

strating at times a high degree of initiative and imagination. Judging them by the standards of their own day, they cannot be condemned for having perpetuated a paternalistic type of rule, since they were never meant to train Algerians toward self-rule.

The Conference closed with a series of workshops, on imperial economics (chairman: Professor Sanford Elwitt, Univ. of Rochester, N.Y), socio-political structures (chairman: Professor Kenneth Perkins, Univ. of South Carolina), and ideologies (chairman: Professor Marc Lagana). These workshops will be summarized at the end of the *Proceedings*, which are to be published in February 1978. The *Proceedings* of the Third Annual Conference, as well as previous ones, may be obtained by writing to Professor Alf Andrew Heggoy, Department of History, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga. 30601, U.S.A.



INDIA

From OM PRAKASH we received the following communication:

The Dutch Factories in India.

A Project for the Publication of Dutch Source materials on Indian History

As I prepare to leave for home after a year's association with the Centre, I would like to outline for favour of a notice in *Itinerario*, a project for the publication of Dutch source materials on Indian History, being sponsored by the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.

It is now reasonably well-known that the records of the Dutch East India Company, preserved at the Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag, constitute a major - and in many respects the most detailed - European source material on Indian history during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

Comparatively cheap cotton textiles produced on the Coromandel coast in south-east India - which constituted the principal medium used by

Asian merchants to produce pepper and other spices in Indonesia - were the chief attraction India held for the Dutch East India Company in the early stages. Within four years of its establishment in 1602, the Company had organized trading posts - usually described as factories - at Setapuli and Masulipatam in Golconda. Commercial contacts were later extended to other parts of the sub-continent, Gujarat on the west coast, Bengal on the east and Malabar on the south-east coast. By the close of the seventeenth century, India had come to occupy a central place in the complex of the Dutch intra-Asian and the Euro-Asian trade. Some idea of the significance the Indian factories had come to assume by the turn of the century be conveyed by the fact that the factories in the Bengal region alone provided more than one-third of the total value of the cargo imported by the Company into Holland.

This important role of the Indian factories was instrumental in the production of an enormous amount of written material. Several letters - some of which ran into hundreds of folios each - were exchanged each year among the factors in India, The Governor-General-in-Council at Batavia and the Gentlemen XVII in Amsterdam. The letters from the Indian factories often carried bulky enclosures. A good bit of this material has survived and is preserved at the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

As one would expect, this material dealt primarily with commercial matters - instructions by Amsterdam and Batavia regarding the procurement of goods, reports by the factors stationed in India on the organization of production and procurement, the problems they encountered at the hands of the local merchants and so forth. But one also comes across a large amount of information pertaining to matters other than commercial, which might have attracted the attention of the narrator by reason of their association with matters of more immediate concern to the Company.

It was in recognition of the importance of these papers as a source material for Indian history - economic, social and political - that the Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, recently decided to launch a scheme for a selective publication of these documents in so far as they related to the factories in the Indian sub-continent. The documents would be edited and published in the English language with a view to optimize their use by researchers.

Some years ago, Dr. T. Raychauduri of Oxford University had prepared such a calendar of Dutch documents for the period 1607 - 1616. This volume is expected to be published soon. The scheme launched by the Council therefore begins with Vol. II to be edited and translated by myself and covering the years 1617 to 1625. During these years the Indian factories of the Company were on the Coromandel coast and in Gujarat. The Coromandel factories numbered four with the chief factory being at Fort Geldria in Pulicat. The chief factory in Gujarat was at Surat, which had administrative jurisdiction over the subordinate factors in Ahmedabad and Broach and the factory in Agra.

By the close of the first quarter of the seventeenth century the Company's trade on the Coromandel coast had been put on a secure footing. But in so far as the trade with Gujarat and north India was concerned, the years to be covered by Vol. II were formative years as the Company tried to find its feet in the area. The documents relating to these years contain information on a whole lot of issues in addition to matters directly concerned with the Company's trade in the two regions respectively. To take a few examples, one comes across a discussion of items such as the role of Indian slaves in Coen's scheme of colonizing Indonesia, the foreign trading activities of Indian and other Asian merchants, the various implications of local droughts and so on. In the administrative sphere, one finds information on the system of farming of state offices in Coromandel and on the working of the mansabdari system in the north. One also gets interesting and often detailed information on local conflicts and rebellions and the intrigues at the Mugual Court at Agra.

One would hope that these documents would have something to offer to the political and the social historian, though the chief beneficiary is likely to be the economic historian.

P.S. Dr. Prakash will report from time to time on the progress of the project.



U.S.A.

From John E. Wills we received the following communication:

In this first report as corresponding editor, I am not going to stay in the bounds of either studies in the U.S. or studies in the Far East. Rather, I am going to report on some dispersed developments in studies of European knowledge of the 'wider world' in early modern times, a topic which is not often kept in focus by students of European expansion.

The impact of the Americas on European consciousness down to the eighteenth century was the subject of an international scholarly conference at the University of California, Los Angeles, in February 1975. Many of the papers delivered at this conference have been published in:

Fredi Chiapelli, ed., *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, 2 vols. (University of California Press, 1976).

First images of the new world also received a good deal of attention in connection with the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976. The most interesting products of this interest I know of are: