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J. H. O. PAULUSZ ON THE 1638 WESTERWOLT TREATY IN CEYLON: A REJOINDER

In Deel 136-II/III of *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1980, pp. 321-352, Mr. J. H. O. Paulusz has published an article entitled 'The 1638 Westerwolt Treaty in Ceylon: Charges of Dutch Deceit Disproved'. In this article he reviews the literature on Dutch relations with the Kingdom of Kandy, and in particular the treaty of 1638 and the events immediately following, and attempts to "disprove" an opinion widely held among historians that the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C.) was guilty of fraudulent conduct in its relations with Raja Sinha II, King of Kandy (c. 1630-1687). His article raises a number of issues of fact and interpretation relating to the history of the V.O.C. in the east as well as the history of Ceylon. It also raises questions relating to historical methodology, the use of primary sources and the problem of bias in history. In the interest of historical scholarship, his viewpoint must be taken up and analyzed in detail. I propose to do this in the following pages.

The historiography of the Treaty of 1638

Before Paulusz entered the fray, almost every historian who had studied the original documents relating to this period had concluded, with varying degrees of certainty, that the Dutch behaved with duplicity in their dealings with Raja Sinha. Thus W. van Geer, the first historian to make a detailed study of these events, said:

It cannot be decided with certainty whether the alteration made in the copy presented to the Maharaja was caused by an error, or deliberately, in order to deceive him . . . It is, however, hardly credible that an unconscious, yet so glaring, error of a subordinate should not have been immediately perceived. The nature of the alteration and the obvious objective that was aimed at by the alteration make us rather believe that there is no question of an error here, but that really, this was done according to a fixed plan and that the translator was only the tool of people in higher positions. (Van Geer 1895:422.)

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J. E. Heeres, in his edition of the treaties of the V.O.C., annotates the treaty of 1638 with comments drawn approvingly from Van Geer (Heeres 1907:309-310). R. G. Anthonisz (1929:28) comments thus: "This special stipulation appears to have been omitted by mistake or fraud in the Dutch copy".

By far the most thorough investigation of these events was made by K.W. Goonewardena, the results of which were published in his *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon 1638-1658*. He based his study on the V.O.C. records in The Hague and in the Sri Lankan Archives, supplemented by contemporary Portuguese evidence and such Sinhalese accounts as were available. He went thoroughly into the circumstances relating to the treaty of 1638, the disputes between the allies caused in its implementation and the process by which the Dutch displaced the Portuguese as the colonial power of maritime Ceylon. In his conclusions, he went further than any of his predecessors in asserting that the V.O.C. acted with duplicity and fraud in its dealings with the Kandyans (Goonewardena 1958). When the work was first published it was hailed as a major work of historical revision and its conclusions widely accepted in the general histories of Ceylon. I was among these historians who accepted Goonewardena's conclusions and incorporated them in my 'De V.O.C. in Ceylon en Coromandel' (Arasaratnam 1976), to which Mr. Paulusz has taken exception. Similarly E. F. C. Ludowyk, a well-known historian of Modern Ceylon, showed that he accepted these findings when he wrote:

An article of treaty stipulated that ports captured by the Dutch from the Portuguese should be garrisoned by the latter only 'if the king so desired'. This vital clause, 'if the king so desired', was deliberately omitted in the Dutch copy of the treaty and was the first cause of trouble between the two contracting parties. (Ludowyk 1962:121).

