The Legacy of French Rule in India (1674-1954):

An investigation of a process of Creolization

By Animesh Rai

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in French in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in French in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE LEGACY OF FRENCH RULE IN INDIA (1674-1954): AN INVESTIGATION OF A PROCESS OF CREOLIZATION

by

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It is merely an accident of history that India was a British colony rather than a French one. France, however, did occupy some enclaves scattered across the country. The French presence in India can be viewed as the symbol of a failed enterprise. What were the causes of this failure and what are its implications? Is it entirely insignificant?

This dissertation proposes to study the history of French presence in India from the beginning of colonization to present times. In particular, it will try to determine whether or not nearly three centuries of French presence in India has resulted in a new reality which makes the former French territories of India different from other parts of India.

This new reality is often known as creolization. What are the criteria which can be used to define creolization in these territories? Are these criteria relative or are they absolute? These are some of the questions which will be answered while examining the situation of the former French territories in the larger context of India.

The methodology used is an examination of the facts of history starting chronologically from the time of the commercial occupation and expansion of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales in these territories in the seventeenth century up to the time of the formal transfer of these territories to the Government of India and of its ratification in the French parliament in 1962. This historical analysis has been

complemented by field work undertaken by me in the former French territories during the summers of 2003, 2004 and 2005. The field work component of the dissertation was crucial in that it enabled me to assess the ground realities through interviews and conversations with the local people. The problematization of creolization in these territories is the underlying theme of the dissertation.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Distinguished Professor Edouard Glissant for his inspiring guidance of this intellectual enterprise. It is generally believed that a dissertation is the end of a particular scholarly endeavor. For me, the completion of this thesis is in reality a new beginning. I think that Professor Glissant has enabled me to lay the groundwork for probing the notion of creolization beyond the limits of its treatment within this dissertation. The writing of this thesis has made me particularly sensitive towards removing prejudices and keeping an open mind while carrying out a particular investigation. Certainly, the notion of creolization is foreign to the Indian collective unconscious. However, intellectual pursuits require a conscious breaking out of one's mould and manner of thinking. That requires effort and careful scrutinizing of one's acquired patterns of thought and viewpoints. I believe that in completing this work, I have merely touched the tip of an iceberg. I have indeed been more than fortunate and honored in having received the undivided attention of the top specialist in the world for the work that I have done. My conversations with Professor Glissant have always been a delight and a source of immense intellectual invigoration. Professor Glissant could inspire me to forget the rest of the world for days, weeks, months, years and to focus like a laser beam on just one problem in all its ramifications.

I wish to thank Professor Francesca Canadé Sautman for her dynamic leadership of the French Ph. D. program. She has been a pivotal factor in enabling me to bring to fruition my desire to acquire this academic degree. The dissertation is a partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Ph. D. Hence, as regards the other aspects of my development as a doctoral candidate, I have much to owe to Professor Sautman. I think that, overall, she has made the French Program a fun place to be in. Her non fossilized and rigorous approach to the development of the Program and of its members is exemplary and inspiring.

I wish to thank the faculty members with whom I have had direct dealings regarding matters about or other than my dissertation. Among them are Professors Blum, Brown, Caws, Di Scipio, Haller and Pryzbos of the French Ph.D. program and Ruth Misheloff, my former WAC coordinator at BMCC. I would also like to thank the rest of the faculty of the French Ph.D. Program whom I have known over the last few years. I wish to thank Carole Kulikowski, the Assistant Program Officer, for her adept guidance in handling the subtle intricacies of the department and Graduate Center machinery.

I wish to thank my colleagues in the French Ph.D. program. I have always enjoyed my conversations and interactions with them and have learned immensely from them. In reality, they were my friends and will always continue to be so.

I wish to thank all the people in the former French territories of India whom I got to know during my fieldwork there over a period of three consecutive summers. They are the people who have been mentioned in the dissertation and so I will not cite their names here. But thanks to the dissertation, I was able to widen my circle of friends to an extent to which I would not have been able to otherwise.

Lastly, I wish to thank my parents, Rajendra and Rani Rai, and my sister, Mridu, with whom I have had extensive discussions regarding my dissertation.

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Introduction:

Acculturation, Creolization, Indianization

For many years, India was controlled from London. What if it had been controlled from Paris? Would it have been different? Perhaps, this question can be answered very quickly by substituting in one's mind the French colonizer for the British and then making extrapolations. One would presumably be led to the conclusion that India would now be Francophone with French as its *lingua franca* and administrative, judicial, educational institutions modeled on France. The colonial experience would probably have been different in as much as the spirit of French colonialism was different from that of British colonialism. There would now be no cricket playing, gentlemanly Indians but rather ones with a Gallic outlook of a different kind.

Fortunately for us, we can be spared this level of imaginative effort as history was kind enough to leave a distinct, albeit marginal, French legacy in India. We do indeed have an actual laboratory in South India. As it so happens, its constituent parts are dispersed in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and for that matter, in West Bengal. What if we decided to focus on this laboratory? But then it would be a laboratory only in terms of our initial question. Can we say that it has a distinct reality which is different from the rest of mostly Anglophone India?

The existence of such a reality is often known as creolization. According to the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, creolization is "a broad anthropological term, which describes any coming together of diverse cultural traits or elements, usually in the context of the West Indies or Louisiana, to form new traits or elements. In the context of linguistics, creolization occurs when two or more languages converge to form a new,

indigenous language." As Salman Rushdie says, "Mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world."[1] It would be noteworthy to ponder on the diametrically opposite ways in which the notion of mixture is generally interpreted. On the one hand, it can be viewed as an enrichment but on the other hand, it can also be viewed as an impurity. What can be said about the former French territories of India? The level of intensity of creolization in the Caribbean, for example, is very high. Creolization occurs at different levels of the continuum in other parts of the world. When we reach India, in particular the former French territories, creolization is perhaps not very clear cut and evident at first glance. The time span for the French presence in India is very long: nearly three centuries from 1674 to 1954.

The Martinican writer and leading theorist of creolization, Edouard Glissant, has made a fundamental distinction between globalization and "mondialization".[2] While the forces of globalization strive to reduce everything to its lowest common denominator while striving for uniformity, "mondialization" is presented as that aspect of culture, which preserves our distinct individualities. The basic conflict between the two, according to Glissant, produces "plural, multiplying, fragment identities" which are no longer viewed as a problem but as a "huge opening and a new opportunity of breaking open closed gates."[3] The emergence of new identities resulting from this clash is what Glissant calls a "world in Creolization." For Glissant, creolization is not a simple cross breeding known as *métissage* in French and whose English language equivalent is *hybridity* as theorized by the Caribbean writers Wilson Harris and Edward Brathwaite but a dynamic process whose end results are unpredictable. It will be emphasized that the

[1] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (Hardmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 394.
[2] Edouard Glissant in "Local Histories/Global Designs" by Walter Mignolo, p. 40.
[3] Edouard Glissant in "Local Histories/Global Designs" by Walter Mignolo, p. 40.

element of *unpredictability* distinguishes creolization from *hybridity* and that creolization is considered to be an extreme form of *hybridity*.[4] Homi Bhabha also describes creolization as a dynamic process, which prevents the emergence of absolute identities.

In 1673, the Compagnie des Indes Orientales established an enclave in Pondicherry. François Martin is regarded as its founder. It was initially a lodge which he developed into an enclave and then into a town. According to the definition at the time, a lodge was a commercial installation in a place of which one was not the proprietor whereas an enclave was a territory of which one was the proprietor. The concession which had been obtained by François Martin from Chir Khan was never officialized. It was a *de facto* transfer as one would put it today which François Martin obtained in return for military services provided by him to Chir Khan.[5] François Martin was then recalled to Surat on the northwest coast. He returned from there in 1686 with the title of "Director of the Coromandel and Bengal Coasts and of places in the South where the Company would carry out its commercial activities." In 1688, François Martin obtained the authorization to engage in trade in Karaikal, an old town on the delta of the Cauvery, known in the country as the town of the mystical Shaivaite poetess Pounidavadiar of the 6th century whose alias was Karaikal. In 1690, the enclave of Chandernagore was founded whose original name was Chandannagar, "moon-town", so called because the river in this place forms an arc in the form of a crescent of the moon. In 1721, the French obtained a piece of land at the mouth of the Mahé river with the right to keep in place a garrison. In 1731, an enclave was created in Yanam.[6] Since 1701, the importance of

[4] As stated by Celia M. Britton in Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory, p. 16.

[5] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.21
[6] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 22

Pondicherry to the Compagnie des Indes Orientales was recognized. It became a headquarter. The Company, considering that owing to the increase in the extent of its commerce and of the number of its establishments the sovereign council established in Surat was not enough for its purposes, created another independent one in Pondicherry. Its jurisdiction extended to all those establishments which it had and could establish on the Hooghly and on the Coromandel coasts. As a result, the jurisdiction of Pondicherry extended to Chandernagore in Bengal, Karaikal and Yanam on the east coast and Mahé on the west coast.[7] These 5 enclaves are now collectively referred to as the former French territories of India. They also included 8 lodges: the 5 lodges of Cassimbazar, Jougdia (which has now been submerged by the sea), Dacca, Balassore and Patna all of which were dependent on Chandernagore, the lodge of Masulipatnam which was near Yanam, and the 2 lodges of Calicut (near Mahé) as well as the lodge of Surat also on the Malabar coast.

For the Compagnie des Indes Orientales, its organization in India differed profoundly from that of the Mascarenes. This was because the productions from Asia formed the essence of the commerce of the Company, in value as well as in volume, and then it consisted of densely populated regions, having a coherent political organization. The Establishments are usually presented according to their geographical location: the Coromandel coast in the South East, around Pondicherry, seat of the Conseil Supérieur and of the government, Bengal, with Chandernagore and a provincial council; the

[7] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 24

Malabar coast in the South West, with Mahé as headquarters, also the seat of a provincial council.[8]

On the Coromandel coast, the site of Pondicherry had very early on caught the attention of foreign powers who had come to trade in Asia: since the time of the Romans, it seems to have been occupied by merchants. That is because it offers many advantages. Undoubtedly the harbor is very accessible, as all those of this region, and the coast is low, sandy and cluttered with lagoons, but the mouth of a river created the possibility of penetration towards the interior, and above all the drinking water came naturally out of the land through artesian wells, a unique situation, which contributed towards the richness of the region. After 1617, the French attempted to settle in Pondicherry; dislodged the following year, they tried on several occasions, during the 17th century, to re-establish themselves, in spite of the hostility of the Danes and the Dutch. French occupation became definitive in 1697, when Holland recognized it through the treaty of Ryswick.[9]

The territory of the town of Pondicherry does not form a coherent whole. It consists of a series of enclaves, acquired at random due to circumstances in three great phases. In the first phase, in 1697, François Martin had bought back from the Dutch the rights which he had obtained previously from the nabab of Arcot, on the town and the nearby land; then from 1702 to 1710, the Compagnie des Indes Orientales had taken, against an annual tax payable to the nabab, successively the village of Calapett, whose forest provided the wood necessary for the constructions of Pondicherry, the garden of

[8] Philippe Haudrère, La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIIIe siècle (1719-1795), Tome 1, p. 297
[9] Philippe Haudrère, La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIIIe siècle (1719-1795), Tome 1, pp. 297-299

Oulgarett, and the land of Mourgapacom. In the second phase in 1740, the nabab, in order to thank the governor Benoit-Dumas for his protection against the Mahratta invaders, had granted him everything which he could extract from the lands of Archiouac, Cottecoupom and Villenour, the head of the French establishments had hastened to cede these territories to the Company. In the third phase in 1750, the French received the lands of Bahour and Valdaour with their dependencies. At this time, the total area of the territory was 29.000 hectares in fourteen enclaves. It is difficult to form a precise idea of the nature and the extent of the ceded rights. According to the terms of the grant, the trader had the right to collect the existing taxes of all kinds, that is in general the basic tax, indirect contributions, customs duties, and he could also create new ones; he could put in place a police force and administer justice, mint coins, consolidate the lands of which he had become the proprietor. In fact, these concessions became what the traders wanted them to be: under the authority of an active Company and under the flag of the King of France, they became, in the face of the weak Indian authorities, foreign territories.[10]

The town can be situated in the Portuguese colonial tradition: it combined a port, fort and lodgings, and one could distinguish a well-defined "white" town, with a regular plan, according to the expressed wishes of the directors of the Company, and a "black" town. On the sea side was the elevated zone of the white town, established on the ancient dunes at the center of which was erected the fort; to the west of the white town was a depressed middle zone, an ancient lagoon which was being filled in and which was moderately drained by the Ariancoupam river, then the land rose towards the Indian

[10] Philippe Haudrère, La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIIIe siècle (1719-1795), Tome 1, pp. 299-302

town, which was previously located to the south of the white town, and transferred to the West, on more stable and available land during the course of the 18th century.[11]

An initial principle guided the administrators in charge of developing the town: to impress the imagination of the natives by an urbanism of quality, by the choice of good materials of construction, by the development of important buildings. In 1719, Father Bouchet observed that the houses of Europeans were built of bricks whereas those of Indians were only of earth coated with lime. Eleven years later, the mayor Simon de La Farelle remarked that this town had gained much. Earlier, the people used to construct their houses in wood and in earth; Mr. Lenoir decided to build only in bricks and to cover only with tiles; and one built magnificient houses and in large numbers. The verdant appearance of the town struck an officer who said that all the streets were planted with trees on both sides, which was of a charming aspect and soon after the sailor J.F. de Gennes exclaimed that this was properly speaking neither a town, nor the country, or rather it was one and the other together. This optimistic picture was nuanced by the long description of a specialist, the engineer Charpentier de Cossigny, who was closer perhaps to reality, even if his judgment was often characterized by systematic denigration. He said that there was no minister, no engineer in France, who, seeing the plan of Pondicherry, would not imagine that this was one of the most beautiful cities in the world: it was a multitude of symmetrical houses, of long and wide aligned streets, straight as a die and mostly planted with trees; they were dressed canals, gardens, ponds.[12]

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[11] Philippe Haudrère, La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIIIe siècle (1719-1795), Tome 1, p.302
[12] Philippe Haudrère, La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIIIe siècle (1719-1795), Tome 1, pp. 302-303

At first, the potential for an outward and sustained expansion of French influence in India was very high. By the middle of the 18th century, this potential reached its peak. During the 19th century, the scope for French expansion was drastically curtailed by British constriction of the powers of the French. The French territories of India were relegated to the same scale, if not an even smaller one, as other overseas French territories such as Martinique, Guadeloupe and the Reunion Islands. The former French territories of India could perhaps be viewed as the extreme case of the situation in the other overseas French territories. The scale of priorities given to the former French territories of India by the metropolitan government in France can be judged by the fact that the formal transfer of these territories to the Government of India did not take place until 1954 after the withdrawal of France from Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam. Furthermore, the cession of these territories was not legally ratified by the French parliament until after the resolution of the Algerian crisis in 1962. The insignificance of these enclaves in the larger French national interest can thus not be denied.

The uniqueness of these territories lies in the fact that after decolonization they became neither an independent, sovereign state nor part of France as, for example, a *Département d'Outre Mer* but instead were ceded to another sovereign state namely India. This implies that there was no scope for them to develop either their own national identity as a function of their history or to reaffirm their nexus with France, its language and culture. They were instead absorbed by the Indian Union.

The presence of French power and the progressive association of the inhabitants to this power created human links which would make their effects felt on the turn of events. During the period of installation and expansion, even though there may have

been narrow individual relations between French and Indians, the relations between the communities remained very distant: buyers-sellers, rulers-ruled, employers-employees. At the time of the revolt of the sepoys in July 1857 in British India, a wave of insecurity took hold of the British in India. The event also frightened somewhat the Governor of Pondicherry. On this occasion, the French population and the Indian population sent him messages. The one signed by the Europeans, numbering 61, asked him for arms and ammunitions to organize an uprising against the eventual invasion of the town by a group of looters. That of Indians consisting of 440 signatures expressed complete solidarity.[13]

After the Revolution, the relationships changed and it is the Indians who took the initiative. They wanted to be recognized as full members of the city. Their representatives asked the representatives of the Europeans to accept them among them. They met the governor on more than one occasion. They expressed their loyalty and support in this time of turmoil and announced their demands. The parliamentary representation attempted under the 2nd Republic and continued under the 3rd Republic was the first tangible expression of the desire of France to have a democratic link with the colony. The population did have to pay a price for it. Each time that there was a question of the transfer of the Establishments, voices were raised vigorously in opposition and to express the profound attachment of the population to France.[14]

In spite of their meager resources, the Establishments sent financial aid to metropolitan France during the War of 1870 and that of 1914. In like manner, France had given money when big natural disasters such as cyclones and food shortages had

[13] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp.136-137

[14] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.137

devastated the territory. The general mobilization during the war of 1914 took place against this background of strengthening ties. The Pondicherrians fought with the French to defend the mother country. On the day of the armistice, they participated together in the general euphoria and exhilaration. Pondicherrian soldiers were embraced by Parisians. All those who took part in the war were no longer the same men when they returned. France was no longer a mythical country for them whose history and geography one studied in books. It somewhat became their own country whose people and landscapes filled their memories. At the beginning of the Second World War, the general mobilization had already been decreed and preparatory measures for sending the soldiers were in progress when news of the capitulation reached them, provoking a general consternation. As soon as the free French forces were put into place, a large number of volunteers took part and fought in the Middle East and in Tripolitania.[15]

The common history of nearly three centuries with political and economic ties thus created individual links of friendship between the inhabitants of the Establishments and the French. French education was modeled on the spirit of the local elite. Hence, when India attained its Independence, the Establishments were very well knit sentimentally and intellectually to France. They were also very well knit to India viscerally and culturally. Furthermore, the Establishments were not self sufficient in essential products; they depended for everything on India and lived in a symbiotic relationship with her. Essential services such as Posts and Telegraphs were in the hands of India. The media were all Indian. This double belonging was well known to France; she banked on pro-French sentiments when she wanted to prolong her presence. But the Indian authorities were completely ignorant of the reality and could not understand that

[15] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.137

the inhabitants of French India could hesitate even for a single moment to merge into India. Not realizing that newly independent India still remained English on many counts, she was annoyed by the desire of inhabitants of French India to retain their French character for an entire generation. It was the main cause of the useless and unpleasant events preceding the transfer.[16]

Until India's independence, there was no anti-French movement in Pondicherry. The local nationalists brought their modest contribution to the liberation of India from British domination. Indian leaders advised them not to do anything hostile to the French as the latter gave shelter to Indian patriots who had taken refuge in the enclaves and who continued the struggle from these secure places. Suddenly, when Independence from Britain became certain, the Indian press began a violent diatribe against what they called foreign pockets in India. Soon after Independence, the Indian Government declared in its turn that it did not recognize the rights of France on the enclaves. Local nationalists pointed their guns at French colonialism. The rest of the population became aware of the problem. The French government was aware of the situation created by the British. It quickly realized that it would probably be compelled to follow them out of India.[17]

The Congress Party's policy towards these possessions as well as the Portuguese occupation of Goa was officially stated in 1948 in the Jaipur Resolution:[18]

> with the establishment of independence in India, the continued existence of any foreign possession in India becomes anomalous and opposed to the conception of India's unity and freedom. Therefore, it has become necessary for these possessions to be politically incorporated with India, and no other solution can be stable or lasting or in conformity with the will of the people. The Congress trusts that this change will be brought about soon by peaceful methods and the friendly co-operation of the Governments concerned.

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[16] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.138
[17] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.141
[18] William Miles, Imperial Burdens, p.59

Decolonization could be envisaged but one had to take into account the repercussions in the other colonies. Furthermore, in as much as the Establishments were concerned, it was not simply a question of giving them Independence. India claimed them by right. The issue became more complicated due to the fact that there were three concernced parties instead of two. The most interested party was naturally the population. What was the opinion of its representatives? The elections in Pondicherry took place before Independence from India; they revolved on the administration of the territory and not about its future. There were two tendencies within the Representative Assembly elected in 1946, one which was anti-colonial and the other conservative. They all had in common the desire to merge with India with a large autonomy and to perpetuate the French heritage. Each reacted in its own manner to the turn of events of which both the governments held the strings.The second party was France, which held the sovereignty of the territories. In the French parliament, there existed all the different trends of opinion ranging from the continuation of the Empire to the partisans of the principle of the people's right to determine their own future. As events proceeded, the majority would lean towards decolonization. Even the government was divided; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was inclined towards establishing good relations with independent India whereas the "Ministère de la France d'Outre Mer" was opposed to dismantling the French empire. The third party, which did not exist in the other colonies, was India which wanted to get back the territories. It was then torn by partition, exposed to the problem of Kashmir, and busy assimilating a large number of princely states which had been semi-independent until then. Its primary preoccupation was to get back the foreign possessions which seemed to pose a threat to its victorious nationalism. Even

here there were two trends, one wanting to rapidly incorporate the French establishments dispersed in their respective neighboring states and the other not having any objection about keeping them as a separate entity for some time.[19]

On 28 August 1947, France and India through a joint declaration expressed their desire to amicably settle the future of the enclaves. On 6 October 1947, the 8 lodges were returned to France without any formalities. There remained the 5 enclaves. The French Overseas Ministry declared on 18 June 1948 in the French national assembly that the government would grant the population of the enclaves the right to self-determination; in this regard a consultation would be organized in accordance with the municipal councils of each enclave; the results of this consultation would be valid for each enclave separately. This decision was accepted by the government of India by an exchange of letters dated 29 June1948.[20]

Meanwhile, a strong movement for liberation had manifested itself in Chandernagore which had never been able to tolerate the tutelage of Pondicherry. The enclave was declared a free town in the administrative framework of French India by a decree of 7 November 1947. On 20 January 1948, the town claimed its right to secede for deciding its future subsequently. On 4 December, it asked to be merged with India as soon as possible, a transition period of 5 years and subsequently, a maximum of administrative and financial autonomy. The assembly of the free town of Chandernagore was united on 10 March 1949 to determine the date and modalities of the referendum which was fixed for 19 June 1949. There were 7500 votes for merger and 114 against. The cession of the territory was to take place in 2 months pending the signing of the

[19] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 141-142
[20] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 142

treaty. As the law and order situation had deteriorated, France requested India to take *de facto* charge of the territory on 2 May 1950.[21]

It had been decided right from the beginning that the future of the other establishments would be decided by a referendum. The need to consult the population had been recognized by both parties. But India retracted when it seemed that the result would not have been favorable to it. The population was not interested in the referendum for various reasons. The Members of the Congress Party in a resolution of the convention of the people of French India had declared in 1948[22]:

> *Elle (la convention) réprouve toute idée de tenir un référendum, parce que c'est une insulte et un défi au droit moral de notre peuple de rejoindre nos propres parents et amis.*[23]

Others foresaw a pure and simple retreat of French power to allow the population to decide about its merger at an appropriate time. The rest of the population was in favor of a cession agreement drafted by a tripartite commission which would be submitted for popular approval. They estimated that the referendum which would require a choice between France and India would lead to a campaign of denigration of France on one side and of India on the other and which would be unpleasant for everyone. In France as well, some politicians thought that the political relations between France and India risked deteriorating.[24]

France, invoking constitutional reasons, had made the referendum a *sine qua non* condition for the determination of the future of French India. But circumstances forced

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[21] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 142-143

[22] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.152
[23] *Jeunesse*, Vol. 1, No 4 du 31-08-48.
[24] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p.152

the Minister of Overseas France to declare to the National Assembly on 27 August 1954 that the consent of the population scheduled by the Constitution was not a synonym for a referendum. But the Minister, who found himself in an impasse, could validly state that circumstances did not permit such a consultation and furthermore, that this being a *de facto* transfer and not strictly speaking a formal cession of the territories, a prior consultation of the population was not necessary. The logical and legal solution would have been to submit the subsequent Treaty of Cession for approval by the population. In this case, the treaty would have been drawn up while taking into account the wishes of the population. Everything would then have been legal. However, the Treaty of Cession was subsequently ratified without this consent of the population. The Treaty of Cession is considered to be a mere formality.[25]

Moreover, in order to lend credence to the vote of the representatives, their legitimacy had to be irreproachable. However, the elections of the municipal counselors in 1948 had led to allegations of intimidation, violence and electoral fraud of a high degree. The reports indicated a massive majority for the winning party. Lastly, when a text is presented to an assembly, it is normally asked to deliberate on it. At Kijéour, the members of Congress did not have any choice but to approve on 18 October an agreement whose terms had already been decided without them and where they did not have the right to suggest the slightest modification.[26]

According to the terms of the treaty, the government of India *de facto* took charge of the administration of the territories starting from 1 November 1954. India and France

[25] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp.152-153

[26] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 153

congratulated themselves on having resolved the question by the sole means of negotiation. Naturally, there had been no bloodshed; but one cannot deny the fact that the population had to suffer the consequences of an economic blockade imposed by India in response to French intransigence about re-establishing a customs union between the two countries and of the shock that this brutal transfer represented in terms which precluded its participation. The government of India suffered substantial financial losses and alienated the population. France, on the other hand, for having procrastinated had been cornered into accepting an unexpected and humiliating retreat by disregarding the constitutional principles which she had brandished until then. However, the question was simple and easy to resolve. The population through its delegates had manifested its desire for merger with a transition period in terms elaborated through tripartite negotiations; but the High Contracting Parties proved to be obstinately resistant.[27]

The Pondicherrians had seen in co-sovereignty a short term solution to the problem of the French establishments in India. India had always been fiercely opposed to it, not wanting to tolerate any kind of foreign sovereignty on its soil. But a form of co-sovereignty took shape on its request, with France having legal sovereignty over the territories and India an actual one, and this lasted for 8 years. French institutions were still officially in place and yet the Indian system began to function by adapting itself to a foreign mold.[28]The new government was conscious of the fact that the vote in favor of the *de facto* transfer had not been obtained in normal conditions, nor with the wholehearted consent of the people. The population had mixed feelings at the thought of

[27] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 154

[28] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 155

being ruled by those who had just subjected them to a blockade and who were viewed as being the successors of the British, who had on many occasions ravaged Pondicherry and whom the inhabitants considered to be their traditional enemies, as one had moreover always taught them that. The Representative Assembly and the Government Council had been dissolved, the new administration was isolated and it had to make itself accepted.[29]

The Indian administration, which had already felt the lack of enthusiasm of the population for the transfer, took note of the expressed votes and redoubled its efforts to make itself accepted. In this effort, India revived development programs. The latter were able to create a bridge with the people, as they provided jobs to young graduates and considerable aid to agriculturists. Schools and clinics were opened. The Indian government was not sparing in this effort. In high places, the officials thought that given the small size of the territory, one could invest all the money which was necessary and to make of it a trial laboratory for the development program of India. These efforts bore fruit; the population began to forget its grievances.[30]

India and France rapidly concluded the Cession Treaty which was signed by the two parties on 28 May 1956, yet again without having consulted the representatives of the people of Pondicherry. It was more or less the reproduction of the *de facto* transfer agreement. Provisions on nationality were added, provisions which had become obsolete were removed. Many important points were not addressed. One can discern a lack of interest on the part of both parties. In Pondicherry, even those who were in favor of merger expected a clear improvement and were disappointed by the lacunae and imperfections of the treaty. They rightly feared the overpowering weight of the Indian

[29] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 156
[30] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 157-158

administrative machinery and would have wanted written guarantees. The pro-French, encouraged by the results of the election which took place after the transfer, undertook a campaign drawing attention to the irregularity of the treaty. Their main argument was the absence of a referendum. They wanted to delay the ratification of the treaty. They claimed a modification of the treaty in order to conserve as much as possible of the past. They were in favor of double nationality, of a period of transition of 25 years, of trading privileges, and of a larger autonomy.[31]

The Treaty of Cession was ratified two days later by the signature of the Indian government. But in France, the ratification had to be made by the Parliament.[32] After the Evian accords, the problem of Pondicherry was taken up. It was admitted that there had been inadequacies in the treaty relative to the guarantees to be granted to the transferred population. An agreement of principle was made between the two governments that changes of principle could be made after the ratification of the treaty by means of a supplementary instrument. After this understanding, the treaty was ratified by the French parliament in July 1962; the exchange of the instruments of ratification took place on 16 August 1962, making that the date of the *de jure* transfer. As agreed, France proposed to India certain additional provisions to the treaty and India accepted nearly all of them without any difficulty. They were incorporated in a supplementary agreement signed on 13 March 1963. Hence there had actually been a brief, unexpected but useful transition period during which the population could adjust itself to the new dispensation.[33]

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[31] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 158
[32] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 158
[33] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 160

After the *de jure* transfer, every one was looking for the best path towards the future. There was, first of all, an important choice to make. According to the Treaty of Cession, the territory became legally Indian and the inhabitants became Indian nationals. The treaty gave the right to opt for French nationality to those who wished to remain French; in this regard, they had to make a declaration at the French consulate within a period of six months. Little by little as the fateful date of 16 February approached after which the Pondicherrians would become irrevocably Indians, their nervousness increased. This right to opt became problematic for the French Pondicherrians to whom the two countries were equally valuable. They were Indians by race, language and manner of living. Would they take the necessary steps to go and register at the French consulate but with the result of having to repatriate themselves in a distant country, which was known to be cold and towards an uncertain future? On the other hand, their studies had been in French, their qualifications were French and they had been imbued with French culture. Would they remain in their ancestral land but with the thought of having to adapt themselves to their racial counterparts from whom they had distanced themselves through three centuries of history and with a future which was as uncertain? They faced a real dilemma. Their anguish increased. When the last day arrived, the most indecisive among them had to make up their minds. At the closing time of the consulate, the line before the door was very long; the closing time of offices was reported to be at midnight. At this time, many of them still waited, they were asked to enter and the door closed behind them.[34]

ASSIMILATION BY FRANCE + PONDICHERRIANS = FRANCO-PONDICHERRIANS. The Franco-Pondicherrians who are conversant with French

[34] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 160-161

culture are, in my opinion, creolized. Their Indian origins combined with the French influence on them make them unique in that they are like the natives of other former French colonies with the sole difference that their "Frenchness" is permeated by their unique "Indianness." However, in numerical terms, their presence dwindles to nothingness. There are currently approximately 8000 Indians of French nationality in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. They are also referred to as *optants*, after having opted to take up French nationality six months after the *de jure* transfer in 1962 of the territories of Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam to India. Of these, only approximately 2000 are actually French speaking or have links with France through pensions, which they receive from the French government, or through family members living in metropolitan France. With over a million people in the entire Union Territory of Pondicherry and over a billion in all of India, they are indeed curious oddities.

Among those who opted, there were descendents of Europeans, the local civil servants who knew about the possibility of integrating themselves in the metropolitan services which many of them had not even dreamed of, the families of French soldiers and metropolitan civil servants who were serving elsewhere and finally, the domestic servants of Europeans. In 1963, there were 4944 *optants* both men and women, the children being included in the option exercised by their parents.[35]

While in 1962, at the time of the cession of the territory, most of the Pondicherrians hesitated a great deal about leaving for France and for this reason did not opt for French nationality, in the years that followed the situation progressively reversed itself. First of all, the civil servants and the soldiers who were serving in Indo China, those from the establishments who opted for French nationality, the young people who

[35] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 161

had received a French education and who wanted to have their degrees accredited all settled down in France and in overseas French territories by force of circumstances. It appeared to them that their stay in France was possible; they invited their relatives. The Indian rupee which was at that time a strong currency became a weak currency since it detached itself from the pound sterling. The franc which was a weak currency became a strong currency at the end of the Algerian war. The attraction of France since then became irresistible. So many children since then have reproached their parents for not having opted for French nationality, without taking into account the fact that circumstances were not the same at that time. Since the 1980s if, by some loophole in the treaty, one happened to be of French nationality, this status was quickly taken advantage of. If one was not French, one had to become French at all costs, either by adoption, marriage or by some fraudulent means.[36]

The absorption, apart from Chandernagore, of these territories by the Indian Union was distinctive. Chandernagore, through a referendum in 1948 on the part of its inhabitants, became an integral part of the state of West Bengal. As for Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam according to the second article of the 1956 Treaty of Cession, these territories would constitute a single administrative entity based on their historical links with France until the populations of these territories decided otherwise. The desire to preserve this single administrative entity as per the requirements of this article led to the creation of the Union Territory of Pondicherry to be administered centrally from New Delhi as opposed to Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam being integrated into the neighboring states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

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[36] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 161

The fact of Pondicherry being a union territory implies that it is administered centrally by New Delhi. As a result, it receives large subsidies from the latter. This makes the units of the Union Territory more prosperous than adjoining areas in their respective states. This prosperity, which can be witnessed, for example, in the form of better roads to name but the most visible aspects of it has also led to people in the adjoining states flocking to the units of the Union Territory of Pondicherry. For example, in the case of Yanam this has in recent times led to a four-fold increase in migration of people from the adjoining state of Andhra Pradesh to it. The economic advantage of being a union territory which is a clear legacy of French rule is a distinct reality even though as a result of this economic distinctiveness, the migration of hordes of people to Yanam, for example, can be said to further erode the French character of Yanam by "Indianizing" it further.

I would like to suggest that in this case FRENCH+INDIAN STATES (TAMIL NADU+ KERALA+ ANDHRA PRADESH) = UNION TERRITORY OF PONDICHERRY. The Union territory of Pondicherry is a resultant, which is different from the starting components, namely French and the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh and is, in effect, a new reality. This satisfies the definition of creolization. While what has been creolized is something which is abstract namely the administrative structure of the Union Territory, its reality can be perceived in its distinctiveness from the adjoining states in the form of manifestations of its prosperity such as better constructed roads, a lower tax structure and the abundance of liquor shops due to the low cost of alcohol.

After the *de jure* transfer, one had to integrate Pondicherry constitutionally into the Indian Union. In the original Constitution, the Indian Union consisted of four categories of states:

1. The states A which were the former provinces administered by the British government and which were endowed with a parliamentary form by the *Government of India Act* of 1935.
2. The states B which were the former princely states of large size under the British protectorate.
3. The states C which were the former princely states of small size under the British protectorate.
4. The Union Territories, in other words small territories administered directly by the British government.

When the establishments had been transferred *de facto* in 1954, the Indian government thought of temporarily giving them the status of a class C state. Before the *de jure* transfer took place, there was a radical modification of the structure of the Indian Union. The policy of the Congress Party, which had been stated well before India's Independence, was to redo the political map of India by forming member states on a linguistic basis. A commission had been named for this purpose. Following the recommendations of this commission, the constitution was revised on November 1, 1956, setting up only one class of states and some union territories. The last category was thus the only one for which Pondicherry was eligible. Goa was already one.[37]

By the constitutional amendment of 28 December 1962 (14th amendment), Pondicherry was placed on the list of states and territories which, with effect from 16th

[37] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 168

August 1962, formed part of the Indian Union listed in the annex of the constitution. It was naturally put in the Union Territories category. Some parts of India which were also classified in this category complained of their near colonial status including Goa. The representatives of Pondicherry stressed that their status was inferior to that which they had enjoyed under the French.[38] All this led the Indian government to modify the Constitution with respect to the status of Union territories to make of them political entities of the Indian Union endowed with a certain autonomy. *The Union Territories Act* of 1963, which was voted following this modification, endowed them with a legislative assembly and a council of ministers answerable to them. These institutions replaced the representative Assembly as well as the Government Council of Pondicherry. These modifications took place without prior consultation of the population, but the politicians there were in agreement. The *Chief Commissioner* gave way to an administrator with the title of *Lieutenant Governor* of the new Union Territory.[39]

The process of integration began from this time onwards. The previously cited law of 1963 gave the legislative assembly, which had taken the place of the representative assembly, the power to adopt one or more languages used in the territory or Hindi as the official language and stipulated that, as long as a decision of this kind had not been made, French would continue as the official language. But it stipulated that the deliberations of the assembly would take place in the official languages of the territory or in Hindi or in English. Every member would be authorized by the President to express themselves in their mother tongue even if it had not been declared as an official language. The text specified that all the laws and regulations had to be drawn up in English. Even

[38] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 168
[39] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 168-169

if the assembly had voted a text in another language, the text to be adopted would be the translation in English published under the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor. In fact, the drafts of texts and resolutions were prepared by civil servants who were at home only in English. The assembly did not make any immediate decision concerning the official language which remained, in theory, French. But the law has considerably reinforced the place of English without the elected representatives expressing their views one way or another, as was required by the treaty.[40]

Within the administration, the integration which had begun during the *de facto* régime was intensified. One no longer thought of managing a transition but of removing the local particularities. This was symbolized by the request to remove the statue of Dupleix which the French consulate was then obliged to accommodate. With development projects on the rise, many officials of all categories and specializations were recruited and most of these had received an Indian education. This also had the effect of attracting more people from other parts of India. The Indian government, realizing that this was the best way to fuse the former French enclaves with the rest of India, continued to infuse substantial investments in Pondicherry. The administration was completely Indianized with English as its exclusive language. All the books in French were removed from some offices in order to accommodate the newly acquired books in English. The archives in offices were destroyed as no one was able to make use of them. Even the fine colonial furniture was relegated to the verandas and exposed to the bad weather to make way for the modern furniture. Prime Minister Nehru had sincerely wished that Pondicherry would remain a spot in India where French would retain its privileged

[40] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 168-169

position, but his subordinates did not share this view point. After his death in 1964, they had room for manoeuvre.[41]

This evolution considerably perturbed the civil servants who were posted at the time of the transfer and had within their hands the entire administration. These civil servants had a superiority complex with respect to the new Anglophone civil servants, a complex which was in part justified by the fact that with the same degrees, they considered themselves to be more capable. They could easily switch to English whereas their Anglophone counterparts could hardly speak French. For a certain period of time, there was a rivalry and veiled animosity between the civil servants of earlier times known as the "ex-French staff" and the new ones. This rivalry was exacerbated by the fact that the older civil servants received for the same work a salary which was above that which was set for the new recruits to which one applied the pay scales of the neighboring state. Later on, this situation took a new turn; their salaries not having been increased to take into account the increase in the cost of living became less than those of their new colleagues whose salaries received regular increments. The ex-French civil servants then preferred to be paid according to Indian pay scales. Hence was accomplished the integration in the civil service.[42]

The politicians and the ex-French civil servants were disappointed by this rapid modification; they imagined that French would prevail here as English in the rest of India. Even the nationalist militants were of the same opinion. In their periodical, under the title "ce que nous voulons," one can read the following two sentences[43]:

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[41] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 169-170
[42] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 170

[43] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 171

> "*Le gouvernement indien assurera l'administration extérieure du territoire: Affaires Etrangères, Défense, Communication et P.T.F, Douane…*
>
> *L'Administration intérieure appartiendra au peuple de l'Inde française. Notre territoire conservera donc son autonomie, sa personnalité, ses institutions et sa culture…"*[44]

Thus this frenzied integration caused great disillusionment among those who were staunchly for the transfer and who had worked for it. "We felt otherwise" were the words which were on everyone's lips. Many of the former civil servants of the French régime, who had opted for French nationality, got themselves integrated in the corresponding metropolitan services and left the territory, thus hastening the integration process. One can assert that one of the main reasons why Pondicherry lost its French character so rapidly was the attraction of French salaries.[45]

The integration having taken place briskly, it was natural to think of merging the enclaves with the neighboring states from which they could hardly be distinguished. Everyone thought that this was the logical outcome of the merger with India. The political circles in Delhi thought so and those in Madras even more so. For the people of Delhi, the question in the beginning revolved around getting back the enclaves and in this respect to reassure the population. The people of Madras were naturally more in favor of a rapid integration, but they subsequently modified their stance for two main reasons: in order to win the elections in Pondicherry, one had to promise the population the continuation of the *status quo*; secondly this part of Tamil Nadu was developing rapidly owing to the large sums of money invested by the central government and this was as much gained by the state of Tamil Nadu of which Pondicherry would end up becoming a part or so they thought. Merger or not, Pondicherry lives at the same frequency as Tamil

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[44] *Jeunesse*, Numéro special du 7 janvier 1949, page 2.
[45] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 171

Nadu; hence the struggle of 1964 against the Hindi language saw the same level of hostility and the instructions for it came from Madras.[46]

In 1979, it was thought within influential political circles in Delhi that it was time to proceed with merger into the neighboring states. As soon as the question was raised, a violent agitation took place. Ironically, it is those who settled in the territories after the transfer who were the most relentless and ready to fight. This was because they had developed important personal connections and business interests whose continuation required the maintenance of the *status quo* whereas the former inhabitants of these territories who had nothing more to lose remained relatively calm. When there was a threat to the status of a separate territory, the local politicians regretted the hasty integration which they had allowed the administration to complete. They reversed the trend and they tried to bring back into fashion the trivial aspects of the old Pondicherry, in an artificial manner, by visible acts. They tried very hard to highlight very French names, for example, "Mairie" and "café." They began renaming the streets with French names such as François Martin, Dumas. The French consulate was requested to place the statue of Dupleix on the sea side. What shows the superficial character of the change was the objection raised from all parts when an attempt was made to name the corner where his statue was placed Dupleix square on the occasion of his bicentenary. Before the transfer, the Pondicherrians who feared a traumatic integration had pleaded for a transition period of 25 years. If it had been accepted, one could have put in place the terms and conditions of the transition. As the concerned parties rejected this solution and

[46] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, p. 171

jealously kept the representatives of Pondicherry at a distance from their talks, the merger took place in a savage and brutal manner.[47]

In order for creolization to occur, one can ask oneself if there should be a critical mass of the foreign culture, which could significantly affect its permeation into the indigenous culture. The possibility of creolization in the former French territories of India began when the Compagnie des Indes Orientales set foot in India. The first chapter of the dissertation analyzes the activities of the French East India Company, which gradually percolated itself into the local soil by setting up an administrative and trading apparatus that would enable it to become a profit making enterprise. Dupleix, when at the head of the French government in the French territories, saw beyond the need to make immediate profits and envisioned a greater role for France in India in terms of establishing an empire. This role was based on the idea of developing a hinterland, which would deepen the scope of French influence and in the long-term lead to greater profits for the Company. But the stockholders of the East India Company were not as far sighted as Dupleix and could not see beyond the need to make immediate profits. This led to the recall of Dupleix and to the decline of French influence in these territories.

The second chapter is concerned with bringing out the salient features of the nineteenth century when France was fully at the mercy of the British who had reduced the French territories of India to the role of mere trading posts and ensured that they would remain in a subsidiary state from which they would never be able to extricate themselves. This chapter also points out the all-pervasive influence of the caste system in Indian society and how the attempt by the French to assimilate the natives met with formidable resistance from the caste system. The imposition of universal suffrage turned

[47] David Annousamy, L'intermède français en Inde, pp. 171-172

out to be a double-edged sword, which was effectively used by the proponents of Brahmanism to assert their supremacy in Indian society. Only the pariahs, or outcastes, were in favor of renouncing their personal status and of acquiring French citizenship.

The third chapter looks at the contemporary situation in the former French enclaves. It begins by looking at the situation in the early part of the 20th century when Chandernagore was suffused with the spirit of nationalism and made it inevitable that it would merge into the state of West Bengal in 1948. In this chapter, I have tried to formulate notions of identity. What is Pondicherry like today? I have attempted to bring out the contemporary situation as I saw it during the summers of 2003, 2004 and 2005. I have relied on interviews with the local people and on extensive conversations with members of the Franco-Pondicherrian community. I was all along looking for the French connection. I was trying to see how the French influence has seeped into the present day situation of Pondicherry. There is, of course, the Indian Pondicherry , that is, that aspect of Pondicherry which resembles India in general but there is also that part which makes it different. My investigation of creolization was motivated by this fundamental dichotomy. Certainly there is a tension between these two aspects and I have all along tried to come to grips with this tension.

This chapter is also concerned with determining the significance of the *traces* of French culture remaining in the given environment. What is their role in the daily lives of people? Are they a residue from the past contributing merely to the coloring of the landscape? Or do these elements lead to a synthesis at a microscopic level? According to Edouard Glissant, a *trace* is what, in a particular culture, subsists of a lost culture in the unconscious of those who belong to that culture such as, for example, African rhythms in

American jazz or African syntax in Creole. Furthermore, Glissant states that *traces* are *imprints*, which are not *imperative*, do not determine *cultural immobilities* and do not trigger *cultural sectarianisms*. When I arrived in Pondicherry in the summer of 2003, I noticed red *kepis* of policemen, French street names, churches such as *Notre Dame des Anges*, the statue of *Jeanne D'Arc*, shops such as *Philips-Compagnie Commerciale Indo-Française*, the *Romain Rolland* Library, the *Lyçée Français*, *L'Institut Français*, the *Ecoles Indiennes a Programmes Français*, the periodical *Le Trait D'Union,* men playing *pétanque* and French meals in various restaurants. These are just some of the visible traces.

When people in India think of Pondicherry today, they vaguely associate it with a French past. They associate it with the Aurobindo Ashram where they flock in great numbers for pilgrimage to the shrine of Shri Aurobindo, the revolutionary turned mystic who migrated to Pondicherry as a refugee from Chandernagore where he had been pursued by British soldiers as a terrorist. His erstwhile companion, the Mother, was of French origin. The Ashram school bears the imprint of her French influence still as French is a medium of instruction there. The abundance of liquor shops in Pondicherry and the other enclaves of the Union territory give it a certain sense of liberality. Some old French colonial buildings are an attractive sight for tourists in the old White Town where there are still French street names. Policemen wear red kepis. It is a charming town by the sea, which makes for an enjoyable vacation.

The fourth chapter is an investigation of the role of language in creolization. I view language as the essence of a culture. According to some opinions of people who were interviewed by me during field trips to the former French enclaves during the

summers of 2003, 2004 and 2005, the already existing traditional, classical and highly developed Tamil language in Pondicherry did not allow the French language to deform Tamil. The French language was thus essentially "filtered" by the strength of Tamil. This chapter looks at the status of French in an environment where there are many other languages in addition to the major European language, namely, English. I have attempted to examine the dynamism of languages in India by studying its politics since the time of Independence. If there has been creolization, how has the French language permeated the linguistic sphere? And if there has been no creolization, can we say that French has been swallowed up in the vortex of other languages? The impact of the other Indian languages and cultures and of English on the former French enclaves becomes significant in the light of a study conducted by Professors Madanagobalane (Madras University) and Krishnamurthy (University of Pondicherry)[48], which reveals that in the multilingual Indian universe (18 official languages and 1652 regional languages), French is not the first language of choice. In fact, since the beginning of the 1950s, the policy of the Indian government has been to enforce a "three-language" policy in an attempt to promote national integration. Having been revised several times (1957,1964, 1968), this regulation calls for the educative structures (primary, secondary I and secondary II) to adopt a trilingual teaching policy: the regional language, the official language or the associate-official language (Hindi or English respectively), and a living Indian or foreign language other than those opted as first or second choice.[49]

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[48] "Regards croisés sur le français pour demain", *Dialogues et cultures* (no. 40), Ed. FIPF, 1996

[49] La Présence Culturelle Française à Pondichéry et sa Mémoire (Aspects Contemporains). Mémoire présenté par Pougajendy Bichat sous la direction de Jean-Pierre Viallet , Séminaire d'Histoire culturelle et religieuse contemporaine, Université Pierre Mendes France, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, p. 44.

As it happens, Indians generally speak firstly, their mother tongue, secondly, English and thirdly, either Hindi in South India or another Indian language in other states. In each case, French would only be a fourth choice. In Pondicherry, due to its historical links with France, conditions for learning French are slightly more favorable. However, the infrastructure for learning French from the primary to higher secondary stage is provided only by the *Lyçée Français* and the *Ecoles Indiennes à Programmes Français*, the latter facing a number of significant financial problems and a lack of adequate pedagogical means at its disposal.[50]

A language and culture are prisms into reality. They refract one's view. In India, the British prism plays an important role in refracting one's view. Hence, a conversation which I had with a Franco-Pondicherrian, a French national of Indian origin, in the summer of 2003 in Pondicherry completely changed my view of India.[51] The conversation was refreshing, enlightening and stimulating. I was speaking to an Indian who was completely Francophone. However, the native component of his culture was Tamil. He asked me if I thought that I would have been a different person if I did not know French and I said yes. I became aware of the power of a different language and culture such as French. He talked about the lifestyles of people like him in Pondicherry, drinking beer freely from the refrigerator as opposed to traditional Indians who would hesitate to do so especially in front of elders, eating traditional Indian food during the week and trying out other cuisines during the weekend in Pondicherry which can pride itself on having a fairly cosmopolitan array of food offerings. But through the French language, he was also able to convey his deep pride in his native language and culture

[50] Ibid, p. 45.
[51] Interview with a Franco-Pondicherrian in Pondicherry, June 2003

namely Tamil. Clearly he was someone who belonged at the same time to the worlds of Tamil and French. An English speaking Tamil could never have the same effect on me. On a later occasion, an academic who was a friend of the francophone gentleman told me that on one occasion the francophone person had said that he had regretted having taken up French nationality but then took back what he had said realizing that it was a "faux pas."

Another Franco-Pondicherrian whom I got to know during that trip was also as Francophone while being of Tamil origin.[52] He had spent many years in the Reunion Islands as a tax collector as well as having lived in France. He clearly did not like the Reunion islands and had felt racist sentiments while in France. However, I could not but be impressed by the French influence on him. This impression would extend to yet other Franco-Pondicherrians whom I met who were completely Francophone.

This dissertation is a global analysis of a microscopic entity. Its great interest lies in the examination of the process of cultural interactions, whether or not they lead to creolization, on a relatively tiny and focused environment. The isolation and examination of certain variables in this process will define the nature of creolization in a particular and localized environment. By extrapolation, it will be determined whether or not this particular case fits into the general theory of creolization.

I would like to invite the reader to set aside all pre-conceived notions regarding creolization. I set myself the task from the beginning to take a broad sweeping look at the entire span of three centuries of French presence in these territories starting chronologically from the beginning. It was an adventure of the mind and a voyage into the unknown. Inevitably, I was led to closely trace the trajectory and meanderings of

[52] Interview with Edmond in Pondicherry, June 2003

French colonization and all its ramifications across time and space. I would also like the reader to share with me the sheer joy and excitement of trying to define the criteria for apprehending the nature and extent of creolization in these territories if indeed there had been any. My common sense told me that I should pay close attention to any juxtaposition or combination of French and Indian cultures which I may encounter historically or on the ground. Hence that approach prevailed throughout. Another defining criterion for me was to determine whether French influence or elements of French culture were filtered out by Indian culture or did they seep through the filter? Certainly this was a broad conceptual question which had to be answered by examining the facts of history and the present situation. If some elements of French culture had seeped through the filter, could we say that they had also been eroded? How would one then go about defining the criteria for gauging this erosion?

In the colonial situation, the colonizing culture tries to assimilate the colonized culture to its own values by the implementation of a series of administrative or legal measures: imposition of its language, the setting up of cultural or pedagogical establishments and so on. If these measures do not succeed, there is no creolization but a partial acculturation, which gradually disappears when the colonizer leaves. The following chapters will be concerned with determining whether or not there has been creolization in the former French territories of India as a function of its history. It will be relative to the notions of acculturation, deculturation and assimilation. *Acculturation* is defined as a partial adoption of the cultural elements which have been introduced, *deculturation* as a complete adoption of those cultural elements and *assimilation* as that where the whole colonized culture transforms itself in the image of the colonizing

culture. *Creolization* is the appearance of a reality, new and unexpected, a synthesis of the heterogeneous elements that are in contact with one another.

Chapter 1

The Beginnings:

A special case of colonization: the commercial occupation of Pondicherry

The beginning of French presence in India was marked by the advent of the commercial activities of the East India Company. In order to counter the perceived threat on prices of goods sold by other European nations, the French East India Company was established under the tutelage of Colbert.[53] These commercial activities subsequently led to the establishment of a political presence.[54] The French Company had initially to deal with obstacles set up by the already established English and Dutch companies. Once it overcame these obstacles, it had to find ways of penetrating the interior of the country in order to expand its profit making enterprise. This was done by striking deals with indigenous chieftains who were often on warring terms with one another. The Europeans, and in this case the French, were given land concessions and trading rights in exchange for the military support and training provided by them to the native factions.[55] By taking these incremental steps, the French established a significant presence in South India so much so that by the middle of the eighteenth century, the possibility of a French India could appear as probable[56] as the eventual establishment of a British India.

In order to trade, one had to create "enclaves", that is a collection of lodgings and stores constructed on land of which the Company was the proprietor, with the possibility of storing cargoes while waiting for the arrival of vessels. A complement of French

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[53] Haudrère, p. 387. Failure to do so would mean that the French would have had to buy the same products from the Dutch and other nations for 7 to 8 times the cost of obtaining them directly.
[54] Haudrère, p. 28. It also established itself politically on the island of *Bourbon* (present day Reunion Islands).
[55] Haudrère, p. 976
[56] Miles, p. 2

personnel located on site was in charge of purchases, sales, dispatch and accounting. This installation was relatively easy to conduct, as the local authorities were sympathetic towards the settlement of foreign traders. Moghul rule proved to be completely tolerant towards foreign communities, to whom it gave large administrative and judicial autonomy. As far as the Hindu princes were concerned, they made a clear distinction between *dharma*, derived from religious inspiration and the domain of priests, and *artha* the domain of warriors and sovereigns, governed according to principles of efficiency. Just like the Moghuls, they sought out foreign merchants, who poured in vast amounts of money to obtain authorization for acquiring territory, and then brought large quantities of precious metals, silver and gold, to buy finished products or raw materials. These precious metals, transformed into monetary coins, enabled the Indian economy to function smoothly. Lastly, the artisans, profiting from sales to the Europeans, enriched themselves and were, consequently, not too reluctant to accept tax assessments.[57]

The Europeans, on the other hand, in order to obtain permission for settling down and then for obtaining privileged commercial rights, would voluntarily agree to become part of the network of lords and vassals and to be in a subordinate juridical position with respect to the governors who, during the 17th and especially the 18th centuries, tended to become more and more independent of the authority of the Moghul Emperor. Some even declared themselves to be sovereigns.[58]

The French knew the region well, as since 1617 two ships from the Falklands had disembarked there, and in 1664 the merchants of Saint-Malo, in a letter addressed to the king, had said that one of their more notable experiences was the generosity of Indians as

[57] L'aventure des Français en Inde, by Rose Vincent, Kailash Editions 1995, pp. 42-43.
[58] L'aventure des Français en Inde, by Rose Vincent, Kailash Editions 1995, pp. 42-43.

well as their sympathy towards the French temperament. Their sympathy was so powerful and effective that, in comparison, everything else which the other foreigners have ever exploited at their place by the force of arms is compensated for by the largeness of their hearts, hence the Nayacq of Pondicherry, sitting on the Coromandel coast, has allowed the construction and maintenance within his jurisdiction of a fortress for the safety of French commerce.[59] In this connection, urbanism was also a major preoccupation of François Martin, one of the founders of Pondicherry. Undoubtedly, he did not have any grand political design. He was nothing more nor less than an excellent administrator dedicated to the prosperity of his town and to the development of commerce. According to him, a well-defended town and well-constructed houses would attract artisans.[60]

Thus, at the beginning of the 18th century, one could say that the project, which was envisaged by Colbert half a century earlier, had succeeded. The French had at their disposal in India permanent installations, with a solid point of support in Pondicherry. The commercial relations between France and India developed rapidly, as the taste for Indian goods spread among the French. Between 1600 and 1664, in 64 years, the French had sent to India 33 ships, that is one every two years. Between 1664 and 1719, in 54 years, they had sent 209 ships, that is three or four per year; between 1720 and 1770, in fifty years, 533 ships, that is ten to eleven per year, in spite of the wars which disrupted commerce. [61]

While this flow of trade flourished, the number of French arms remained vastly inferior to that of the British and of the Dutch. How could one explain this difference?

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[59] L'aventure des Français en Inde, Rose Vincent, Kailash Editions 1995, p.45
[60] Rose Vincent, p. 50
[61] Rose Vincent, p.57

Some people attributed this to the extreme individualism of the French whom they viewed as incapable of bringing great projects to successful conclusions. Hence Louis XIII declared in 1626 that this lack of order was due to the division among his subjects who, wanting to go their own ways and thinking only of their own profits suffered great losses. Arguably the patriotism of certain middle-class men of Dieppe, Rouen and Saint-Malo, determined to defend their commercial autonomy and more so the commercial rivalry between Normandy, pioneer of the penetration into the Indian Ocean at a time when the ports of Brittany were lacking in financial resources, and Brittany, enriched during the 16th century by trade with Spain prevented the setting up of a great national enterprise. Finally, Paris was not London. The French capital did not have at its disposal direct access to the sea; it did not have the economic muscle of the City. In London, the only great port of the British Isles, constituting the hub of commercial activities, the East India Company found a natural home and had easy access to financial resources. From 1664, Colbert endeavored to remedy this problem by creating in the image of the other powers of Western Europe a great East India Company.[62]

It was a reflection of the specific evolution of the prices of Asian goods: in a climate of general decline, the prices of certain goods continued to rise, in particular those which came from the East such as silk or cotton fabrics from whence the interest of new suppliers. The rise in prices was accompanied by a constant demand. Due to a lack of more precise sources, the inventory of the collection of Cardinal Mazarin, set up in 1661, demonstrated a taste for Asian objects: it consisted of seven hundred pieces, porcelain, fabrics, folding screens, having come from regions with which France did not yet have regular commercial relations. The policy of Colbert must be placed in this

[62] Haudrère, p. 24

perspective. It consisted in procuring to the kingdom the usefulness of Asian trade and to prevent the English and the Dutch from being the sole beneficiaries as they had done so until now. To create a big national company, Colbert endeavored to copy the very prosperous Dutch enterprise. Firstly, learning a lesson from the failure of Richelieu, he avoided putting the sum total of French trade within the hands of only one association but, like in the Netherlands, he multiplied the companies: the East India Company, the West India Company, the Northern Company and so on.[63]

Philippe Haudrère says that the East India Company of Colbert was an economic failure and a relative success politically. It was an economic failure because it was not able to underwrite the entirety of its stocks, a capital of at the most twelve million was put together and that too due to great ministerial pressures. It was also an economic failure because the deficit became significant since 1675, the Company being able to subsist itself mainly due to the King's aid and by the sale of a part of its fleet, before the definitive liquidation in 1684. It was a political success in that the French established themselves for good in the Reunion Islands and in India; a regular current of exchange was created. Finally, this construction was the result of the perseverance and of the doggedness of Colbert. However, there was a heavy price to pay for this success. It could have been achieved at a lower cost, if the management of the Company had been less artificial and more commercial. The war with Holland and the temporary loss of Pondicherry in 1693 brought the Company to the verge of bankruptcy. Loans were the only resource left. [64] The setting up of the East India Company explained itself principally by the encounter between three elements: the disastrous situation of finances

[63] Haudrère, p. 25
[64] Haudrère, p. 28

in France, the prosperity of certain sectors of the great maritime trade and the desire of the Regent to innovate in financial matters.[65]

The practice of trade, the *raison d'etre* of the Company, conformed itself to a model defined by Colbert, recalled by the cashier Dutot to obtain at the least cost the spices, the drugs and other items which were not produced by their provinces, which they could not do without and which they would absolutely have had to obtain from their neighbors. If they did not go themselves to obtain these goods they would have been obliged to receive them from the Dutch or from other foreign countries and to which they would have had to pay not only the cost of the first purchase of these goods in India but also all the costs which they would have incurred in going to get them and the profits which they would have made in reselling them; this would eventually mean seven to eight times the cost of the initial purchase. Consequently, the state would lose more than seven to eight times the amount which it currently made. Thus far from this trade being a burden, one could hardly provide it with more protection and to increase it so that they would not have had to depend on foreign countries to bring them these goods and that on the contrary they would be able to provide these goods to them. In other words, one had to ensure a regular supply of the national market and to sell the surplus to foreign countries to have a commercial balance.[66]

Towards Asia, the essence of trade was carried out with the enclaves of Pondicherry and Chandernagore and revolved on provisions (rice, cattle, and poultry), cloth, and slaves or free laborers. The regulation of 1727 anticipated that a ship at least must be sent every year from Pondicherry to the islands, and thus frequency was

[65] Haudrère, p. 40
[66] Haudrère, p. 387

respected. Some times the other enclaves of Asia participated in this traffic. Hence, Mahé sent certain years pepper and provisions and Canton sent drugs, porcelain and cloth.[67]

In India as in China, trade consisted mainly of the exchange of precious metals with manufactured products or raw material. It must be mentioned that the predominance of silver in the dispatches raised some problems as gold was particularly in demand in India and in periods of insecurity it increased in value to the detriment of silver whose relative trend diminished. There was, however, a fundamental difference between the two regions; in China, the kinds minted in Europe or in America and the ingots were accepted in payment according to their weight and content; in India, they had to be again melted and beaten before entering the commercial circulation. Until 1736, this operation took place in the hotel of finances of the nabab of Arcot, suzerain of Pondicherry and his treasurers levied a financial right of about 7%. On many occasions, the administrators of Pondicherry had tried to obtain from the Indian authorities the permission to mint in the colony currencies of the type of Arcot following the example of the British of Madras. All the negotiations had failed, undoubtedly because the presents demanded by the Indian authorities had seemed too high, and the French had to be content with issuing copper currencies meant only for the satisfaction of commercial exchanges in the interior of the concessions.[68]

In 1736, Benoit-Dumas succeeded in obtaining the authorization which was so sought after at the conclusion of laborious negotiations, conducted by a remarkable person, Joseph Devolton, soldier of the garrison of Pondicherry originating from the area

[67] Haudrère, p. 939
[68] Haudrère, pp. 952-953

of Bar-le-Duc who after having deserted had succeeded in becoming a Moghul doctor. The agreement anticipated a present of 20 000 rupees for the nabab of Arcot, and the payment of a right of one rupee for a thousand minted in Pondicherry to the prime minister of this nabab, for him and his descendants; in other words, the Company was committed to deliver to the treasury of the nabab 50 000 pagodas of silver ware by vessel arriving from France at a fixed and invariable price. In spite of these rather heavy conditions, the agreement allowed a rather significant profit. It procured to the Company profits of 400 000 pounds per year so much so that to the benefits on the cargo destined for French trade was added the right to cash conversion. On average the equivalent of five to six million pounds that is around twenty tons of silver, were minted every year.[69]

Trade, as one can presume it to be, was not very prosperous from 1757 and especially from 1758. It was not, however, war which did it the most harm; the sea remained almost always free and one could with impunity navigate in the seas of India as well as in the Atlantic, but money was almost always in short supply. The Company relied too much on the revenues from the peninsula to meet the military expenses in sufficient quantity and as these revenues were less than what was expected, the Conseil Supérieur had to allocate the entirety of funds meant for trade to the needs of the army.[70]

Overall, the percentage of goods increased regularly to reach more than half the value of cargo in the period 1765 to 1770. The goods in the English company increased in the same manner since 1735, but were always proportionately more until it reached more than two thirds in 1765-1770. This disequilibrium was a reflection of the commercial successes of the British. However, it must be pointed out that this prominent

[69] Haudrère, pp. 953-954
[70] Correspondance du Conseil Supérieur de Pondichéry et de la Compagnie, Tome V, Intro, p. 17

place of goods in the British cargo already existed before 1735 when the rivalry between the other commercial nations and the British was not intense. What was the share of each of the establishments in these dispatches? India received the major portion: based on the memorandum of evidence justifying the Company's recall of Dupleix, the average was 68% between 1736 and 1756 with extremes of 22% in 1748-1749 and 82% in 1740-1741. The dispatches diminished in relative value between 1764 and 1769 with an average of 25%.[71]

Of what products did the cargoes of goods consist? First of all, they consisted of what was necessary for the subsistence of Europeans established in Asia, notably of foodstuffs, such as wheat, salted meat, wines and brandies which made up at least one fourth of the cargoes of goods. The enclaves required Bordeaux wine, some Xérès, some Madera, brandies from Armagnac and from Nantes. Pondicherry consumed or sold 8000 to 10000 bottles of Bordeaux per year, 20 000 liters of brandy, 20 000 liters of Madera; Chandernagore, the same quantity of Bordeaux wines, 60 000 liters of Madera and 30 000 litres of brandy. Arms and materials for the navy consisted of 7 to 10 % of the value of the cargo. Two products had a major importance, metals and cloth, as they found an outlet among the natives, giving a profit of an average of 25%. Flat and square iron were in demand in India, in Arabia, in the Philippines; the annual average of the cargoes was more than 600 000 pounds in weight, however the Councils did not stop asking for more so that they could load them in ships traveling through India.[72]

Copper sold well in Pondicherry but its outlet was uncertain in the rest of Asia. On the contrary, tin was in demand everywhere and its annual average was 600 000

[71] Haudrère, p.407
[72] Haudrère, p. 408

pounds in weight in the cargoes to India, China and the Mascarenes. This item was used to manufacture cannon balls, various utensils, to garnish the inside of cases of tea, drugs or silk products. Tin was sought in India as well as in China but it occupied a relatively small place in the French cargoes, undoubtedly because of the competition from the British and especially from the Dutch.[73] Cloth was sold with a moderate degree of success in the first half of the 18th century then with difficulty in the second half. The stock comprised the range of different qualities: one found beautiful material such as the woolen cloth of Sedan and Amiens, those of less good quality from Languedoc but the cloth of good quality was more abundant due to the inferiority of the small French drapery which could not compete with the British production. [74]

Can one say that the dispatch of materials and goods allowed the French to rival with the other powers, notably the British whose commercial organization was closest to theirs? The figures can answer this question. Until 1735, the place of the French was limited and their dispatches were barely a third of those of the British. Between 1735 and 1740, the French Company asserted its commercial presence in Asia: its dispatches on average were annually over 13 000 000 pounds, while those of the British were of 14, 500 000 pounds. The conflicts and their maritime developments halted this expansion: the British, sure of the mastery of the Atlantic could continue their activities while the French were constrained to limit theirs. After the Austrian war of succession, the dispatches of the French were two thirds those of the British; after the Seven Years War, they were one third. From 1765 onwards, the comparison between the dispatches of the

[73] Haudrère, p. 408
[74] Haudrère, p. 409

Companies was no longer significant as the British found in Asia resources which enabled them to diminish their dispatches.[75]

The acquisition of territory for trading purposes played itself out in various ways throughout. Karaikal was, by its topographical situation, outside the theater of political activity. It was not of great use for the commercial operations of the East India Company. Its territory being principally agricultural, it served the purpose of fulfilling the aim of its founder, Governor Dumas, of being the attic of Pondicherry.[76]

Comprising the entire delta of the Cauvery, the kingdom of Tanjore was always the most fertile and the richest region of the entire Coromandel coast. With the facilities that it had from the estuaries of the various branches of this river, it used to dispatch by sea the surplus of its rice production to various parts of India and of Ceylan. The Danes were the first to realize the advantages that this country could offer for the sale of European products. They established themselves in Tranquebar, in 1616, and four years later, they constructed the fort of Danesburg. Half a century later, in 1660, the Dutch established themselves towards the south in Negapatam. The prosperity that resulted from these two enclaves in the kingdom led the court of Tanjore to make offers to François Martin that resulted in a Parvana of 15 July 1688.[77]

Chandernagore, one of the smallest establishments with 940 hectares, was the most active commercially. It is located on the Hooghly, the principal branch of the Ganges, hence on the very navigable route of the very rich province of Bengal. It would be delving into very great detail to talk about the different types of goods which were

[75] Haudrère, p. 411
[76] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome IV, Gaudart, Intro, p. v
[77] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome IV, Gaudart, Intro, p. vi

produced by India; it is necessary to say that they were abundant and suitable for all kinds of trade and that, according to Dupleix, they produced considerable profits in Europe.[78]

Five lodges were dependent on Chandernagore and these were simple commercial posts, meant to facilitate the purchase of products in the proximity of manufacturing regions. The largest and the most important one was that of Casimbazar, which bought silk prepared in great quantities in the neighborhood. At the same time, it was also a political observation post near Mourchidabad, the capital of Bengal. Located on the banks of the Ganges, it was sustained by a quay adorned by bricks. And towards the land, the enclosure was formed by thin walls and slightly raised with a foundation of only half a foot high. Along the walls of half the enclosure were workshops for the manufacture of silk which could accommodate two thousand to two thousand five hundred circular plates for manufacturing silk. In the same enclosure towards the house, there was a big shop where one kept the silk that the merchants brought and those which were ready to be packed for being sent to Chandernagore. This shop was made of bricks, large and divided lengthwise into two parts by arches. The whole enclosure of the lodge was filled with everything that was necessary for the soldiers and the workers. Around thirty houses were located next to the lodge.[79]

In Patna, the last establishment in going up the river, the French were trading since 1693, but they were settled permanently since 1728, first in a rented house then since 1734 on land with a house and warehouse which Dupleix then the head at Chandernagore, had acquired. One sold goods from Europe, especially cloth which found buyers in the north of India and one could procure oneself saltpeter sparing more

[78] Haudrère, p. 308
[79] Haudrère, pp. 313-314

than sixty per cent on the purchase of this good and some opium. Every year, when the interior political situation of the region allowed it, a convoy of boats went from Chandernagore to Patna escorted by some soldiers, with a load of merchandise from Europe and came back with a cargo of saltpeter.[80]

Dacca and Jougdia were two small lodges located on the Brahmaputra and in which the French established themselves in a stable manner since 1735. The embroideries and fine goods which constituted the stock of cargo from Bengal came from Dacca. Their value was of 400000 rupees according to a governor of Chandernagore. In Jougdia, the Company possessed land on which there was a small shop of bricks and a bamboo house covered with leaves which served as a lodging for the boss and one found some quite ordinary cloth but of good finish for an annual sum of 130 000 rupees.[81]

Commercially, the least important dependency of Chandernagore was the lodge of Balassor, located at the outlet of the Hooghly river. Being the first settlement of the French in Bengal, in the second half of the seventeenth century, its role became negligible since 1729 when the vessels coming from Europe went up the Hooghly and did not remain in harbor in front of Balassor to receive the cargo brought from Chandernagore on light boats. The employee who directed the lodge at times bought *cauris* coming from the Maldives and was responsible for the transfer of courier between Chandernagore, Mazulipatam and Pondicherry and he occasionally offered shelter to the Ganges pilots.[82]

On the Malabar coast, the company had the enclave of Mahé, as well as the lodges of Surat and Calicut. The territory of Mahé was very small—hardly two hundred

[80] Haudrère, p. 314
[81] Haudrère, p. 314
[82] Haudrère, p. 315

acres—in spite of the different enlargements of territories during the eighteenth century, and the population was not very large hardly exceeding the figure of three thousand. The harbor was inhospitable during one part of the year. The advantage of the enclave lay in its location, being at the mouth of the river which traversed the regions producing pepper. The settlement was compact: it consisted of four buildings, one serving as a lodging, the second as a hospital, and two others as shops for pepper and rice. The entire setup was surrounded by a simple fence.[83]

The French had settled down on the Malabar coast, at Calicut, in 1701. The location was mediocre as it was too far from the centers of production of pepper, the principal resource of the region. In 1710, they set up a factory on the mouth of the Mahé river and then in 1721, some negotiation, skillfully conducted, guaranteed to the French a monopoly of pepper trade in the states of the neighboring prince called Bayanor. In December 1722, on the orders of metropolitan France, the French on the Malabar coast definitively transferred themselves from Calicut to Mahé and stores meant to receive pepper were developed, the superintendents in charge of the production department estimating that it was possible to make more than 200.000 pounds of profit per year in this trade alone. The development of this installation and the competition for the purchase of pepper led to hostility from other local sovereigns and from the British, settled in Tellichery on the other bank of the Mahé river. The employees did not refrain from denouncing to their respective managements the hindrances posed by their rivals. This can be seen in the message sent by the Mahé council to Pondicherry: "The security of this establishment and the trading interest of the Company requires absolutely that we should disallow the British and all other foreigners entry to the river and if we did not

[83] Haudrère, p. 315

have the right or reasons for it we should find excuses. They set an example on a daily basis."[84]

The rivalry sharpened in 1724 when the French established a garrison and undertook the construction of a fort. The British first incited the opposition of Bayanor, they then provoked, in 1725, an uprising of several local sovereigns who marched towards Mahé to chase away the French. The council of Pondicherry estimated then that these new troubles originated from the same source as the first, that is due to the jealousies of the British, who, not being able to directly attack French trade, sought to disrupt it by secret intrigues, decided then to send a squadron of five ships, set up by a part of the garrison of Pondicherry, and put under the joint leadership of the Chevallier de Pardaillan, lieutenant of the king and of Simon de la Farelle, major of the troops of Pondicherry. The landing of these troops took place without any incident and the fight between Indians in which participated notably Mahé de la Bourdonnais, ended with the victory of the French. Henceforth the Company was solidly established in Mahé; however, it had been obliged to spend more than two million pounds for these military operations, which weighed heavily on its budget in as much as it was not able to obtain, as it hoped to, the support of the royal navy.[85] An agreement signed on March 20, 1728 between the head of the French establishment and the director of the British enclave of Tellicherry recognized the existence of both territories. The concerned parties agreed never to mutually interfere in their establishments and to never attack each other's boats as soon as they came within the range of vision from Mahé or Tellicherry even if there was a war in Europe between the two nations.

[84] Haudrère, p. 316
[85] Haudrère, pp. 116-117

On 4 July 1784, a memorandum on Mahé by Lagrenée sought to demonstrate that Mahé did not have the advantages that one would expect from the headquarters of the French establishments in India. He examines the following two points: 1) Is Mahé located in such a place that it might be easily defensible and be, at all times, of prompt aid to the other French establishments of India? 2) Is it located in a region where it might supply a lot of goods for the freights of the ships, which return to Europe? Lagrenée responded negatively to both questions.[86]

In June 1789, in a letter to Conway, Tipu, having informed the former of the rumor about the Dutch ceding their settlement of Cochin to the British, tells him of the advantages the French would gain from negotiating with the Dutch for the acquisition of this territory?[87] On October 5, 1789, the count of Conway left instructions to the Chevalier de Fresne, the Commandant at Pondicherry to the effect that Pondicherry having been reduced to "the state of a simple enclave guarded by Indian troops, the Sipahis are destined to do nothing else but keep the police." The administrators would have to apply themselves to developing trade, which has been reduced to the export of salt to Bengal, to render prompt and impartial justice and to increase public revenues.[88]

The principal protagonist in this narrative is François Joseph Dupleix. He was the architect who prepared the blueprint for a potential French empire in India. He was, par excellence, a product of the East India Company, who rose within its ranks serving first in the Advisory Council of the Company in Pondicherry, then as the sectional head in Chandernagore before becoming the Governor of Pondicherry heading the French

[86] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome V, Gaudart, pp.47-48
[87] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome II, Gaudart, p. 5
[88] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome II, Gaudart, p. 13

Government in India.[89] It is an irony of fate that his downfall which is symbolized by his eventual recall to France by the East India Company was caused not by his foes in India but by clever machinations by the British, by his rivals in France[90] and, most importantly, by the stockholders of the East India Company who were dissatisfied with the financial statements of the Company.[91] With the departure of Dupleix began the downfall of the stronghold of the French epitomized by the singular personality of the latter.[92]

In terms of the recall of Dupleix, one can ask oneself if the stockholders and the managing agents could exercise an influence on the management of the company and more generally on the royal policy. The reply is yes as long as all the demands are not at odds with the aims of this policy which was the case during the recall of Dupleix. The primary cause of his recall was not, as Dupleix would have liked to have believed, an injunction made by the British to the ministers of Louis XIV but a concession given to the stockholders.[93]

William Miles says that for the French, the hopes and the dreams of a French empire associated with the eighteenth century are symbolized by Dupleix and that he took France to the heights of its power in India through his stewardship of the East India Company. He says that historians have rated Dupleix very highly. He quotes Ananda Ranga Pillai who said that, "no one else is possessed of the quick mind with which he is gifted. In patience he has no equal. He has peculiar skill in carrying out his plans and designs in the management of affairs and in governing." Miles also quotes a later commentator who said about Dupleix the following words: "He possessed that insight of

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[89] Haudrère, p. 333
[90] Owen, p. 725
[91] Haudrère, p. 176
[92] Miles, p. 3
[93] Haudrère, p. 176

statesmanship which can divine a change in the balance of political forces when it is actually taking place rather than years later, when it has become obvious to all." According to Miles, Dupleix can be credited with envisioning India's readiness for European intervention. This intervention could take place militarily as well as diplomatically through politics. According to Miles, Dupleix, by playing one side against another in the factional struggle in the Carnatic was able to establish control over the region. [94]

The long war had revealed to Dupleix the fragility of trade. Until then, he had depended solely on gold and silver, which the ships brought from France. Only one of them had to be attacked and sunk for the town to be asphyxiated. Pondicherry had no hinterland, which could help it to breathe, to live. The idea of enlarging the territory grew out of this necessity. Dupleix was farsighted. He was a man of distant schemes and of subtle intrigues. He calculated that if he helped his friend Chanda Sahib to reconquer his throne of the Carnatic, he could undoubtedly, in gratitude, obtain Villenour. It was near Pondicherry, a small town where it would be very profitable to install a cloth mill dependent solely on the Company.[95]

In Paris, in spite of the constant support of his brother the farmer-general Dupleix de Bacquencourt, the policy of Dupleix was not well understood. Parisian society and the "philosophes," with Voltaire at the head, were not interested in what could be happening at the other end of the world. Trade had not regained its pre-war splendor, and the Company could not easily reconcile itself to the slipping of a mercantile activity towards territorial ambitions. The first signal of alarm was the acquittal, by a close shave, of La

[94] Miles, p. 3
[95] L'aventure des Français en Inde XVIIe-Xxe siècles, par Rose Vincent, Editions Kailash, 1995, p.79

Bourdonnais.[96]In reality, Dupleix had ceased to understand Paris from which he had been away for more than thirty years: he had allowed himself to be enchanted by the magic of India.[97]

He had also asked Paris for new reinforcements and in 1753 sent a report to the Company in which he explained his policy. Trade, according to him, was too fragile if it depended solely on the export by sea "of bullion." The Company needed a territorial base, whose fixed revenue would stabilize economic exchanges. And he cited the success of the Dutch in Java and Sumatra, which was due, according to him, to the prodigious hinterland, which supported their trade. Dupleix was also the first to formulate a theory which would influence all of the 19th century, and which would be adopted a few years later by his enemy Robert Clive with, as we know, what success. This policy, conceived of course in the interests of Europeans and which brought nothing to the exploited poor, had nevertheless allowed the emergence, in Pondicherry, of a prosperous middle class, artisans, businessmen and intermediaries, undoubtedly for the most part banias. Dupleix's report could have been of interest to the Company. But it was too late: his hour had passed.[98]

According to the report of Lescallier, Commissaire civil, at the National Convention and at the Conseil Exécutif on 15 October 1794, France could become rich, powerful and respected in India if in response to England's policy of encroachment, of domination and conquest, she adopted one based on principles of justice, loyalty and of goodness. She would then become the "liberator of India, a majestic duty to which

[96] Rose Vincent, pp. 81-82.
[97] Rose Vincent, p. 82.
[98] Rose Vincent, p. 84

Indians of all castes and of all the religions are tacitly calling us as their unique hope."[99] For this it was not necessary that she become a big territorial power. It would be sufficient for her to occupy a few points with "the consent and wish of the Indians."[100]

Earlier on 26 May 1793, in the note accompanying his letter, Lescallier asked that the natives, born in the French territories, might become French citizens if in addition to the conditions required for naturalization, they added the following: 1) To be subject to French law in their civil actions; 2) To be born of a legitimate marriage between father and mother, who have never been in a state of servitude or of domesticity; 3) Not to be a descendant of the caste of pariahs; 4) To know how to read, write and speak French. [101] The third point is particulary interesting and ironic in the context of the category of *renonçants*, that is those natives who at the end of the 19th century gave up their Indian nationality in favor of French nationality and did happen to belong largely to the caste of pariahs. Contemporary Franco-Pondicherrians, that is, French nationals of Indian origin who during the 1962 *de facto* transfer of the former French territories to the Indian government opted for French nationality are mostly descendants of *renonçants*. There is a subconscious fear among many of these Franco-Pondicherrians of being rejected by France and hence, when asked whether they consider themselves to be French or Indian they immediately assert their French nationality. This subconscious fear can be explained in part by the fact of pariahs being the outcastes in Indian society.

The Portuguese made no distinction between castes and consequently, the contempt that Indians had towards the pariahs extended towards the Portuguese, and has continued since then. Even though the other Europeans did not ignore the sensitivity of

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[99] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde française, Tome 2, Gaudart, p.442
[100] Ibid, p.442
[101] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde française, Tome 2, Gaudart, p. 397

Indians on this issue, they did not have more consideration towards this than the Portuguese: they lived in India as they live in France, England and in Holland, without refraining oneself and without coming to terms, as much as it would be possible to do so, with the customs of the nation. This is what has principally caused this aversion of Indians towards Europeans and which is addressed extensively by the letters of the missionaries.[102]

The *Topas* enjoyed rights of citizens only under certain conditions. They had the right to vote in the primary assemblies and the right to deliberate in the Commons' Assembly but were not eligible to vote in the latter. *Topas* were natives subject to French law in their civil action. Moreover they were also subjected to conditions imposed on French citizens, namely that of being born in legitimate marriage "between father who have never ceased to be free" and that of having to "know how to read and to speak French"[103]

In a memorandum of 16 October 1790 a petition was made to the colonial assembly for including the *Topas* on the electoral lists with all the rights of active citizens in the same category as the *Métis*. This distinction, which did not exist at the time of the formation of the representative committee, had been established for the election of the colonial assembly and was the motivating factor for this protest.[104]

On October 15, there was an assembly of French citizens who demanded that the National Guard be composed only of Europeans and of sons of Europeans (both males and females). This proposal led to a protest by the *Topas* who, in a meeting held on 30 October, invoked their right to be part of this Guard. The assembly maintained its wish

[102] Rose Vincent, p.94
[103] Catalogues des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde française, Tome 2, Gaudart, pp. 394-395
[104] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome 2, Gaudart, p.68

to disallow the presence of men of color and it was decided that the formation of the National Guard would be suspended until the national assembly made a decision.[105]

This segregation played itself out in other ways too. For example, in the *Résumé des Actes de l'Etat Civil de Pondichéry de 1736 à 1760*, unlike the first volume which brought together all the certificates of persons, whoever they may be, born, married or dead in Pondicherry, this volume comprised only the certificates of the most notable people, of European origin. There was really no great interest in publishing the others. The example for this exclusivity was set by the editors of these certificates, who, from 1736 onwards had been in the habit of keeping two kinds of registers, one reserved for Europeans only, the other meant for all Catholics, no matter what their origin.[106]

The "descendants of Europeans" or "Créoles" of Pondicherry today represent less than 1% of the population of Pondicherry. Being part of a very hierarchical society, which is not integrated with the Indian economy and at odds with Indian culture, the Creoles are bound to adapt themselves to the natural evolution of Indian society in order to survive, with the exception of those who had chosen to return to France in 1952 and in 1962 after the treaty of Cession. Before 1962, Pondicherry was French and the Créoles had a natural base of their own. Today Pondicherry is part of India and a great number of Créoles are confronted with a very hostile environment to which they have to adapt themselves. This adaptation tends to become a long and complex socio-cultural process.[107]

The *Créole Pondichérien* came into being as a result of the contact between a population of autochthones and of an immigrant group. Such contacts resulted from

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[105] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome 2, Gaudart, pp. 234-235
[106] Résumé des Actes de l'Etat Civil de Pondichéry de 1736 à 1760, Alfred Martineau, Intro, p. I
[107] Les "Créoles" ou descendants d'Européens à Pondichéry, , Tirouvanziam-Louis, Lourdes, Intro, p. 1

French colonial expansion which began with the existence of trading enclaves and commercial centers, having as their principal aim negotiating with the natives rather than a desire to assimilate with them. This relationship between Europeans and Tamils of lower caste, developed over a relatively long period, led to the emergence of Créole speech. The spoken word is close to the vernacular language; the European component being above all lexical and the *Créole Pondichérien* does not offer any written examples.[108]

The Company was able to ensure the exploitation and the protection of its colonial domain with a small number of Europeans as it largely made use of native personnel. For India, based on some scattered facts, one can estimate that the number of natives employed in the administrative and commercial services was not less than a thousand of which more than three hundred in Pondicherry and as many in Chandernagore. Among these natives, the primary place was occupied by the writers to whom the councils sometimes gave important responsibilities. The Parisian management recommended on many occasions (showing that its directives were not always obeyed) to leave them in an inferior position where they would be taking orders from the European employees. The career of Pedré Mousse who reached the rank of deputy merchant showed that the ban was easily transgressed. The same was true of the decision made by Boyelleau the interim chief of Pondicherry in 1767 to set up a special arrangement for the *métis* and the Indians as: "It is a shame that these kinds of people are confused with the personnel of the Council." The interpreters played a crucial role in the relations between Europeans and the local population. The very large number of "peons" often reaching

[108] Les "Créoles" ou descendants d'Européens à Pondichéry, Tirouvanziam-Louis, Lourdes, pp. 199-200

the figure of more than two hundred were used in diverse domestic chores, especially in the transportation of mail.[109]

Among the indigenous personnel in charge of administrative and commercial duties, one figure was predominant, that of the "courtier," who was at the same time the representative of the natives to the Governor and a commercial intermediary between the employees and the different ranks in various professions. In all the establishments of European nations in Asia, one found this key person who was at the same time a courtier, interpreter, underwriter of contracts, an expert and guarantor. On the Coromandel and Malabar coasts he was known as the *modeliar* or *dubash* and in Bengal he had the less specific name of *dadni* or merchant. This last term aptly indicates his main role which was to make advances of funds to the merchants of the Interior and to the local producers and to estimate the amount on future deliveries. These advances, varying from ten to seventy percent of the total of the order, were covered in general by a written contract, allowing the Company to assure itself in anticipation of the next season the return cargo. In this system, based on a reciprocal understanding between Europeans and Asians, the responsibility was often kept in the same family.[110]Dupleix chose as his courtier the son of Tirouvengadam, the famous Ananda Ranga Pillai of Brahmanical religion whose journal, fortunately conserved, reflects very well the crucial position between the indigenous community and the Europeans. In Bengal, the continuity along family lines was even more distinct as, in 1735, Indinaram succeeded his father, courtier in

[109] Haudrère, pp. 345-346
[110] Haudrère, p. 346

Chandernagore under the same terms that is: three quarters percent on the contracts that would be drafted in favor of the Company.[111]

The sale of some land on February 1, 1745 to Louis Modeliar illustrates the role of the courtier. Louis Paradis, commander at Karaikal, made the sale; it consisted of different plots of land located between the town of Karaikal and Cotchéry. Louis Modéliar was the courtier of the Company in Karaikal. He was getting ready to cultivate all these pieces of land and to divide the revenue with the Company in a proportion fixed by the contract at thirty percent in 1749, with an increase of five percent every year till 50 percent from 1753 onwards.[112]

The manner of buying was quite idiosyncratic. All the merchants were assembled in the shop and sat on the floor forming a circle according to their custom. The courtier played the role of an interpreter. When one of the merchants had shown his silk and the employee of the Company found it admissible, he told the courtier the price he would want for it and all this without speaking.[113] For the fabrics, such as the muslin of Bengal or the painted cloth or guineas of the Coromandel, there were long delays. During the course of the month of May, the merchants were assembled by the courtier, the latter presenting them to the director of the enclave who announced the quantity of the necessary goods and the price at which they would be bought. The merchants would send their agents or paquers who would fan out in the neighboring area and place their orders to the weavers. The merchants would make advances to the weavers and would themselves receive down payments from the courtier as the vessels from Europe arrived by turn. The field of action of these paquers extended very far hence in Pondicherry

[111] Haudrère, p. 347
[112] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Tome IV, Gaudart, pp.9-10
[113] Haudrère, p. 956

according to the diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai their activities extend 120 km northwards, 160 km to the east and 90 km to the south. During the month of October, the goods would begin to enter the stores and when there was a critical amount, the visits would begin. In Pondicherry, the visit took place in the fortress where all the shops were located in a spacious and clear covered market, which made it very convenient for this operation. Those employees who were selected for this purpose inspected the raw cloth then the pieces which they received were opened by the natives appointed for this purpose who gave it to the launderers of the Company who stamped with its mark each piece at its head. This visit, constituting the acceptance of the merchandise was particularly difficult to accomplish and it required a great deal of experience: "most of the merchandise arrived in November and December, the employees were then compelled in order to expedite the vessels to make their visit hastily and passed, usually haphazardly, as of top quality what often belonged only to the second and the muslins required such attention that the oldest and the most experienced people were always making mistakes everyday." The excellent quality of the cloth brought by the French in Europe came from the great care given to this operation of the visit, whereas the British and the Dutch were more concerned with the quantity at the expense of quality.[114]

Ananda Ranga Pillai was also the Dubash or translator of Dupleix. He straddled two worlds: that of his master Dupleix and that of his native milieu. The East India Company institutionalized the role and function of the Dubash.[115] Dubashes served as intermediaries between the East India Company and the indigenous traders of the hinterlands. Ananda Ranga Pillai provides the best understanding of the period during

[114] Haudrère, pp. 957-958
[115] Haudrère, p. 346. On the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, he is also called *modeliar* or *dobachi*. In Bengal, he is called *dadni*.

which the French rule reached its zenith and of its gradual decline. The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai very perceptively portrays aspects of life during this period. His famous house in Pondicherry is a symbol of the synthesis of French and Tamil cultures, which he had made. This house is characterized by its composite style, with an Indian patio surrounded by teak pillars surmounted by a European floor sustained by white columns.[116]

Around 82% of the personnel of the Company originated from the metropolis and more than half came from two areas, Ile de France (of which 30% were from Paris) and Brittany. Then, in decreasing order of importance, the recruitment took place in three regions, the center of the Parisian basin, consisting of Paris, Soissons and Orléans, the neighboring regions of the Atlantic like Rouen, Caen, Tours, La Rochelle, Pan and lastly, the regions of the Midi, Aix, Montpellier, Toulouse and Lyon. The absence of recruitment from the east of the kingdom was notable. The employees were above all urban people two thirds of whom were born in a town. Outside the home country, the most important group originated from Asia and especially from Pondicherry, then came those who were born in the Mascarenes (2,5%) and in Ireland. The latter were often Jacobite refugees.[117]The entry into service was accompanied by postings. The most sought after posts were in descending order those of China, Bengal, the rest of Asia, the Mascarenes and lastly those of the other enclaves.[118]From the Mascarenes, transfers were made towards Asia, and usually there were only five employees. The passage of employees from Asia towards the Mascarenes, or from the Mascarenes towards Senegal was always the result of pressing personal reasons or of service duties. An employee

[116] Les grandes pages du <<journal>> d'Ananda Ranga Pillai, Préface de Jean Deloche, p. 7.
[117] Haudrère, pp. 745-746
[118] Haudrère, p. 750

would go from Pondicherry to the Ile de France in 1737 for reasons of health, another would be sent back to the same island in 1746 as a result of difficulties with Dupleix, and a third person in 1750 after having been accused of diversion of funds. An employee of the Ile de France went to Senegal in 1743, as his too restless personality was a source of agitation in an island peopled by European colonizers.[119]

The officers and the employees had to find spouses among European families settled in the enclaves and for the soldiers among the Christian topasines who were the descendants of Portuguese men and Hindu women.[120] Furthermore, as Haudrère points out, the main obstacle to the multiplication of these marriages was religion; hence the widow of a French officer was against a matrimonial alliance with a Danish officer due to differing religions. Living conditions in the enclaves were difficult but they were not that much more difficult than those of some Frenchmen living in the metropolis. The Company took care of the lodging, clothing and food requirements of its soldiers and of its workers as well as the steps needed to keep them in good health. It just about fulfilled its contractual obligations. [121] The absence of a distinct social life was not compensated by intellectual pursuits. In any case, the management was never interested in developing the intellectual capacities of its employees and was merely satisfied with the teaching of reading, writing as well as with the rudiments of arithmetic.[122]

The libraries did not have many works of general culture. One fourth consisted of technical works, that is, the Dictionnaire du Commerce , the Parfait négociant , the Ordonnance de la Marine , the Ordonnances criminelles , the Coutume de Paris, and the

[119] Haudrère, pp. 751-752
[120] Haudrère. Vol. 3, p. 788.
[121] Haudrère, vol. 3, p.789
[122] Haudrère, vol. 3, p. 794

Recueil… of Dernis for the employees; the Bombardier français de Belidor , the Routier general des Indes , the Art de naviguer , for the officers of the navy within India; the Code militaire, some Cours de mathématiques , some works on fortifications, artillery and fencing for the troop officers; some tomes of surgical works for an army surgeon. A little less than a quarter of the books dealt with religion. The remaining collections of libraries consisted of works of history and literature. One often found the Métamorphoses of Ovid and the Contes of La Fontaine as well as Racine, Molière, Corneille and above all Voltaire.[123]

The employees were motivated principally by the desire to enrich themselves. This motive was less widespread among the officer class than among the other employees of the Company. [124]The most lucid admitted it without any disguise. Lovet, the director of the enclave of Juda, declared that the employees placed under his orders, "have crossed the seas only to increase or restore their fortunes." Mahé de la Bourdonnais wrote to the comptroller general: "one comes to India only for business… the contrary opinion could not be expected as it was not natural and he said elsewhere: wealth is considered to be the only fruit which one brings from India and the only one to which one is attached." Toussaint Morellet asked to go from India to China as, wrote he, the enclave of Canton offered especially fruitful business possibilities. The young Malouin Provotin, an employee in Chandernagore, hoped to be able to quickly marry off his sisters in providing them with a dowry with the fortune he was bound to acquire. Dupleix defined this search very well when he wrote to his brother: "What a pity it would be for an employee without wealth in Europe not to be able to return without risking death by

[123] Haudrère, Vol. 3, p. 795
[124] Haudrère, pp. 752-753.

hunger? Is there anything more mortifying than to see oneself being forced to pass one's days in climates as opposed to one's temperament and among nations whose customs and ways are so different from one's own? On the contrary, what joy would one not feel if, after having served well and having carefully collected something, one hoped to increase it considerably on return to France and to be able to finish one's days in calm in the bosom of one's nation." The same wrote from Chandernagore in 1731: "Bengal is definitely the place to earn riches quickly…and in 1735, again: "When one would have returned to Europe, each one going back into his shell would distinguish himself only by his wealth."[125]

Rose Vincent also says that money was the major preoccupation of these merchants. They were, like the Company itself, far away from what became the following century the colonialist spirit. They were never troubled by dreams of conquest or of domination: all hoped, after becoming substantially rich, to come back to France, to buy some land and perhaps a chateau in the region where they were born, which would allow them at best a means of rising up the social ladder, and at least a happy old age. They also considered themselves to be mere visitors, who did not see any great merit in getting to know or to understand the country in which they lived. They rarely learned the language, which was at the time, in the region of Pondicherry, a mixture of Tamil and Portuguese; in spite of being almost under the Equator, they wore cloth suits, closed shoes and frill shirts; they fed on meat and wine, a diet which was hardly the most appropriate for this hot country. They had not acquired the ability to resist fevers, cholera, and dysentery. Consequently, many of them died before they could even return to their country in fulfillment of their dreams. The aligned tombs in the cemetry of

[125] Haudrère, pp. 752-753

Pondicherry are a moving picture as they exemplify the failure of these people to realize their much-cherished aspirations.[126]

All the sources are agreed that the most considerable fortunes were made from trade between different parts of India. All these people were rich. How did they enrich themselves? By navigating, said Dupleix to his friend Vincens. The same Dupleix, having become Governor of Chandernagore, described in language laced with imagery this trade in a letter addressed to La Bourdonnais: " I hope that the remedy that you are going to look for in France against the epidemic sickness of Pondicherry, misery, can be a certain thing…You can believe that I will try as much as I can to relieve those who are vigorous enough to come here.[127]

The officers and employees of the Company took no interest in the life and culture of India. Dupleix, like his contemporaries, never went to the towns along the Ganges River. [128] The local languages were not known. In India, between 1753 and 1765, only eight members of the personnel were able to express themselves in Persian and in Arabic and only four officers could express themselves in Tamil. Their lack of knowledge was accompanied by a certain amount of contempt, which was directed towards the political power. This is illustrated by what was said by an officer in India: "The government of these people is one of the most arbitrary…it is the height of despotism."[129] Another officer expressed his contempt of religion thus: "no other people are as superstitious as the Indians."[130] Pierre Poivre added, "the religion of the Malabars

[126] Rose Vincent, pp.61-62

[127] Haudrère, p. 810
[128] Haudrère, pp. 795-796.
[129] Haudrère, pp. 795-796.
[130] Haudrère, pp. 795-796.

is perhaps the most extravagant, the most shameful for human reason and the most infamous that one can imagine."[131] A Navy officer summed up his attitude by saying, "What can one say about these absurdities?" [132] The same critical attitude is discerned towards the animist practices of Africans.[133]

The employees were for the most part quite mediocre, and it is interesting to read in the letters of the Company, in particular those of 9 November 1740 and 25 November 1741 about their qualifications. "This one," it is said, "is quite conversant with arithmetic and a bit with books, seems to be intelligent, is gentle and of good character." We also find that "this other person writes well, is a bit conversant with books and with arithmetic; this other one also understands arithmetic and books and seems full of good will, reads and writes quite well and is diligent." Another person, Vincent, is also commented upon: "doesn't have an elegant handwriting, but is quite conversant with books and knows how to calculate."[134]

However, during the same period, one could also witness the development of a movement in the metropolis for improving the scientific knowledge of the world. The management of the Company also participated in this movement…Silhouette sought "…knowledge about the different forests which proliferate in India and in the Indian Ocean islands"; the directors protected the mission of the astronomer Pingré in the Indian Ocean and of the linguist Anquetil-Duperron in Asia. This movement motivated by curiosity led some of the more diligent employees and officers to take interest in their surroundings. In Asia, the baton of the Jesuit missionaries and their interest in Indian

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[131] Haudrère, p. 796.
[132] Haudrère, pp. 796.
[133] Haudrère, p. 796.
[134] Correspondance du Conseil Supérieur de Pondichéry et de la Compagnie, Tome III, Introduction, p. xxix

civilization was passed on to the residents during the second half of the century: Jean Law, the governor, and Jean-Baptiste Gentil, the officer, became interested in Indian politics, Bussy learned the local languages; Maissin studied Hinduism; Wust and Lo-Looz tried to penetrate Indian strategy; Anquetil de Briancourt formed a natural sciences study circle. After 1765, the setting up of two masonic lodges in Pondicherry and in Chandernagore facilitated these researches. However, these intellectual activities occupied only a very small number of employees as for most other people, the best past-time was to try to make money even though very few succeeded in this venture.[135]

Bernier's experience was somewhat different. He was thirty-nine when he first landed in India. He stayed there for only ten years, but this was sufficient for him to have declared himself to be very "indianized." He was perhaps the first Frenchman to have clearly been aware that one never returns unscathed from the "Continent of Circe."[136] He wrote personally to the minister Colbert about his reflections on the fact that a great part of the gold and the silver circulating in the world "finds different ways of entering into India from all sides and almost no outlet for coming out of it", India herself producing no precious metals. [137] Bernier informed Colbert about the religions of India, its army, the privileges and duties of the Emperor's ministers. His remarks on the rights of ownership in India have remained especially famous and have influenced a number of theorists from Montesquieu to Karl Marx.[138] Bernier also underlined the tolerance of the Muslims of the period towards other religions.[139]

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[135] Haudrère, vol. 3 p. 796-797.
[136] Rose Vincent, p. 32
[137] Rose Vincent, p. 32
[138] Rose Vincent, pp. 32-33
[139] Rose Vincent. p. 33

The construction and refinement of the economic engine that would generate profits for the employees, officers, the Company and the State was facilitated by the statesmanship[140] of Dupleix and by the artful diplomacy[141] of Ananda Ranga Pillai both of which enabled the East India Company to entrench itself in the local soil. The administrative apparatus of the East India Company was elaborated through the setting up of Advisory Councils, known as Conseils Supérieurs, in the different enclaves. The powers of these Councils did not extend very far in geographical terms but they encompassed a wide range of functions. These functions ranged from determining trading regulations to administering, policing, rendering justice and formulating codes of conduct of Europeans vis-à-vis the natives and among themselves in the territories under their jurisdiction. [142]

They had first of all at their disposal very extensive commercial powers. All matters relating to this activity had to be discussed by the councilors and the decisions based on a majority vote. The Councils had at their disposition certain funds, decided about the advances to be made for supplies, clinched deals, made purchases, gave permits to private individuals for local maritime commerce when the regulations of the Company authorized such activities. They could modify the orders of the general management in trade matters, but not the distribution of funds between the enclaves, such as between Chandernagore and Pondicherry when this had been stopped by the home country. They also had administrative and disciplinary duties: they made decisions about the construction and the maintenance of ships and fortifications, kept a watch over the employees and the troops and had influence over the police. The Councils also played a

[140] Owen, p. 731
[141] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, vol. 3 p. 366
[142] Haudrère, pp. 327-328

political role. They were responsible for deciding about the code of conduct towards the natives and other Europeans, gave orders about acts of hostility or retaliation and dealt with peace treaties with the local powers subject to ratification by the general management. The members of the Council dispensed justice, numbering three in the civil section, five in the criminal section and one of the councilors fulfilled his duties as Prosecutor General in the name of the company. In criminal matters, the Conseils Supérieurs played the role of first degree courts with respect to Europeans and the creoles, and of last degree in the case of the natives and the slaves. They could thus also receive the appeals of judgments of the provincial councils. The decrees of the Conseils Supérieurs could be amended only by the council of the king. Finally, the Conseils Supérieurs had in the concessions of the company the duties devolved elsewhere in the seats of the admiralty.[143]

The authority of the Conseils Supérieurs was generally not well accepted by the provincial councils. In the Mascarenes, the skirmishes were constant until 1734; in India, Pondicherry complained about being badly obeyed, Chandernagore and Mahé about being badly commanded and the provincial councils made sure that one was not considerate enough towards them. The distance and the slowness of communications impeded the execution of orders and the orders and instructions had become irrelevant by the time they were received. Certain persons were not amenable to taking orders thus in 1731, Dupleix, the director in Bengal, forced by his Council, took advantage of the order given by the management to the ships of Europe to return straightaway from the exit of the Ganges to the metropolis, without stopping in Pondicherry and to send them directly to France. The number of provincial councilors was in proportion to the importance of

[143] Haudrère, pp. 327-328

the enclave: Chandernagore had seven and Mahé had three. The councilors were recruited among the employees of an immediately inferior rank. All of them were not resident members; the heads of lodges who often had the title of councilors signed resolutions when they were present at the headquarters.[144]

The powers given to the heads were extensive. The most prestigious among them, the one who was placed at the head of the establishments in India was in the middle of the 18th century: "Governor of the towns and forts of Pondicherry, and commander general of the French establishments located on the Coromandel and Malabar coasts and in the Ganges, president of all the Conseils Supérieurs as well as the Provincial Councils to command the inhabitants, clerks of the company and other employees either of pen or sword as well as officers, soldiers and men of war; to maintain trade in the enclaves of the Company in the East Indies; and to render civil as well as criminal justice."[145] The heads utilized fully the authority which was conferred upon them. The posts, far away from the metropolis, required strong personalities: "one had to know how to pamper or threaten, to know the men and the premises. Those who obtained these posts had long administrative experience: Benoit-Dumas, clerk in 1712, was then a councilor, then governor of the Mascarenes before being made the governor of Pondicherry in 1734; Dupleix, councilor in Pondicherry for ten years, was then head in Chandernagore for another ten years before becoming the head of the government in India in 1740.[146]

On May 6, 1738 the Supreme Council of Pondicherry passed a resolution to the effect of making pagoda coins of 8 1/6 touches legal tender. Pagodas of 7 ¾ touches would also be lawful conditional upon the payment of a premium of 4 pagodas.

