda though he had commenced his duties to form the new administration some six days earlier. During the Delhi Durbar of 1 January, 1877, where Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III was bestowed with the new affectionate title the British Government conferred on Sir T. Madhava Rao the honorary rank of Raja and ever since that day the Government of India bestowed honorable appellations of Khan Bahadur or Rai Bahadur on the chief officers of the Baroda State.<sup>262</sup>

According to F.A.H. Elliot the events narrated above mark a break with the past. Maharani Jamnabai, according to Elliot, was given the honor of adopting a son and successor to Maharaja Khanderao Gaekwad because the latter had during his reign when the Revolt of 1857 erupted stood steadfastly loyal to the British and assisted them in suppressing any symptoms of rebellion in Gujarat and thus precluded the Revolt from spreading in the region. His brother Malharrao Gaekwad, on the other hand, had done the opposite during this testing time for the British. Instead of supporting them as a prince Malharrao Gaekwad had fomented rebellion against the British in the State of Baroda and the rest of Gujarat and even made an attempt on the life of Maharaja Khanderao Gaekwad. He was therefore made a state prisoner and put in solitary confinement at Padra. He was, however, forgiven by the British Government and after the death of Khanderao Gaekwad in 1870 when his widow Jamnabai gave birth to a daughter proclaimed Maharaja of Baroda. Notwithstanding this British gratitude, writes Elliot, Malharrao Gaekwad unleashed a reign of terror in Baroda and despite repeated warnings from the colonial government showed defiance. Eventually he was deposed on the charge of misgovernment and the vicious system of government he represented came to an end. Thus, Elliot concludes that what a series of interferences by the British in the affairs of the Baroda State in the past could not do one decisive act accomplished and the Baroda State was given a warning “not to conduct itself in such a way as to deserve the censure of its powerful ally”.<sup>263</sup> In place of Malharrao Gaekwad, a twelve year old boy would embark upon a fresh career and until he attains manhood and is invested with full ruling powers the administration of the State would be carried out by Raja Sir T.

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<sup>261</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 256.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

Madhava Rao, who being an efficient administrator would put the Baroda State in sound financial position or to use Elliot's words "set his house in order".<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, p. 258.