The historiographical position, till Paulusz made known his views, was that all historians were agreed that there is a suspicion of shady dealing on the part of the V.O.C. in its relations with the Kandyans. Some would assert that Raja Sinha himself contributed to this by seeking to utilize the Dutch for his own ends of expelling the Portuguese. Some historians feel that the Dutch had planned to hoodwink Raja Sinha all along. Paulusz is the first writer on these matters to assert with finality and even with passion that the V.O.C. scrupulously adhered to all its obligations in the Treaty of 1638, that the omission of the vital clause in the treaty was an unimportant error of a copyist, that Raja Sinha was out-and-out the villain of the piece who deserved everything he got. When a major task of revision of opinions long held is undertaken, it is incumbent on the author to adhere rigorously to the canons of historical research. Such a revision may be undertaken

either by the discovery of new evidence in support or by a reinterpretation of existing evidence to flaw the currently held interpretations. It is my task to subject Paulusz's views to the test of these two canons of historical research. I shall then show that, far from conforming to these tenets, Paulusz's arguments are erroneous in the extreme, he has no new evidence to produce that has not been considered so far by historians, his interpretation of the existing evidence is unacceptable, and he reveals an inadequate knowledge of the broader problems and background of the period that are essential to historical understanding. I shall take up his points in the order in which he makes them.

Some errors of fact and of the understanding of background factors

Paulusz begins by commenting on the claim of Raja Sinha to be Emperor of Ceylon and berates him for this claim (pp. 322-23). Here he shows an ignorance of the philosophy and practice of state power in the island of Ceylon. A study of the political history of the island will show that this claim to all-island sovereignty was ingrained in Sinhalese kingship. Any ambitious king would lay claim to such sovereignty, irrespective of his ability or otherwise to achieve it. In the recent past, the kings of Kotte in the 15th and early 16th centuries had called themselves sovereigns of Ceylon, though there were independent kingdoms of Jaffna in the north and Kandy in the centre. Ever since Kandy became the seat of the only independent indigenous kingdom in the island, its rulers felt that they had a legitimate claim to an all-island sovereignty. When Raja Sinha's father, Senerat, was king, the *Stadhouder*, Prince Maurice of Orange, addressed him in a letter as "the Illustrious and High-born Emperor of Ceylon, King of Candia, Tringenemale, Jafnapatan, Sete Corlas, Manaar, Chilau, Cota, Batecalo and Punto Gale" (Baldaeus 1672:25). This recognition was afforded to the ruler by European powers whenever it was in their interest to do so. Decades later, the English did the same when they wished to enter into a treaty with him, as did the French in 1672 when they actually entered into a treaty recognizing him as the Emperor of Ceylon (Koloniaal Archief 1175). In the light of these facts, Paulusz reads too much into what appears to have been an accepted titular greeting.

Paulusz goes on to assert that Raja Sinha and the Kandyans had no control of cinnamon (p. 323). This is a fallacy which is easily exposed from the evidence. It is recorded that the Kandyans exported cinnamon through the eastern ports. It is not certain where the cinnamon grew. Probably it was peeled in the western parts of the kingdom and transported overland. But there also seems to have been some cinnamon in the eastern districts. In 1672, after the Dutch had mastered Ceylon's coast, they discovered cinnamon in the Batticaloa district and sent a sample to Holland. It was declared by the Directors to be

"very sharp" and they also instructed the Ceylon Government to take special care over the security of these parts (Koloniaal Archief 457). This will become relevant when I come back to discuss Paulusz' assertions on Raja Sinha's payment of his debts to the V.O.C. in supplies of cinnamon.

Then there is Paulusz' assertion that the Dutch "raised a protective barrier in a huge arc around Raja Sinha's kingdom" (p. 322) by their sea power. This "arc" he dates back to 1623, and "even earlier", and cites three references (Generale Missiven 1.2.1623, 1.12.1632 and 15.12.1633) in support of these statements. I have checked these references thoroughly and there is nothing in the first two letters to suggest any such thing. The third letter (that of 15.12.1633) refers to the deployment of ships along western India and coastal Ceylon for purposes of trade, in the absence of any substantial Portuguese naval might in the area. Let us look at the actual position *vis-à-vis* Dutch seapower in the Indian Ocean in the years alluded to. M. A. P. Roelofs, in her definitive study of the Dutch in Malabar, describes in detail the early fleets sent into this region by the Dutch (M. A. P. Roelofs 1943:49-113). Up to 1636, the appearance of Dutch fleets in the western Indian Ocean was sporadic and not of a sufficient scale to deny the Portuguese communication links between Goa and their subordinate stations. When they did blockade Goa, it was for three months (mid-January to mid-April) and not seven months, as Paulusz asserts. The Portuguese had little difficulty obtaining reinforcements from Cochin, when these were available. As G. D. Winus, in the history of the Portuguese loss of Ceylon, has shown, their problem was not so much one of communication as of an absolute shortage of resources. The Crown had decided that its first priority lay in Brazil and that Ceylon was dispensable (Winus 1971:87-104). Paulusz concludes that Raja Sinha "never roused himself to seize the chance they gave him to crash his weakened enemy". The almost continuing conflict between the Portuguese and the Kandyans as far as Paulusz is concerned may never have taken place.