[144] Haudrère, p. 331
[145] Haudrère, p. 332
[146] Haudrère, p. 333

Merchants and traders were warned not to transgress these rules, which would make them liable to have their coins forfeited, and to their being tried before a court of law.[147]

The Supreme Council of Pondicherry enacted another decree on February 27, 1741 whereby the European as well as the native population would be forbidden to sell "brandy, liqueurs, Batavia rum, Colombo arrack, Goa rum, pattai arrack" from March 1 to September 1 of that year. Transgressions of this decree would result in imprisonment for a year and the payment of a sum of 1, 000 pagodas.[148]

Ananda Ranga Pillai recounts an incident when the Deputy Governor of the day presided over judicial proceedings, which sentenced three lascars to be whipped in public. They would subsequently have been sentenced to death were it not for, as Pillai states, "divine mercy" and his own intervention on their behalf which underlined Pillai's far reaching influence within the administration.[149]

It cannot be said that all decrees by the Supreme Council of Pondicherry were of an impersonal nature as can be seen in the order issued by Dupleix whereby all the "merchants, officers of the Company, and other men of rank should each build a house for himself at Mortandi Chavadi." Furthermore, Mortandi Chavadi was to be named Dupleixpettai and failure by anyone to call it by this name would make him or her liable to the payment of a fine.[150]

Such apparent vanity was not inconsistent with Dupleix's aim "to impress Indian minds."[151] In order to accomplish this, he relied very much on outward manifestations of pomp and glitter. However, as Sidney Owen points out, he did so also partly or perhaps

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[147] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, vol. 1, pp. 92-93
[148] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, vol. 1, pp. 152-153
[149] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai , p. 196
[150] Ibid, p. 244
[151] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, vol. IX Intro. p. xvi

wholly with a larger strategic objective in mind, as was the case during the war with the British following their dispute over the Austrian succession. In order to redress the inadequacies of military resources and of timely aid from the navy, Dupleix projected himself to the natives as an awe-inspiring ruler with enormous political power. His display and publicity of his title of Nawab, which his predecessor Dumas had obtained, may have seemed out of proportion with his actual stature and rather ridiculous in the eyes of his compatriots but to the native, the appeal was very effective.[152]

Ananda Ranga Pillai says that at one time even though the British had received ample naval assistance, they proved to be ineffective due to the ineptitude of their Governor. This is in sharp contrast to the reputation of Dupleix who, even if he had a short supply of funds and ships and even if the population of Pondicherry was in dire straits, commanded much respect and instilled fear into his enemies.[153] Much has also been said about the bitter rivalry between Dupleix and Mahé de la Bourdonnais. In the eyes of Dupleix, the latter's conduct was entirely inappropriate and did much to hurt the reputation which he had painstakingly acquired. This reputation spread far and wide to Arcot, Mysore and all the coastal cities.[154] In an exchange between Ananda Ranga Pillai and Dupleix, the latter says that his desire is that his reputation should spread even further to the Court of Delhi. He also uses the phrase "bring home to their minds" and furthermore says, "That dog, M. de la Bourdonnais, thwarts all my designs."[155] This mentality, made of audacity and of a taste for immediate conquest, did not agree well with the character of Dupleix, whose attention was turned towards long-term projects and

[152] Sidney Owen, François Joseph Dupleix, p. 705
[153] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol. 1, pp. 299-300
[154] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol. 2, p.276
[155] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol 2, pp. 279-280

dreams. Dupleix was sentimental and sensitive; La Bourdonnais, with dark eyes and eyebrows, a long nose above a big mouth, was lively and gay, and undoubtedly rash.[156]

The "Conseil Supérieur de Pondichéry" was a creation of Louis XIV in 1701. It had more members deciding criminal cases than civil ones. Even though it did not have professional lawyers and jurists, the cases were tried in a fair and impartial manner. The Conseil Supérieur was dissolved on November 22, 1819 and was then called "Cour Royale"[157]. While the Conseil Supérieur tried cases pertaining to French citizens, the "tribunal de la Chaudrie" was constituted to dispense justice to the natives.[158]

The tribunal of the *Chaudrie* had become an institution of local law, that is, a body pertaining at the same time to both French and Indian law.[159] These rules reiterate the involvement of French authorities in judging, in civil matters, the natives according to their own law, an ancient principle which will be stated during all the big declarations (and in the last instance, for this period, by the decree of 16 January 1819 laying down the implementation by French courts of laws and customs for the people of personal status, as opposed to those who were governed by the Code civil). Criminal matters fell within the jurisdiction of the lieutenant general of police (after distinguishing his duties from those of the civil lieutenant), whose duty was to enforce police regulations and who awarded minor traditional punishments (such as whipping and mutilation of ears).[160]Right from the start, the *Chaudrie* was viewed as a typically Indian institution, located at the center of the activity zones and of the traditional habitat. It found itself at

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[156] L'aventure des Français en Inde, by Rose Vincent, Kailash Editions 1995
[157] Jaganou Diagou, Foreword.
[158]Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. ix.

[159] Jugements du Tribunal de la Chaudrie vol.1,1766-1791, Jean-Claude Bonnan, p. iv
[160] Bonnan, p. xvi

the crossroads of the three principal roads, controlled by the three doors of Madras, Villenour and Gondelour (Cuddalore), and communicated directly with the fort (and the sea) by a diagonal breach pierced across the whole building.[161] In a memorandum of 27 July 1776, Chevalier required more guarantee for the Indian subjects by a reorganization of the tribunal of the *Chaudrie* in Pondicherry and of the *Cacherie* in Chandernagore. This memorandum revealed, on the part of Chevalier, a perfect knowledge of the administration and of justice in India and a great concern for ending the abuses, which existed during his time in the French possessions of India.[162]

The Conseil Supérieur functioned normally, without any disagreement between the governor and the advisers; there was a permanent conflict only with the Council at Chandernagore of whom Dupleix was the rather undisciplined head. The other services such as the port and police also functioned with the same regularity.[163] In spite of the recent acquisition of Karaikal, from which Dumas expected great profits, Chandernagore was the second and maybe the most prosperous of the French establishments.[164] Within ten years, after a long stay in Pondicherry, Dupleix had succeeded in making this village an important town of ten thousand houses. He had revolutionized trade in practising at the same time, the export of Indian products bought on the spot and the import of European goods.[165]

In fact, the French East India Company which had full sovereignty in the countries located beyond the Cape of Good Hope and which enjoyed exclusive commercial privileges thought it convenient in the interests of its business to make the

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[161] Bonnan, p. xviii
[162] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Gaudart, Tome III, p. 160
[163] Correspondance du Conseil Supérieur de Pondichéry et de la Compagnie, Tome III, Introduction , p. xvi
[164] Correspondance du Conseil Supérieur de Pondichéry et de la Compagnie, Tome III, Introduction , p. xix
[165] Chandernagore ou le lit de Dupleix, par Georges Tailleur, p.34

judicial council an administrative one which would be a forum for discussion of matters of all kinds related to its commerce, its administration and to the expenses of its enclaves without, at the same time, ceasing to function in its capacity as a judicial council[166].

The Conseil Supérieur was divided into two parts, each one mutually tarnishing the other's reputation in bilious attacks against the Company. Dupleix was able to muster an indefectible majority thanks to his allies and friends that he was sagacious enough to bring in. Unfortunately, his conflict with Mahé de Labourdonnais and the scandalous trial that ensued caused public opinion to turn against him[167]. During British rule from 1793 to 1816, justice continued to be dispensed according to the format and laws followed in the French admininistration. Nevertheless, on June 12, 1805, the denomination and the competence of the Conseil Supérieur were changed. A court of Judicature was instituted in Pondicherry in place of the Conseil Supérieur by a decree of the Governor of Madras. It was composed of three judges and of two assessors. The Tribunal de la Chaudrie was eliminated in favor of an arbitrating chamber[168].

With the return of the French, on October 4, 1816, the Count Dupuy took care to reorganize the judicial service. By a decree of February 8, 1817, he re-established the Conseil Supérieur on the bases of the Edict of 1784 and the Provincial Councils in the secondary establishments. Soon the Royal Ordinance of November 22, 1819 gave the Conseil Supérieur the designation of Cour Royale[169].

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[166] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. ix.

[167] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p.xi
[168] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xiii-xiv
[169]Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xiv

It was with the assistance of members of the Conseil Supérieur that the Governors struck deals with the native Princes, which led to war and finally to the ruination of Pondicherry in 1761[170]. This allowed the Presidents and Members of the Conseil Supérieur to deliberate without discordance of opinion and to lead without doubt involuntarily the East India Company in perilous adventures. Related to one another by family ties, they jealously prevented intrusions into the Conseil Supérieur of all those who were not with them [171].

From the point of view of strict justice, the Conseil Supérieur never neglected its duties. It is true that the members were merchants and therefore not very conversant with legal affairs; nevertheless, the decrees of the Conseil Supérieur left nothing to be desired in terms of impartiality. Often the members of the Conseil Supérieur became prosecutors of the concerned parties. One must admit that their intervention did not endear them in the eyes of their colleagues[172]. It would not be hazardous to state that if western customs have slowly percolated in the course of time on the ways of life of Hindus, they have not modified their basic character[173]. In terms of principles of colonization, it can be said that European nations practiced in India during the 18th century politics of collaboration and of great tolerance and did not at all try to assimilate the natives of India [174]. But it did, for one thing, try to impart some instruction about its religion.

Thus on February 11, 1733 the declaration of Louis XIV made in August 1664 for the establishment of the East India Company states in its 30th article that it will impinge on the Company to establish churches in the said islands of Madagascar and other places

[170] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xiv
[171] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xiv
[172] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xv
[173] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xv
[174] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Introduction, p. xvi

that it would have conquered and in such number and of such quality that it will find appropriate for instructing the people in the catholic religion [175].

According to Article 19 of Annexe no. 1, the East India Company, in order to conciliate such disparate interests as those of the nobles, could not help recommending to the Governor and to the Conseil Supérieur to observe that every ceremony, which constituted the essence of the cult of their religion, must be wisely tolerated. In the processions, which they take out in the town, it said that it would be of great help to try to abolish their habit of wearing indecent statues or idols. They must also be encouraged to gradually reduce the pomp and glitter, to restrain them so that they take out their processions only around every pagoda and, lastly, their cult and their ceremonies must be confined to their temples. It said that it was essential that all these should take place by suggestion and consent so that they volunteer to modify their methods and are in no way dictated by any form of authority. It also similarly recommended to the missionaries of Pondicherry to plan with the governor and the Conseil Supérieur to bring forth the wise people who can be brought as the need arises and to nevertheless make any use of the people with even the most measured temperaments only after obtaining the approval of the said Company signed by its trustees and managers and planned by his Majesty's Minister, and to regulate their conduct with respect to the idolaters according to the views of the East India Company, until it pleases God to make them come out of the darkness of error to the light of truth[176].

There is some evidence of seclusion as in one of the decrees of the Conseil Supérieur whereby the Councils and heads of enclaves within the jurisdiction of the

[175] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Annexe no. 1, p. 370
[176] Gnanou Diagou, Tome 1, Annexe no. 1, pp. 374-379, Article 19

Court were meant to chose a place away from inhabited places to serve as vaults to European or Indian Catholics, which they would enclose to prevent the profanation, and would constitute the present regulation to be notified to the parish priests, chaplains and missionaries of this town to be observed by them without delay according to its form and purport and a copy sent to the presidents and seats within the jurisdiction[177].

On 18 June 1741, a declaration was made to educate slaves in the catholic religion: the order prescribed to all the employees of the Company who were owners of slaves to baptize and to raise them in the Catholic religion, failing which they would be subject to confiscation and to fines. Dumas, Dubois Rolland, Miran and Goland signed the order in Karaikal.[178]

Budgetary considerations dictated that all extraneous expenses by the Company should be reduced to a minimum. To maximize profits. The cargoes of goods imported to France also had to be of a high quality. The French East India Company also united with its former rivals the British and the Dutch to prevent the establishment of another company, which would have had the effect of reducing the quantity of goods that were imported to France. Their hostility is particularly directed against "interloping" companies, that is, those that were formed by intrepid adventurers who sought to defy the monopoly of the larger companies.[179]

Even if the European companies were united in their policy towards the interlopers, they were divided in their policy towards the local chieftains. The latter accorded the foreign community certain privileges in particular those that allowed them

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[177] Arrets du Conseil Supérieur de Pondichery, Diagou Gnanou , Tome 2, p. 20.

[178] Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française, Gaudart, Tome IV, p.7

[179] Haudrère , p. 969.

to govern themselves according to their personal law. For the Hindu rulers, this concession was designed to retain foreigners whose economic activities were profitable to them. For the Europeans, the agreement meant an ability to sign treaties and hence the recognition of an administrative hierarchy which was often in consonance with feudal norms.[180] The policy of the European companies was to obtain equal commercial treatment with the other nations as well as favors for customs. These favors were often in exchange for services provided by French doctors to Indian rulers such as the services provided by Saint-Hilaire to the Nawab of Arcot, by Joseph Devolton to the Moghul Court and by Villeneuve to the Nawab of the Deccan.[181]

This situation inevitably led to a political and military intervention by the Europeans in Indian affairs as the security and viability of commercial operations could be guaranteed only by a penetration into the hinterlands and the adversaries who were there such as the Marathas or other feudal lords who, desirous of extending or maintaining their dominions, increasingly sought the assistance of Europeans who could easily win battles with their well-equipped and disciplined armies. The acquisition of Karaikal reveals the mechanism. Karaikal, which supplied Pondicherry with food and cloth, was obtained by Benoit-Dumas from the king of Tanjavur in 1738 in exchange for financial aid given to the latter to help him fight a rival. When the king of Tanjavur subsequently refused to recognize the 'acte de concession,' Chanda Sahib, a rival of the latter, offered Karaikal to the French in 1739 in return for their support. [182]

The fact of being well organized and disciplined is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the armies to be effective. This axiom can be illustrated by the observation

[180] Haudrère, p. 975
[181] Haudrère, p. 975
[182] Haudrère, p. 976

that in 1947, the large and very well equipped British army could not defeat the *unarmed* Indians who were inspired by Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence.[183] Thus the nature of the social organization in which it operates determines the potency of the organizational and technical strengths of the army. According to J.H. Parry, "the institutional structure of the modern European state, interlacing war and trade in conflict with other states, is a key organizational element in the expansion."[184] According to W.H. McNeill, the West was in a more advantageous position due to a combination of a "firm belief in their own institutions, together with burgeoning numbers, the world's most powerful weapons and most efficient network of transportation and communications."[185]

In a strikingly synchronized manner, while the attacks against the French Company multiplied themselves, the British Company was also threatened. Finding itself on the verge of bankruptcy after the costly conquests of Clive, it was subjected to the joint actions of Parliament and of the unhappy stockbrokers who reproached the administration for its arbitrary power and its bad management of the revenues from Bengal. It must be noted that the suspension of the French Company in 1769 was also followed by the reduction of the monopoly of the Danish Company in 1772.[186]

There was an essential difference between the British and the French East India Companies. Undoubtedly, the East India Company was, like the French Company, a commercial undertaking, subjected to a budgetary equilibrium and in London as in Paris one was hostile towards expensive military or naval operations. Clive was recalled as was Dupleix. However, the British Company was first of all a corporation of merchants

[183] Gayl D. Ness and William Stahl, 'Western Imperialist Armies in Asia,' p. 2.
[184] Gayl D. Ness and William Stahl, 'Western Imperialist Armies in Asia,' p. 3.

[185] Gayl D. Ness and William Stahl, 'Western Imperialist Armies in Asia,' p. 3.
[186] Haudrère, p. 1124

and shipowners, knowing how to watch over their particular interests, while having the support of the navy, ready to fulfill its principal mission which was to come to the rescue of the merchants. For Great Britain, a naval state, the essential was on sea, and the interventions on the continent remained secondary.[187]

From the middle of the eighteenth century, land wars became more significant than maritime technology as "land wars were required to establish modern colonial control."[188] The conflict between the French and the British was inevitable due to their respective attempts at filling in the political void caused by the death of Aurangzeb and the decline of the Mughal Empire. This was at the time of the European war of Austrian succession (1746-48) and the Seven Years War (1756-63). The French were the ultimate losers in this conflict, which can be attributed largely to the naval superiority of the British who were able to replenish their troops much more easily than the French.[189]With the departure of Dupleix, the grandeur of Pondicherry had gone with him.

The other major cause of the defeat of the French can be attributed not so much to the corruption of the French administration but to the mutual jealousies of the officers, which prevented the establishment of a genuine *esprit de corps*. It can be said, however, that corruption during the rule of Dupleix was an inherent vice. This corruption took the form of bribes taken by Dupleix, Bussy and their subordinates as well as the peculation rampant in their administration. This was undoubtedly a sore point. If the administration had been less corrupt the troops could have been paid on time which would have made them more disciplined and enabled them to fight with greater valor leading to more

[187] Haudrère, p. 1184
[188] Gayl D. Ness and William Stahl, 'Western Imperialist Armies in Asia,' p. 4.

[189] Gayl D. Ness and William Stahl, 'Western Imperialist Armies in Asia,' pp.5-8.

victories. It cannot, however, be said that even though corruption was an inherent weakness it was the reason for the administration's collapse. This can be borne out by the fact that the British administration of Bengal starting from the time of the Battle of Plassey to the time of the arrival of Cornwallis was not in fact any less corrupt; the same can also be said of the British administration of Madras which was in place from the fall of Pondicherry to the time of the assumption of the Carnatic even though it fared slightly better than the administration of Dupleix. It can furthermore be said that the administration of all tropical colonies of the eighteenth century whether they be the Portuguese rule in Mozambique, the Dutch rule in Java or of that of any colonial power in the West Indies was characterized by inherent corruption. This thus was not in itself an impediment towards the establishment of colonial control. M. Martineau very aptly summarized the situation by saying that "L'esprit de discipline et de méthode qui, dans la paix, prépare la force des nations, fut tout à fait étranger à la plupart des conseils qui administrèrent nos dependances." [190]

To think that the Seven Years War and the treaty of Paris (1763) had shown to the Indian powers the striking superiority of England over France is a perspective of the mind and a posterior analysis of history which disguises, sometimes in a grotesque manner, reality. Barnett was right in stressing that in the course of this decade the superiority of the British power had only been partially established in India. The success of Dupleix, the remarkable achievements of Bussy and the disaster of Lally left a rather complex and imprecise image of the relations of force between the French and the British. Nothing was yet decided in the eyes of the native princes and governments, and the worries expressed by the British agents with respect to French officers suddenly scattered in the

[190] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol. IX, Introduction, pp. xi-xii

independent territories reinforced even more in the eyes of these governments the impression of precariousness which was that of the British authorities in the annexed territories.[191]

The establishment of a French empire in India would certainly have changed the orientation of India significantly. If the powers that be in Paris and the stockholders of the East India Company were less concerned with obtaining immediate profits and were instead interested in diligently penetrating the interior of the country, they might have been more successful in obtaining larger chunks of the Indian booty. The recall of Dupleix by the East India Company's Board of Directors in Paris symbolized the end of any such possibility. However, the French presence that began with the acquisition of Pondicherry did leave some imprints. It is therefore the degree of their influence, which will be gauged in subsequent chapters.