Paulusz goes on to discuss the combined Dutch-Kandyan attack and conquest of Batticaloa in May 1638 (pp. 323-25). With a flash of originality, he asserts that the decision to attack Batticaloa was motivated by Raja Sinha's desire to get Dutch support against his rebel brother Prince Vijayapala. This original interpretation proves an original error. Vijayapala had fought under Raja Sinha in the famous Battle of Gannoruva in March 1638, only two months earlier, and won a great victory against the Portuguese (De Silva 1972:197-201). His alienation from Raja Sinha begins in the following year, and he was kept in detention in Kandy till the end of 1640, when he broke free and escaped to Uva province to raise a rebellion against the King (Goonewardena 1958:58-61; Winus 1971:68). Vijayapala had nothing

to do with the decision to attack Batticaloa. The reason why this port was chosen was that, as the most recent acquisition of the Portuguese, it was their weakest port. Further, its possession gave some freedom to the Kandyans in their overseas trade and contacts.

The treaty of 1638

I come now to the treaty of 1638. A central fact here is that neither copy of the Portuguese original which was signed and sealed and kept by each of the contracting parties is now extant. The Dutch soon had a copy made and, contrary to what Paulusz asserts, it is clear from the evidence that it was this Dutch copy that was used in the dispute that arose after the conquest of Negombo in February 1640. Otherwise, the whole dispute over the omission of that crucial clause in Article 3 would not have arisen. Paulusz' interpretation of Article 3 (p. 326) is that the retention or omission of this clause, "if His Majesty so pleases and approves", did not make any difference to the force of that Article. He says that that Article gave the Dutch the right to dispose of the conquered ports in the way they wished. This is simply not true. The last sentence of that Article 3, on which Paulusz bases his opinion, concedes to the king the right to reinforce and fortify the ports, though it says he should do it to the satisfaction of the Dutch.

It is plain that contemporary V.O.C. officials did not see it in the way Paulusz sees it, even though this interpretation was decidedly in their favour. Otherwise, why should they have gone to great pains to redraft the treaty and press the king for its revision? Only in November 1638 the Batavian Government had held the terms of the 1638 treaty to be extremely advantageous to the V.O.C. and had instructed Antonio Caen not to enter into any further communications on the subject of the treaty. Yet by September 1639 it had changed its mind and had drawn up plans for a revision of the treaty, which Lucas was instructed to obtain. The dispute over the handing over of the fortress of Trincomalee had intervened and the officials in Batavia wanted to block all loopholes. The new draft sought to eradicate the ambiguity of Article 3 by introducing an Article 4 which, while pretending to concede to the king the right to dispose of the conquered ports, nullified this right by allowing the Dutch to fortify these places against open enemies and "pretended friends". New articles were added which left no doubt of the intended permanency of Dutch power in Ceylon. Some stipulated categories of the island's subjects were to live under Dutch jurisdiction (Goonewardena 1958:33-34). So much for Paulusz' assertion that the V.O.C. sought trade, not a colony, in Ceylon (p. 350).

The king, of course, would not hear of any revision of the treaty of 1638 because that treaty decidedly gave him the ultimate say in the disposal of the conquered ports. When they failed to achieve this

intended revision, the Dutch, after 1640, shifted grounds and appealed to another article of the treaty - Article 8 -, where the king promised to pay all the expenses of Dutch military aid. But even this article did not provide the legality for the Dutch to occupy lands captured from the Portuguese and hold them against the king's will. This legality was not even achieved by the renegotiated treaty of 1649, and the V.O.C. lived in constant apprehension of the non-recognition of its rights to the occupancy of coastal Ceylon.¹

When confronted with this evidence of disquiet at the position among V.O.C. officials of that time, Paulusz resorts to verbal casuistry to explain it away (pp. 344-45). Thus *vertolken* is not "translate" but "interpret" (as if the word "interpret" does not carry with it the meaning of "translate"). Likewise he dilates learnedly on the meaning of words like *medebrenghen*, *expresselyck*, and *schijnen*. He wrongly implies that Goonewardena is translating the Dutch documents word for word, while it is clear that this author is not translating but is paraphrasing the contents of a number of contemporary records which he cites in his footnotes (Goonewardena 1958:28, fn. 25). In any case, the speculative translation of 17th-century Dutch is not the peg on which to hang one's arguments and claim for them the sanction of immutable truth.

The wars against the Portuguese

Paulusz' account of the wars launched by the Dutch and the Kandyans against the Portuguese is replete with error and reflects his one-sided view of the history of the period. A number of instances may be cited to support this contention. The account of the attack on Negombo provided by Queyroz does not support the conclusion drawn by Paulusz that the contribution of the Kandyans was negligible. The Kandyan army was held up on the road as it could not penetrate the Portuguese defence forces entrenched in the strategically placed fort of Arandore. When the Portuguese troops withdrew from Arandore, the Kandyans continued their march towards Negombo. On 28th December 1639 the Kandyan army, led by its commander Dom Balthazar, arrived and crossed the river to move towards the Negombo Fort from the interior. The king arrived shortly after. Queyroz describes the fighting, in which both the Dutch and the Kandyans participated in the engagements that took place till 10th February, when the Fort surrendered (de Queyroz 1930:824-25). As will be shown later, this is not Paulusz' only misuse of Queyroz. The Kandyan contribution to the battles against the Portuguese is more evident in the Portuguese sources than in contemporary Dutch records. This is particularly true as regards the Portuguese counter-attack on Negombo in November 1640. The Kandyans fought valiantly in this battle and lost their commander Dom Balthazar. A despatch by the Portuguese

Captain-General, Dom Philipe Mascarenhas, to the Viceroy, dated 12th November 1640, attests to this fact (India Office Library, Books of the Monsoons, Bk. 47 fo. 86).

The same applies to Paulusz' comments on the failure to prosecute a planned joint attack on Colombo in March 1639 (p. 343). He attributes this to Raja Sinha's failure to bring the promised support by land. This is a complete error. On 19th March Caen received a letter from the Kandyans intimating the impending arrival of the army under Commander Dom Balthazar near Colombo. On the 23rd he received another letter from Balthazar himself informing him of their arrival within 10 miles of Colombo. In spite of this establishment of contact, Caen decided to abandon the attack and sail away from Colombo. All the facts surrounding this decision are to be found in Caen's Journal. It appears that he was suspicious that these letters could have been a Portuguese ruse to lure him into a trap. The fear of the outbreak of the south-west monsoon also seems to have influenced his decision (Koloniaal Archief 1039, p. 160 ff.). Paulusz is aware of this evidence but ignores it because it does not fit in with his preconceived notions of Raja Sinha's duplicity.