[191] Jean-Marie Lafont, p. 85

Chapter 2

The Nineteenth Century:

Towards "francisation" or back to Indianization?

Following the articles of the treaty of peace, signed in Paris on 30 May 1814, and in the convention of 7 March 1815, the French establishments lost during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were returned to France. However, the official handing over of Pondicherry was made only on 4 December 1816 by Captain Y.S. Fraser to the Governor, Count Dupuy. Chandernagore was returned the same day, Karaikal on 14 January 1817, Mahé on February 22 and Yanam on April 12. In the treaty of Paris, two articles were of significant importance to the French establishments in India, namely *Articles* 11 and 12. According to *Article* 11, the places and forts existing in the colonies and establishments would be returned to France in the same conditions in which they were at the signing of the treaty. According to *Article* 12, the British government would extend a most favored nation status to the subjects of the French government especially in relation to commerce and to the security of its people and property within the limits of British sovereignty in the Indian subcontinent. On her part France would not build any fortifications in the Establishments being returned to her and that she would keep no troops than necessary for police duties.[192]

In the nineteenth century, France resigned itself to playing a subsidiary role vis-à-vis the British in India. British supremacy in India in the 19th century resulted in an attitude of prudence and realism on the part of the French. This meant that Pondicherry, Karaikal, Chandernagore, Mahé and Yanam would remain enclaves and nothing more. France would develop trade, and where possible, agriculture and industry. These would

[192] Les Faits Marquants de l'Inde Française au XIXe siècle, by Jaganou Diagou, pp. 1-2

be in the interests not only of its navy and its traders but also of the local population whose well-being was to be a constant concern of the administration. As suggested by the king to Count Dupuy, in order to entice the people who have left this territory to come back to it one would have to provide them with the same resources which they found prior to leaving it. The re-establishment of trade in these parts would take a while. In the mean time, presenting them with a friendly government, an equitable administration and the protection, which one could extend to them, could bring the Indian families back.[193]

While the westerner looks towards the future, the Indian looks towards the past. Nothing is more precious to him than his religious and cultural heritage; nothing is more valuable to him than the honor of his caste. Indifferent to foreign rulers who respect his laws, he would find it difficult to accept those who want to impose upon him their conception of society and its ideal of progress. Talking about the colonies in general, Paul Bert used to say that one should put the native in a position where he would have to choose between either assimilating himself or being wiped out completely. He overlooked the fact that there was indeed a third choice, which was that of revolt against French rule and of its complete elimination.[194]

The delicate problem of the delimitation of French possessions, which was almost invariably resolved in favor of the British and in violation of the rights of Louis XVIII would, right from the beginning poison the relations between the two powers and put France in a position of inferiority and in a state of humiliation from which she would never be able to extricate herself. All the differences, which, under the Restoration and the July Monarchy, between the French and the British whether they related to irrigation

[193] Les Etablissements français en Inde au XIXe siècle (1816-1914) , Jacques Weber, Vol. 1, p. 6 Introduction
[194] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 10 Introduction

or to customs' duties, were in effect, always resolved to the advantage of the stronger party.[195] The British had achieved their aims namely to have reduced to nothing a profitable activity, weakened the revenues of the French government and conferred on their East India Company a new monopoly. Gradually the rupee of Pondicherry went out of circulation and the rupee of the British East India Company was imposed on French India.[196]

Harassed on the outside by a resolute adversary, French India was, during the ten years of the Dupuy government, gnawed by the venality and corruption of its administrators who were men of the 18th century and who were too inclined to sacrifice the interests of the state in favor of their own narrow interests.[197] Being answerable only to a distant governor, some of these heads of enclaves did not wait too long before beginning to behave like absolute sovereigns and treating their colony as their personal property. Besides they had the advantage of the benevolence towards them of Count Dupuy who, in Pondicherry itself, tolerated many abuses of power from his heads of service and from subordinate civil servants.[198] While, demoralized by the absence of authority and the economic decline of the colony, the local population migrated to British territory or plunged itself into the darkest of miseries, the governor taking pleasure in a thousand trifles establishing a court and an etiquette that were reminiscent of the Court of Versailles. [199]

In order to develop education, which had been neglected by the administration of Count Dupuy, the vicomte Desbassayns established the Collège Royal on October 25,

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[195] Weber, vol. 1, p. 11
[196] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 98
[197] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 128
[198] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 133
[199] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 138

1826. The latter being reserved for Europeans, he endowed Pondicherry and Karaikal with free schools for Indians (orders of February 1, 1827). Finally, on 21 July1828 he opened, at headquarters, a free school for the pariahs, showing that his concern extended to all classes of the population. Desirous of making French culture accessible to the greatest number of people, he decreed, on 16 May 1827, a regulation for the establishment of the public library of Pondicherry. He was also interested in the cleaning up and the beautification of the headquarters: on 6 July 1827, he gave orders to prolong the canal separating the black town from the white and to construct an esplanade on the seaside: the Cours Chabrol. He endowed Pondicherry with a central bazaar, a large and airy place that guaranteed to the black town especially advantages and invaluable commodities.[200] Desirous of taking the Créoles out of poverty, he reorganized, on 24 July 1826, the committee of charity and created workshops of charity. He hoped thus to provide means of employment to individuals, white, métis or topas, who had no proper means of livelihood; this was a philanthropic aim if there ever was one and whose achievement has alleviated much suffering and poverty.[201]Preoccupied by the betterment of the lot of the Créoles, Desbassayns saw himself above all else as the advocate of the interests of Indians, for whom he endeavored to provide protection of the law, and thus shield them from arbitrariness. He was assisted in this task by the prosecutor general Moiroud who was, according to Eugène Sicé, his "intimate advisor." Welcoming the governor de Mélay, who succeeded Desbassayns, Moiroud declared that with the latter, a new era had begun for the Indians.[202]

[200] Weber, Vol. 1, p.177
[201] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 177
[202] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 177

Filliard used to repeatedly say, "in such a way as to force the deaf to hear him", that there was "no country which was sadder and more badly governed than the French establishments in India". He used to attribute this situation to the "monstrous mania" which the governors had, as soon as they had arrived in a country where they were ignorant of everything, to legislate without taking into account Indian laws and the actions of their predecessors. What should be reprehended and stopped, according to him, within the limits of what was possible was this deplorable mania for everyone arriving from France to make laws for the "débotté." [203]For some people, the decree of 27 March 1840 was nothing more than a vengeance perpetrated by a governor against a Créole population, which was more and more critical of his attitude and his politics. They estimated as well that de Saint-Simon, on whom rested many serious charges of despotism, needed to counterbalance the charges by some trickery of liberalism or rather of demagogy.[204]

The implementation of the decree of 23 July 1840 calling for the adoption of an assembly where the Indians would have half the seats, which was in favor of the Europeans, was to be at the origin of the first movement of opposition to French presence, indeed of an embryonic nationalism, which du Camper himself admitted at the end of the term of his government. The establishment of this institution had given rise among the most powerful natives by virtue of their wealth or education, to ideas which had till then lain dormant in the shadow of very different laws and customs, and had aroused a competitive spirit and rivalry between the two populations, European and native, which would increase as they became more enlightened. They would put aside

[203] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 197
[204] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 205

the bad advice of some Europeans.[205]According to Weiss, the tax collector of Pondicherry, the Indian people, being indolent and superstitious, needed to be supported, and be kept an eye on by an authority, which alone, with its moral ascendancy, could extract some work out of it. Furthermore, he said that a government, no matter which, is always, if it has lasted as long as the governments of India, the moral voice of the populations it governs.[206]

It was as much to supply to each service competent personnel as to open interesting careers for the young Créoles that the viscount Desbassayns had created by an order of 29 October 1827, under the name of "children of language", an institution which was destined to become the breeding ground for the government, for the tribunals, for the police etc… In the absence in France of a colonial school or of an institution similar to the British "Civil Service", the "children of language" were meant to remedy the insufficiencies and deficiencies of the workforce. But this institution rapidly became obsolete. It finally disappeared in 1838.[207] Desbassayns counted less and less in fact on the Créoles of Pondicherry who had "neither industry, nor capital nor energy." He doubted even that the important fiscal advantages and the generous allowances that the government was going to offer to the industrialists would get them to come out of idleness.[208]

The question of determining who the land belonged to became the object of a sterile debate to the extent that one wanted to find in the Indian tradition a Western concept foreign to the country and to revive, according to the expression of Marcel

[205] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 224
[206] Weber, Vol. 1, pp. 273-274
[207] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 280
[208] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 362

Mauss, "the native rights of the Code civil." From the laborer to the sovereign, including the multiple servants of the aldées, the farmers and deputy farmers of the lands, so many people enjoyed a part of the harvest, that it was difficult to declare that the land was the exclusive property of just one person.[209] Cordier said that he was convinced from the experience he had acquired at Karaikal, that the black Indian would not do anything unless he was driven, but that when he saw that someone was interested in his fate, that one was seeking ways to improve his situation, then he would be re-invigorated and he would no longer be the same man. According to him, in all classes, when the leader took interest in the fate of his subordinates, everything worked with rapidity and advantage.[210]

When Joseph Dayot arrived in Chandernagore, he remarked that nowhere had governments demonstrated greater ingenuity in inventing means of obtaining money than in the countries under the domination of Asian sovereigns. Furthermore, he said that not content with subjecting to law everything that the land and water could provide as outputs, everything that the industry could offer as means of subsistence, their cupidity extended to the basest of objects left to the misery of the people.[211] It had been said that the phlegmatic British did not like industry in India and that they preferred much more commerce and hence, industry was more suitable for French activities. Furthermore, it was French industry, which had inspired the British to have an industry in India.[212]

In conformity with mercantilist principles of which it was an essential component, the Executive system revolved on the idea that the colonies existed only to ensure the enrichment of the metropolis. The latter claimed its monopoly of all commercial

[209] Weber, Vol. 1, p.290
[210] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 304
[211] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 323
[212] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 411

relations with the colony.[213] The enclaves maintained commercial relations with only one colony, namely Bourbon. In spite of the prohibitive tariffs on goods from India from 1826 onwards, the balance of trade of the five enclaves seemed even more excessive with this island than with France or with other foreign countries.[214] For most civil servants, French India was equivalent to Pondicherry. The sole purpose of the existence of an establishment as productive as Karaikal was to cater to the needs of the headquarters; as for the other enclaves, they were the object of contempt of the arrogant Pondicherrian society who viewed them as nothing more than currency of exchange for the enlargement of the territory of the capital of French India.[215]

Some sections among Indians were deprived of aid once when a cyclone had caused damage. This led Du Camper to state that the Indian knew often how to suffer without complaining. He attributed his misfortunes to providence while they might be due to none other than the decisions of men.[216]There was yet another distribution of funds in 1832. In this allocation the Indians, who constituted the poorest elements of the population, were not the best supplied. The decree of 1826 provided that the class "of Whites would receive more than the Topas and these more than the Indians." The maximum of the monthly compensation was thus fixed at 15 rupees for the Whites and at 4 rupees for the Topas and the Indians. [217]

In India, both the British and the French found themselves confronted with an ancient, original civilization and an apparently dislocated society which nevertheless

[213] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 375
[214] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 390
[215] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 427
[216] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 472
[217] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 476

possessed a profound cohesion .[218] The European, who found the Muslim too fanatical and the Catholic too little in conforming to evangelical principles, felt a certain sympathy for the Hindu. No doubt he reproached him for having many defects, but he recognized in him an incomparable softness of character. [219] Even if founded on a notion which shocked them, that of the pure and the impure, the structure of the village filled most Europeans with admiration: a member of parliament would write, "the classification of the dwellers by profession means that one lives comfortably; the weavers are assembled in their street; the jewelers, the grocers, the shoemakers in theirs and so on." A westernized Indian would assert "this organization facilitates social life". [220]

If it was difficult for the Indian to escape the attraction of as strong a tradition and social organization as Hinduism and the caste mentality, it was impossible for the foreigner to escape its influence. Islam and above all Chistianity had been profoundly "Indianized". The two communities both Muslim and Christian, seduced by the religious exuberance of the Hindus, had thus adopted certain "Malabar rites." Far from maintaining a certain cohesion, which is often indispensable for minorities, they had fractured themselves into numerous groups resembling as many castes. [221] The Catholic religion, preaching nothing new, had thus not been able to interest the Hindus; a certain sect, out of politeness, had put Jesus Christ among the incarnations of Vishnu, in a haphazard way with Buddha, with the turtle, the fish, the boar and the other incarnations…[222] In French territory, the Catholic property owners had progressively become city dwellers. While some enriched themselves thanks to commerce, others,

[218] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 480
[219] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 484
[220] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 541
[221] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 553
[222] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 575

owing to their intellectual accomplishments, attained high administrative or judicial positions. Curious about everything, they took interest in French civilization, gave up some of their customs, and became non-vegetarian and ended by converting themselves. Their fellow beings, who dominated the rural regions, remained on the contrary the most solid defenders of brahmanical values. [223] India was obviously not the only country where the Catholic Church might have had to allow the survival of pagan beliefs and rites among its proselytes. But nowhere had the clergy had to make as many concessions.[224]

The closeness that the Indian would exhibit towards the French had on many occasions been remarked upon by devoted civil servants who would explain it by the affinities which existed between these two people namely having the same liveliness of spirit, the same softness of style, the same sense of humanity and of the primacy of spiritual values, while other European people were more dogmatic and tentative. The Frenchman was equally more informal, more of an obedient child, more accessible than the Englishman for whom the Indian remained the "Native" not admitted to his clubs and very rarely to his receptions. The Indian was very sensitive to the distance between him and the British colonizer.[225]The pariahs were the most Francophile along with the Christians, undoubtedly because many found a remunerative job in the big European or Creole houses. In 1828, the head of the pariahs, Tandavayaren, explained to Desbassayns that those of his caste were more inclined and willing to serve the French nation; because in their service with the Whites they were not discriminated against, but were brought up and treated like their children, so that they had always desired the good of European gentlemen. That was why other castes were constant enemies of the supplicant as well as

[223] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 578
[224] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 594
[225] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 607

of his caste because he had always differed from their expressed views against the whites.[226]

Some others thought that if Indians lacked energy in general, one could also say that their audacity increased in proportion to the weakness of those whom they wanted to resist and that only one demonstration with fifty or so French soldiers would be enough to make them give up everything. [227]

A little after they settled down in Pondicherry, the French understood that they would not be able to impose their own laws on Indians and that the respect of the Hindu religion and of the laws governing the family and society would be the condition *sine qua non* for their remaining in the colony.[228] The nation committed itself from the beginning of its establishment in Pondicherry to judging the Malabaris and other Indians who would resort to French courts, in accordance with the moral code, customs and Malabar laws. The civil lieutenant in this respect would comply with what had been the practice until then at the civil headquarters of the chaudrie. [229] Later on, the Prosecutor General Ristelhueber took to criticizing the entire republican policy of assimilation by saying that France wanted to do everything in its image and would lose its self esteem if the least bit of French soil did not enjoy somehow this beautiful political organization of which universal suffrage was the basis. [230]

Mahé of which one had been able to say that it was "less a town than a garden where one has constructed houses", was an immense coconut plantation. The exploitation of this tree was, by far, the principal activity in this enclave and it was

[226] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 609
[227] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 615
[228] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 616
[229] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 617
[230] Weber, Vol. 1, p. 680

thought by the French that being slaves of their habits the Indians would not know how to change them under this relationship and even if they wanted to they would not be able to since Mahé was then just a forest consisting of these trees. The sun would no longer have an effect on secondary vegetation. Besides one could not blame them for it in as much as they knew how to especially take advantage of the coconut tree. [231] The Indian and especially the Indian of Yanam being the enemy of all innovation, no attempt had ever been made to improve the state of cultivations. One had tried to introduce the cultivation of cotton and of tobacco, but on such a small scale that one would not have been able to say anything about it. Cotton had succeeded, as well as tobacco; but the one and the other were of bad quality.[232]

Louis de Charolais got to know in Pondicherry a rich, intelligent but also a "strangely Indianized" European who before establishing himself in a house, would look for omens and would get the Brahmans to intervene. A crate had to be placed on an auspicious alignment and in accordance with the state of constellations in the sky. If commerce prospered, everything would be maintained in the same state; not a single nail would be displaced. If, on the other hand, business were to go badly, one would dismantle everything from top to bottom.[233]Many Créoles had also adopted the way of life of those whom they considered inferior. According to the strict J. de Quennefer, women in particular allowed themselves to be influenced by the "stupid and corrupt" customs of their Indian surroundings. Furthermore, he thought that it was notorious that some among them ate like the natives, chewed betelnuts and areca, applied coconut oil

[231] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 877
[232] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 883
[233] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 1242

and passed their days squatting on mats, in the midst of black servants who delicately tickled the soles of their feet with peacock feathers.[234]

The dobachi was the first domestic servant of a well organized household, a kind of steward, advocate of Figaro and of Caleb, an intermediary of all business and pleasure transactions speaking either English or French always accompanying his master of whom he was the trusted adviser; sly, flattering, insinuating with him, but standing up with arrogance in front of the other domestic servants. A person of such talents was indispensable to every European. If the latter went out on foot, his dobachi covered his head under a large parasol; if he went out on a palanquin, the dobachi walked on besides the window, with a bamboo in hand to keep the onlookers at bay; if he was in a car, the loyal servant latched on to him in the vehicle.[235]

The European, if not the Créole, could not bear to eat curries, which would inflame his palate. He wanted to eat "the French way". One admittedly found all the necessary foodstuffs: the fruits and vegetables "of Europe" were cultivated in the Island of coconut trees not far from the town; cherries, peaches, strawberries, etc. were evidently in short supply but could be replaced by mangoes, guavas, papayas and other local fruits. Game was abundant in the hinterland; the Indian Ocean was full of fish and, in spite of religious taboos, the Hindus tolerated the slaughter of a few cattle for the consumption of the Whites. Abundant and varied, and not in the least bit heavy, this food was nevertheless of a mediocre quality. The butcher's meat, game and fish were not tastier than these painted wooden dishes one finds in the meals of comedy.[236]

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[234] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 1242
[235] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 1245
[236] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 1245

A minority of Europeans, not interested in social events, still found life in Pondicherry thrilling . Seduced by India, these inquisitive spirits devoted themselves to meticulous research: Perrottet studied botany, Ariel, the secretary of the government, as well as the magistrates Laude and Esquer were interested in Hindu jurisprudence and in the caste system. Laude also published the results of his Statistical studies on the population of the establishments of Pondicherry and Karaikal. It is however Doctor Huillet who conducted the best observations on the demographic behavior of Indians. [237]One of the main and specific charges the administrators of India leveled against successive metropolitan governments was that they did not accord to this colony the place it ought to have had due to the size of its population and to the revenues that this population generated.[238]

From the contradiction between the political principles of metropolitan France and the state of Indian society was born a hybrid constitution: liberal and democratic because of the rights it conferred on its population, decentralizing because of the local assemblies it instituted but also conservative, because of the primacy it ensured for the Europeans and paternalistic, because of the absolute power it conferred on the governor.[239] The conservatives appealed to the good sense of the government whom they reminded that the near totality of Indians were not only illiterate, as were a great number of voters in metropolitan France at that time, but also that they were ignorant of the French language. Completely alien to French values, the Indians did not understand anything about the institutions that one endowed them with: “the population”, according

[237] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 1250
[238] Weber, Vol. 2, p. 1254
[239] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1353

to Michaux, "does not at all think about institutions which it does not know and of which it does not understand the mechanism."[240]