The king's debts

I come now to the issue of the king's debts under Article 8 of the treaty. Paulusz treats this issue with a cavalier disregard for the evidence, repeating the naive and simple version trotted out by contemporary V.O.C. officials. This very evidence, if treated dispassionately, provides a more truthful picture. Soon after the conquest of Batticaloa, Paulusz notwithstanding, Raja Sinha set about to settle his debts incurred in invoking Dutch assistance. Before the end of the year he had delivered 143 *bahars* 269 Dutch pounds (a total of 68,909 pounds) of cinnamon, 10,501 pounds of wax, and 3,059 pounds of pepper (Goonewardena 1958:23). The total expenditure for that expedition was given as 53,750 Guilders. Coster, who received the commodities delivered, maintained that the value of the merchandise did not meet the expenses incurred by the V.O.C. From then began the saga of the king's debts, which by every objective test forms a shameful chapter in colonial exploitation. The price at which the commodities, including cinnamon, were to be delivered became an important issue. The king pointed out to the Dutch that in their first overtures to him they had promised 50% more than what the Portuguese had paid. Despite this, he asserted that he would charge them a price of 110 xerafims a *bahar*, which was 20 xerafims less than the price paid by the Portuguese. The Dutch officials of the time — and Paulusz faithfully follows them — objected that this was too high a price. Let us look at the evidence on the price of cinnamon in this period.

C. R. de Silva, the historian of Portuguese Ceylon, on the basis of a

study of Portuguese revenue records, has charted price trends in the early decades of the 17th century. He notes a five-fold increase in the price of cinnamon in the east, and by the early 1630's the price in the South Asian markets uniformly stood at over 100 xerafims a *bahar* (it should be remembered that a Portuguese *bahar* was about 380 pounds, while a Dutch *bahar* was 480 pounds). This increase in price was caused by a number of factors. Supplies of cinnamon were interrupted by the almost continuous wars between the Portuguese and Kandyans in the first decades of the 17th century. There was intensive European competition for cinnamon, the English, Dutch and Danes having come into the market. Asian consumption was also expanding.

The Dutch offered the king 80 xerafims a *bahar*, which Paulusz, echoing a claim by Coster, says was three times the market rate in Colombo (p. 351). This must have been some market which only Coster and, through him, Paulusz are familiar with. Paulusz is rather uneasy about this because he is aware that cinnamon sold for 130 xerafims a Portuguese *bahar*. He has seen this figure mentioned in de Queyroz, though, in a futile attempt to explain it away, he says this was "among the highest figures mentioned in an ambiguous passage in de Queyroz" (p. 351).² This is a downright and easily exposed error. De Queyroz gives here some statistics of revenues derived by the Portuguese from the various villages and districts of Ceylon. He states three prices for presumably different grades of cinnamon. These prices are 121 xerafims, 120 xerafims and 220 xerafims a Portuguese *bahar*, and were in operation during the time Philippe Mascarenhas was Captain-General (1640-45). It can be seen from this that the price mentioned by the king as the market price — 150 xerafims — was not, as Paulusz says, "among the highest figures", but on the contrary, was near the base of the price range then operating. It appears that even Goonewardena has underestimated the price. Paulusz attempts to wriggle out of this by asserting that this was the selling price and not the buying price. Of course, it was the selling price in Colombo. Does he expect the king to have sold cinnamon to the Dutch at the price he and the Portuguese paid to the peeler? The whole episode was a shoddy attempt at robbing the king of the produce of his land which he was using to settle his debts by selling them at the market price. And it is a measure of Paulusz' sense of justice that he chooses to ignore the very legitimate grievance of the king in this matter.

Let us take the price offered by Raja Sinha, namely 110 xerafims a Portuguese *bahar*, and see how he comes out in the squaring of accounts. Converting at the prevailing rate of 1 xerafim = 2 Guilders, with the cinnamon alone the king had paid the Dutch 40,530 Guilders out of the claimed debt of 53,750 Guilders. It would be instructive to see what this cinnamon would have fetched the Dutch in Europe.

The price of cinnamon in Europe had risen to 42 $\frac{2}{3}$ Stuivers a pound in 1641. The cinnamon delivered by Raja Sinha would have been sold in Holland for over 146,900 Guilders. The Dutch kept complaining about the quality of the cinnamon, a complaint echoed by Paulusz. The quality does not seem to have prevented good sales in the Amsterdam market. Again contrary to Paulusz's assertion, Raja Sinha sought every occasion to clear his debt by deliveries of cinnamon, until he realized the futility of the whole exercise. Thus after the conquest of Galle, he had a quantity of 1,150 *bahars* of cinnamon peeled and packed for delivery to the Dutch. In a surprise attack by the Portuguese he lost 800 *bahars* and he was able to give the Dutch only 343 *bahars*. (Goonewardena 1958:40). All these deliveries were calculated unilaterally by the Dutch at what have been shown to be extremely low prices. When the king queried why certain deliveries made, for example 143 *bahars* in Batticaloa, were not entered in the receipts, the Dutch officials replied that these were thought to be personal gifts to officials and not to the Company. Thus the credit side of Raja Sinha's balance with the V.O.C. rose very slowly indeed.

What of the debit side? There is every evidence here of inflated prices and even of downright fraud practised against the king. In the statement submitted to the king by Governor General van Diemen in 1641 there was a total claim for 776,975 Guilders. For the expedition of Lucas alone, a charge of 433,600 Guilders was entered (Koloniaal Archief 765:638 ff.). Compare this, for example, with an expense account of 25,368 Guilders entered in the Batavian trade-books for the much larger expedition of Francois Caron in 1644. In the detailed break-down of the expenses further fraud becomes evident. Salary and allowances per man were claimed at 25 Guilders per month, which was later recognized to be 10 Guilders in excess. The loss of a cargo ship, *Rarob*, wrecked off Negombo, was claimed from the king, while Article 18 of the treaty specifically stated that the V.O.C. would bear losses from shipwrecks. Even then, a sum of 87,000 Guilders was claimed for this ship, while in the Galle account books the loss is valued at 41,135 Guilders (Goonewardena 1958:42-43). In this way, and without reference to the person to whom these charges were made, the debts kept mounting. The process of overvaluing expenses and undervaluing receipts went on to such an extent that in 1658, after the Portuguese were expelled from the island, the Dutch presented a bill to Raja Sinha as follows (Koloniaal Archief 1117:f.278):

General Expenses	Guilders 9,398,651: 15: 4
Amount paid in cinnamon, elephants, areca-nuts, land revenues, etc,	2,135,191: 4: 3
Amount outstanding from Raja Sinha	7,263,460: 11: 1

It is true that in the history of imperialism, the acquisition of empires has generally been a process that paid its own way. But rarely has this

been done in so brazen a fashion. One looks in vain for any of these facts in Paulusz' reassessment of Dutch-Kandyan relations.

There is then the matter of the assassination of Coster on his return from a visit to the king in Kandy. Naturally, contemporary V.O.C. officials were horrified at this incident and their records reflect their outrage, seen from their own viewpoint. Paulusz states categorically that Coster was murdered by Raja Sinha, without looking, as any historian should, at the events surrounding this violence. Coster had behaved with arrogance in court when he could not get what he wanted. He was insulting to courtiers and had created enemies for himself among the powerful Kandyan nobility. He was murdered on the way, and it is not known whether the murder was committed with or without the king's knowledge. It is interesting that François Valentijn, the chronicler, writing years later, condemns the murder, but says in explanation: "Coster threatened courtiers, insulted them, none of which the Cingalese were able to tolerate" (Valentijn V, 1:120).

The Rebellion of 1664 and its aftermath

In his concluding section Paulusz goes on to criticize my findings on a later phase of the relationship between Raja Sinha and the V.O.C. (pp. 348-9). In a brief paragraph he seeks to dispose of conclusions I had drawn from a study of the documents relating to the Kandyan rebellion of 1664 and the events that followed (Arasaratnam 1958b: 25-49). In customary fashion, but with even less documentation, he makes *ex cathedra* assertions which are easily disproved. It is obvious that Paulusz has not read the exhaustive evidence on which I based my conclusions that the Dutch under Rijcklof van Goens took advantage of the king's preoccupations with internal security to march into the interior and occupy provinces he had seized from the Portuguese many years earlier. Paulusz misquotes my statement on the correspondence between Raja Sinha and the Dutch by the old trick of omitting crucial clauses in it and replacing them with dots (...). In his quoted version it reads (p. 348): "After 1659 the King ... had no further direct correspondence with the Dutch in our period", i.e. till 1687, which "leaves us without a shred of evidence regarding the Kandyan Kingdom and the Court". My actual statements read:

The King of Kandy, in these years [1638-1658], was in the habit of writing frequent letters to the Dutch which have been preserved and are useful in revealing his point of view. After 1659, however, owing to his annoyance with the Dutch, the King gave up this practice, and, apart from the fateful letter of 5 January 1665, he had no further direct correspondence whatsoever with the Dutch in our period.

This leaves us without a shred of direct evidence regarding the Kandyan Kingdom and the court of Raja Sinha.

No more comment is necessary on Paulusz' use of quotations from the works of others.

To take up Paulusz' substantive point, he is wrong in his statement that the Minutes of the Political Council in Colombo contain evidence of constant letters, embassies and viewpoints exchanged between the two parties over these years. If he had gone on to read the remaining parts of my book, extracts from which he misquoted, he would have found that I have listed every one of the embassies the Dutch sent to Kandy to win the king's friendship. I have shown that these Dutch envoys, people of very low rank, were either detained at court or not received by the king, or in rare instances chose to take up service under him. M. W. Jurriaanse's comprehensive Catalogue of Dutch records in the Ceylon Archives lists 29 letters from Raja Sinha, the last of which is dated 21 July 1660 (Jurriaanse 1943:207-9). There are no embassies of important Kandyan officials until we come to March 1686, when the king sent Gane Bandara, the Chief Priest of Kandy, to ensure the smooth succession of his son and heir. I have shown in my work how the non-availability of solid, reliable evidence on Kandyan attitudes was a major problem of Dutch policy-makers in these years. Consequently they made serious errors of policy, relying on titbits of gossip, rumour and messages from sycophants (Ara-saratnam 1958b:77-100).

Adriaan van Rheede, a member of the Council of the Indies, was asked in 1677 to look into and report on the difficulties in Ceylon. He prepared a lengthy report entitled 'Consideration over Ceylon overgegeeven aan de Heer Maatsuyker en Raden, Ao 1677, op Batavia'.³ This was a very lengthy, frank and surprisingly objective review of Dutch relations with Kandy. In it he made the point that after 1658 there had been no reliable points of contact with the king and his court, no letters in the king's own hand and no visits from officials of any importance in Kandy. This general lack in information was increasingly commented on by Dutch officials, till in 1681 the Heeren Zeventien were themselves constrained to remark on the unreliability of letters from Ceylon over the last twenty years (Koloniaal Archief 458).

I come now to consider Paulusz' statement that the Kandyan provinces were occupied in response to Raja Sinha's letter asking for help against his enemies (p. 348). I would suggest that he re-read Chapter 2 of my book, referred to above, and see if he still thinks so. Let me recapitulate the argument. The letter was sent to the Dutch in the first week of January 1665 in a spirit of urgency. The first action was taken in April 1665, when the Dutch would have learnt from a captive rebel sent to them for punishment that the rebellion had been suppressed and that the king was back on this throne. Still later, in September 1665, a naval expedition occupied the east coast

port of Trincomalee. From then on, stage by stage, Dutch forces moved into the interior till 1670, by when they had seized large tracts of territory which the king had conquered from the Portuguese. Then began the direct war between the Dutch and the Kandians and indirect guerilla attacks on Dutch positions. This appears a strange way of coming to the help of an ally. These facts are clearly attested to in the documents that appeared a few years later, when V.O.C. officials who replaced the earlier policy-makers realized the patent absurdity of the chain of events, even from the point of view of Dutch interests. Van Rhee de stated it explicitly (Valentijn 1726 V, 1:249). The Council of the Indies recognized it in a formal resolution taken in October 1681. Valentijn makes a revealing comment that when great experts differ many things come to light which otherwise might have remained hidden (Valentijn 1726 V. 1:247). Because of this the evidence is abundant and plain for anyone who approaches it with an open mind.

Conclusion

The aims of V.O.C. policy in Ceylon must be seen in the context of the overall ambitions for eastern trade in the 17th Century. Seen in this light, the process begun in Ceylon in 1638 is the continuance of a policy and actions begun in the Banda Islands, and extended into Ambon and Ternate. These were all spice-producing islands that were quickly reduced to dependence. Treaties, alliances and legalities were not allowed to stand in the way of this single-minded pursuit of monopoly. Ceylon, the cinnamon-producing island, was seen to belong to that category of places with a valuable mono-culture which had to be politically controlled. This explains the readiness with which the Dutch handed over control of the ports on the east coast of the island. But when it came to the ports whose hinterland was the rich cinnamon woods, no legality, no treaty, no alliance was to stand in the way of absolute control. Hence it was that, immediately after the conquest of Galle, they began to think in terms of exercising jurisdiction over people and territory. Territorial imperialism was never to be balked at in the search for commercial monopoly. King Raja Sinha was a loser before he even started. No historian can attempt to write a history of Dutch-Kandian relations without placing it in the context of the V.O.C.'s political and commercial policy in the east.

Paulusz' attempt to rewrite history raises interesting questions of historical methodology. In modern times, historical writing on European expansion in Asia has proceeded broadly through three phases. There was in the first phase the administrator who wrote of the scene of his endeavours from the perspective of the power he was serving. He wrote consciously and unconsciously to justify the extension of colonization, and the administration and policy pursued under colonial

rule. A second stage of historical writing saw the professional historian from the metropolitan country moving in, using the tools of historical research to write what was still colonial history. His sources were the documents of the colonial power, his perspectives were those of the colonizers, and he continued to look at events and incidents from the outside. From the 1950's we move into a third stage, when a revolution occurred in the writing of the history of colonizing powers and colonized societies. An important intellectual stimulus to this activity was provided by the series of conferences held at the School of Oriental and African Studies between 1956 and 1958 on Historical Writing of the Peoples of Asia.

A number of ideas emerged at these conferences which are of relevance to the current debate between Paulusz and other historians. One of the main points of consensus was that it was no longer adequate to write the history of Europe's expansion into Asia solely as an extension of European history. Even less acceptable was the writing of the history of the colonized societies and the process of colonization solely from the point of view of the victorious, hegemonic power, treating indigenous states and societies as passive recipients. In respect to the techniques of historical research, one major consequence was the recognition that the use of the records of the colonial power in the writing of history was fraught with pitfalls for the unwary historian. Historians were encouraged to diversify their sources, look at various versions of events, and subject these sources to the most critical examination. Under the impact of this critical methodology, revisionist historical writings appeared on a number of colonial territories of Asia, where existing perspectives were widened and European expansion was looked at in a more objective manner.

One of the problems in applying these principles is that, in certain instances, the historian is circumscribed by the one-sidedness of his sources. In the case of Ceylon's relations with the Dutch, we have two parties, only one of which has left behind extensive records reflecting its side of the story. The danger is that the historian, consciously and unconsciously, will swallow the prejudices of his sources and write a history based on them as a true record of what happened. I have discussed elsewhere, with illustrations, the implications of this for the history of Ceylon and South India (Arasaratnam 1962). To avoid this danger, the historian has to read between the lines of his sources, subject them to severe tests of criticism, draw away from their prejudices, and thus arrive as close as possible to the truth. This process is all the more necessary where one party to the action has remained silent in terms of historical record. It is clear that Paulusz has failed in all these tests. He has written an account which is a paraphrase of his Dutch sources. In this day and age this type of history-writing simply will not do.

NOTES

- 1 These problems of legality and recognition of Dutch sovereignty in Ceylon are discussed in Arasaratnam 1958a.
- 2 De Queyroz 1930:1193. This is another instance of misuse of his sources by Paulusz.
- 3 Koloniaal Archief 543 (Hooge Regeering); extracts reproduced in Valentijn 1726 V, 1:248 ff.

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