In imposing administrative and political assimilation on the colony before achieving cultural assimilation, France was, according to the conservatives, placing the cart before the horse. One would have needed to initiate Indians to French civilization, "to have placed without bounds at their disposal all the riches of science and of Western culture", as did the British for decades, to enable them to finally benefit from metropolitan institutions whose "mechanism" would no longer have been a mystery for them.[241]The French had succeeded, better than any other nation, in earning the loyalty of Indians while still respecting their traditions. They took care to show the greatest deference for the desires of princes with whom they found themselves in contact and to try to gain their confidence by recognizing their power and authority. In other words, their policy was to adopt as much as possible the customs of the natives…the French were the only European nation for whom the natives had a real sympathy of which they constantly furnished proofs. These principles had allowed Dupleix to build in a very short time a considerable empire. Neglect of these principles had precipitated the loss of Lally-Tollendal. Since 1819, in committing himself to respecting the ways and customs of Indians, Count Dupuy had revived the policy of Dupleix.[242]

The social peace prevalent since then in the entire colony would be compromised, according to the conservatives, if, departing from her secular policy of respect for the *mamoul* (tradition) and of the hierarchy of castes, France wanted to impose its

[240] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1370
[241] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1372
[242] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1374

institutions, and notably universal suffrage, thus placing the pariah on an equal footing with the Brahman. A war of castes would be the consequence of such an initiative.[243]

It is Ristelhueber who best summarized the arguments of those who thought European institutions to be incompatible with the values of Indian civilization. He asked what there was in this world that was more radically incompatible with Indian civilization, which is essentially of a theocratic and feudalistic nature, than the democratic institutions of France, even when finely modified and amended. The system of castes, with its "merciless hierarchy and stupid formalism," left no place for the principle of equality, an essential basis of the French political and social system. But this was the smallest of the chasms that separated them. The language, the religion, the customs, the composition of the family, still controlled despotically according to the laws of Manu, preceding the Christian era by 800 years, created between them an abyss that was even more insurmountable. The canal, which bisected Pondicherry into a white and a black town, was nothing but an imperfect symbol of these incompatibilities. They the sovereigns, the outwardly honored and respected masters, were in the Indian consciousness, pariahs. Ristelhueber was convinced that this respect, which the Europeans enjoyed, even if it were only outward, would disappear once authority would have passed from them into the hands of Indian élites.[244]

As estimated by Ristelhueber, order in India depended on the concentration of powers. Their "scattering can only cause confusion." According to him, nowhere was the principle of authority more respected than in India. The respect was in some ways in the genius of these people accustomed to obedience by a social organization knowingly put

[243] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1374-1375
[244] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1378

together to facilitate domination. Furthermore, he said that in India, the governor symbolized sovereignty; he was the Sultan and the Raja. "You only need to touch his power; scatter it within the hands of the masses; call everyone to say his word on the things of the other world which are for him absolutely 'lettres closes' and you will see what will become of respect."[245]

As soon as Governor Faron arrived in the colony, there was a concerted campaign against him. His adversaries hoped that the weakening of his power would facilitate the investment of powers in the elected councils. The columns of "Le Courrier de l'Inde française" were sympathetic to the cause of Faron's adversaries. The conflict began in December 1872, the day after the opening of the first session of the colonial council. In his speech, Faron had declared that "liberal institutions based on universal suffrage" must "operate with great care in a country whose social organization rests on the hierarchy of castes." "Le Courrier" had responded by saying that universal suffrage would be "an admirably fruitful seed of civilization" and would contribute towards putting an end to the "arbitrary and aristocratic tendencies" of the governor. Even if their duty seemed "very arduous" due to the "least bit of indulgence" on the part of the head of the colony towards them, the elected members of the council were requested by the editors of "Le Courrier" to keep their calm.[246]

They urged the Indian colonial councilors not to be deterred by this attitude which was akin to intimidation; that they should remain calm in the face of the violence which might ensue; that the importance of their mandate, and the sacred interests of their fellow-citizens be incessantly present in their minds: every fit of anger, even as a

[245] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1379
[246] Weber, Vol. 3, pp.1379-1380

reaction, would be enough for the administrative authority to act, and it would not help them in the cause of which they were the defenders. They appealed therefore to their councilors to appear as patient, persevering and calm as they were energetic. They asked the councilors to remain "right", which they were, and that they should leave to others the means of intimidation, which were appropriate only to the defenders of bad causes.[247]

The subsequent support of Paris and the formal denunciation of the colonial council lent some credence to Faron. Confronted by the "rowdy members of the local council and of the colonial council of Pondicherry who, inebriated by their initial successes," sought by all means to extend their influence, the governor estimated that he could no longer administer the colony unless he enjoyed the full and unconditional support of the Minister. Faron stressed that he had even more need of this support so much so that, if he were deprived of it, he would have no more strength left for doing any good. As it was, it was becoming difficult to administer with the help of liberal institutions based on universal suffrage, this small territory characterized by hierarchy, caste privileges, rivalries of religion and three different councils ready to deprive him of any initiative, not to speak of local passions and divisions, nor of embarrassments caused by some civil servants. For the past 60 years, the inhabitants of India had acquired the habit of placing their confidence in the governors which was beneficial to them; but at that moment, with the publication of a French journal printed in Madras and which bore no responsibility and escaped all repression, they were taught not to rely in any way on an impotent authority and even not to respect it any more. What would he be able to do if he were to be deprived of the support of the Minister?[248]

[247] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1380
[248] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1389

For Inspector Trillard, the open conflict between the administration and the elected officials was more serious than the struggles between Whites and Blacks in the Caribbean because it discredited the authorities. Undoubtedly the sessions of the elected assemblies were, notably in Martinique, very stormy. Nevertheless, according to Trillard, one must say that in such a constricted environment as that of the French enclaves, where the slightest incident had immediate repercussions, where everyone knew everyone else, where everything degenerated into personal animosities, where public opinion, having an influence only in a forcibly restricted circle, escaped the fluctuations and currents which could elsewhere modify its direction, these struggles and agitations of political life had a particular importance and influence. They posed a true danger: the weakening of the moral authority of the head of the colony, of his predominance on which the public order had so far depended in a country where the European element was absorbed in the bulk of the native population. Under this relationship, the organization, which was decreed in 1872, had a really defective aspect, even an extreme vice in that, far from preserving the moral authority of the governor, it made it vulnerable to legal attacks.[249]For Trillard, the best solution for the colony would have been the suppression, pure and simple, of the colonial council. A municipal organization copied on that of Madras would be in his eyes the response to the "needs and the state" of the colony. The governor would then be given the task of choosing the municipal councilors, of whom some could, if the need arose, be seated in the administrative council in which the official members would largely be in the majority. This solution, while giving the population its due representation, would have dispensed with elections, universal suffrage being barely applicable to a colony divided among different races, religions and castes and where the certification of

[249] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1393-1394

nationality and of the civil state were impossible. Trillard, however, did not think that the government would have taken a step backward. If the constitution of 1872 were to be kept as it was, it was necessary, according to him, for the minister to extend the governor his full support and to intervene eventually against the councilors who were not duly respectful towards the authorities. [250]

In India, the foes of assimilation had advocated the abolition of the seat of India in Parliament. The rowdy Montclar, who had supported the candidature of Sandouodéar and who mocked the Hécquet committee with the incendiary articles which he published in "Le Courrier", beseeched the Count de Richemont in December 1871 to be so patriotic as to eliminate the Indian seat in Parliament as her social, religious and political make up did not allow this innovation which would result in the progressive and final decline of French influence in these five dispersed enclaves, at considerable distance one from another, surrounded by the British Indian Empire. [251]

While the provisions relating to the Senate in the constitutional law of 24 February 1875 had given the right to be represented in this assembly to the populations of the Reunion islands, of Martinique, of Guadeloupe and of the French establishments in India, the representative of the right, Champvallier, suggested the elimination of the representation of these colonies in the Chamber. Champvallier obviously invoked other arguments in support of his proposition. A native of Martinique, he feared that universal suffrage might confer predominance to people of color, to the detriment of the Créoles: "More than anyone else, the white Créole race needs security, protection to attract

[250] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1394
[251] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1395

European capital, to organize work, to establish enclaves etc."[252]For de Richemont, an adversary of Champvallier, Indians were French, many belonging "to the same race as us" and observing, with a few exceptions, French laws. According to him, Indians were subjected to French law in its entirety, that is to the five codes: the civil code, the code of civil procedure, the penal code, the code of criminal investigation and the code of commerce, with this sole exception that, when they wanted to, eventually, as they had guaranteed to them their full religious liberty, they could claim the application of their ancient laws on marriage and successions.[253]Assimilation was neither a chimera, as was suggested by Champvallier, nor a cause of disorder. It would not lead to the crushing of the Whites by the Blacks, as could be demonstrated by the results of the first elections: "of the nine representatives of the colonies, eight are white and of these eight whites six are Créoles." At the general council of Martinique, there were decidedly only eleven Whites out of twenty-four members, but they had the presidency and the vice-presidency. In Guadeloupe they had the majority and, in the Reunion islands, they had all the seats. As he put it, "this is how the negroes and the mulattoes in all our colonies seek to take the place of the Whites!"[254]

Vellaja Ponnoutambypoullé who, in 1877, replaced Hécquet, wanted not only political and administrative assimilation but also cultural and moral. Indians should not have been content with the institutions of metropolitan France and the latter must not have required their submission to the code civil as the distant outcome of their adherence to republican principles of government. For Ponnoutamby, France should have, at the same time that she granted India parliamentary and local representation, encouraged its

[252] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1396-1397
[253] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1398
[254] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1401-1402

inhabitants to renounce their personal laws.[255]Ponnoutamby began his crusade against the *mamoul* and caste in 1873. While he was a licensed advocate, he appeared in court dressed in hat and stockings, wearing European shoes, in the process scandalizing everyone. Article 188 of the order of 7 February 1842 with respect to the judicial organization of the colony in fact stipulated that Indian advocates should wear in court the costume appropriate to their caste.[256] Ponnoutamby was forbidden from entering the court for ten days for having violated the *mamoul*, disrupted the order and ignored the authority of the governor in matters of caste. He appealed this decision and was defended in France by Jules Godin who asked the Cours de Cassation to decide the following question namely whether an Indian wearing European shoes was committing an irreverent act in not taking off his shoes in front of the people to whom he owes reverence. [257] The Court replied negatively; the judgment rendered in Pondicherry was nullified and Faron was criticized by the Minister, d'Hornoy, who, in his dispatch of 3 June 1873, recommended a policy of progress in the matter of customary laws. According to him, the thinking of the French government had always been to respect the customs and beliefs of Indians, but not to impose this respect if they would rather distance themselves from it. Consequently, he should have thought of intervening only in a case where trespasses committed by one caste against the prerogatives of another, gave rise to complaints on the part of the latter. Other than these cases, the natural role of the government was abstention.[258]

[255] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1410
[256] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1410-1411
[257] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1412-1413
[258] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1413

"The ridiculous matter of 'footwear'" had in fact divided public opinion: all of French India took a position either for or against the wearing of footwear. The question of assimilation, which until now was of interest only to Europeans, henceforth began agitating Indians. Everyone had understood the significance of the incident of shoes, which was ridiculous only in appearance. There was henceforth in the colony, facing the majority of traditionalist Indians, a minority, tiny but undoubtedly very decisive, whose ambition was to substitute the Code Civil for the laws of Manu.[259]

Desirous of breaking away from morals and customs which were "outdated and no more in use", Samymodéliar and Annassamy invoked the judgment of the Cours de Cassation in 1852 and the ministerial dispatch of 3 June 1873, written to Faron by d'Hornoy the day after the publication of the decree nullifying the judgment rendered in Pondicherry in the matter of the "stockings and shoes." They reminded the colonial councilors, whom they were addressing, that "never has it entered the consciousness of the government to restrict them to vegetate in that from which they would like to come out." It was high time "to let them quickly accomplish the moral revolution which had proceeded step by step for nearly a century". It was necessary, at least for Christian Indians, to emerge from the control of the clergy and to enter the common law of French citizens and to marry according to civil law. In 1855, the government was pleased to order a religious marriage to be entered in a civil register. The institution of civil marriage would constitute the end of a long evolution tending to bring Indian Christians closer to those of France. They were of the view that even though a large number of their ancestors had been converted to Christianity, many Indians progressed only haltingly towards the adoption of another order based on the values introduced by the Gospel, the

[259] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1414

principle of equality before the law, humanism and European civilization. They had, in a manner of speaking, arrived at the end of a transition. From then on the duty to address their legitimate aspirations, both in matters of law and philosophical, was incumbent upon the French administration.[260]

Civil marriage had never been imposed on Indians because of the impossibility for women to appear in public, and consequently to go to the town hall, before the birth of their first child. Furthermore, brahmanical rites forbade young couples from leaving their houses before one had removed the "cappou", the cord which was tied on their forearm on the eve of marriage. However, according to Samy and Annassamy, the fastening of the cappou was not the custom among Christians and their women went out freely to receive the nuptial benediction at the church and to attend the "many celebrations of the Catholic cult". There was however one custom that the two Indians were not yet prepared to "shake off": they favored the continuance of the custom of cosanguinary marriages between uncle and niece which the Church and the Code Civil condemned and authorized only under special dispensations. The belief that the mother was not of the family of the uncle was enough to remove any doubts: in this case, the niece was in effect "a completely foreign object." [261] Trillard judged that France needed only to encourage the desire of these Indians to commit themselves to the path of progress. One would not be able to resist those who would want the right conferred by the Cours de Cassation to prevail and to submit oneself freely and voluntarily to French laws and to reap the advantages of doing so while at the same time observing the commandments; and it must be said that until then, nothing had been done to urge people

[260] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1417-1418
[261] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1418

to do this. The exercise of this right would according to him be true progress towards the assimilation of this nation to France and an important triumph of its immutable institutions.[262]

Elaborated by Vice-admiral Pothuau, Minister of the Navy and of the Colonies in the Republican Dufaure cabinet, the "decree stipulating the re-organization of the elected councils in the French establishments of India" was in effect signed by Mac-Mahon a few days after his resignation and the election as President of the Republic of Jules Grévy. For Alfred Martineau, this decree of 25 January 1879 was incontestably the expression of the will of the republicans to assimilate India to metropolitan France. In India, a country too old-fashioned in the eyes of this majority, it seemed to him useful to take a new step towards the reforms announced in 1871 and 1875.[263] As a result of the election in April 1879 in accordance with the decree, a Créole committee was composed, "as well as an opposition party, of merchants, of attorneys' councils, of civil servants, and of a certain number of Topa electors of a mobile and changing nature." Its heads were, besides Ponnoutamby, Emile Hécquet, Albert and Arthur Chatelier, Auguste Faciolle, Alcide Duchamp and Alcide Pochont. In a declaration addressed to members of the committee and to their "dear fellow-citizens", they expressed their principles and their agenda whereby they would do their best to ensure calm and unity, to help the administration to implement all possible reforms, to control without holding up and to improve without destroying, in order to assist the government on its liberal path, in a measured and cautious manner. They would also sincerely commit themselves to assure the regular and beneficial functioning of their elective assemblies, to avoid making mistakes, so that

[262] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1419
[263] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1429-1430

progress and freedom might result to the advantage of the entire population in general, of the European element and the Créole in particular through the development of the interests of all groups.[264]

A commission in France was charged with the responsibility of preparing a plan, of which the General Council of India was seized in its ordinary session of 1879. Ponnoutamby saw in this initiative a new proof of the generosity of France and a decisive step towards total assimilation. According to him, France did not particularly like the demarcation between groups of citizens and subjects in India. Furthermore, he said that they were not from a conquered country but that they were adoptive children and that France, which treated them generously on a par with her children, had invited them to the kindness of her municipal institutions.[265]Against this plan, representatives of the old Pondicherrian and Indian committees found in Chanemougam a spokesman who was as eloquent as he was decisive. Belonging to the Vellaja caste, Chanemougam was the son of Nadou Sidambra Modéliar, the influential Indian who was credited with the election of Lecour to the Assembly in 1849. From his father, he had inherited the title of "nadou", or head of the upper castes, which conferred on him enormous prestige. In posing himself as the defender of the dharma and of the caste system against innovations and assimilation, he rallied behind him all those who found that Ponnoutamby went too far and too quickly. He declared to the general council that the institution of municipalities would provoke a "commotion" among the people and would perturb the morals and society. The rivalries of caste would in no time override the public interest. Finally the pariahs, profiting from the "advantages of universal suffrage" which they would be after,

[264] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1443
[265] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1460

would not hesitate to question a hierarchy in place for centuries. In his response, the Director of the Interior Lacascade denounced the "acrimonious recriminations" and the "sad pages" of Chanemougam.[266]

In spite of these criticisms, Chanemougam resumed his discourse and asserted that education had not been sufficiently developed in the colony to allow "a convenient recruitment" of municipal councilors. For Lacascade, such "pessimism, inspired exclusively by political hatreds", was refuted by the facts, the colony having elected twenty-five general and thirty-four local councilors. If it was true, added the Director of the Interior that the pariahs and the lower castes were vegetating in ignorance, the upper castes were responsible for it. He asked after all whose fault it was if the people of the countryside were not more enlightened than what Chanemougam said. Lacascade added that his assertion was his own condemnation.[267]

Governor Drouhet, who was very favorable towards the cause of the liberals, in strong terms referred to certain reservations on the part of the Department of Navy the day after the promulgation of the "assimilationist" decree of 25 January 1879. Citing Admiral Jauréguiberry who wrote in his dispatch of 15 May 1879 that it was important to monitor agitations of this kind in a country where the experiment of these liberal institutions could be misunderstood and exploited to serve caste interests or cause unfortunate protests. He added that events had but justified these anxieties. Universal suffrage had become within the hands of Brahmanism an instrument of oppression and

[266] Weber, Vol. 3, pp.1460-1461
[267] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1461

the spirit of our institutions found itself subordinated to a whole social system contradictory to that spirit.[268]

Citing also the Essay on the general history of French Law, in which Dalloz asserted that "the responsibility of having fixed injustice, immobilized vengeance in the most inhuman code that despotism has ever produced", lay on Brahmanism, Drouhet let it be known that the only way to prevent the restoration of Brahmanism was to remove the right to vote to Indians subject to their personal status.[269] Indians did not believe any more in the word of France and were persuaded that the policy of metropolitan France was not to impose assimilation but to make it acceptable by a series of imperceptible measures. The remarks of some of the fiercest assimilationists could justify their apprehensions. "Two societies opposed in customs, ideas and religion can be assimilated only by the absorption of one by the other", wrote a jurist. De Ménerville, the author of Dictionnaire de legislation algérienne, asked himself what their objective should be in Algeria. He thought that it should be the absorption of the indigenous people. "When people from the North implant themselves in a country, it is in order to remain there. The Arabs may revolt but they will be absorbed."[270]

Drouhet said that the supposed "superiority" of the European "civilizing element" had no corresponding reality in India. The European element was here as much an enemy of progress, as imbued with prejudices as the native element. It was not more inclined to favor the emancipation of the natives than the colonizers had been at other times to favor the emancipation of their slaves. There was a striking analogy between the two periods and the two situations. In fact, the term European was not the most suitable

[268] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1476
[269] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1477
[270] Weber. Vol. 3, p. 1487

as, apart from forty civil servants or so who "ne font que passer" and sixty or so real Créoles, the category of Europeans consisted only of Topas. Deprived of all means of existence, ignorant and apathetic, the latter were at the mercy of three or four merchants on whom they depended for their livelihood and of whom they formed the electoral clientèle.[271]

In June 1882, La Porte and his friends signed a petition to show to the government and to public opinion the patriotism of the renonçants provoking from the Brahmans a hostile reaction to military service. This would be a proof of the warmth of their feelings for France. Calling itself the "democratic party", the clique of La Porte addressed itself to the Minister by indicating that they would be happy to pay the tax of blood, but in other conditions than those under Dupleix and La Bourdonnais, a period when the rigors of caste recognized under the same flag two armies, a European army and a native army and from the latter the pariah was excluded.[272]

During the summer of 1883, a conference on castes was organized in Paris: it was followed by the publication of a brochure, Bulletin de la Société progressiste de l'Inde française, which reproduced the text of the proceedings of the conference. This society was founded on 1 March 1883 in Pondicherry by a certain Mourougaissapoullé, and had very quickly solicited and obtained the support of men as eminent as Deloncle the son and of Paul Déroulède. Article 2 of its statutes stated its objective: "to develop progress in the Establishments of India by the propagation of French language and culture".[273] This "société," which called itself progressive, was in reality profoundly reactionary: "one cannot have a more splendid label for a bag of tricks". Far from wanting to develop

[271] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1513
[272] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1516
[273] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1517

the French language and culture these pseudo-progressive people did not refrain from creating hindrances. The French language was what was the most neglected in the French establishments. As for French culture, it was well known what obstacles the fanaticism of Brahmin priests placed in its way.[274]

One way of escaping the oppressive hierarchy of the caste system was to become a renonçant. However, the author of a brochure called Les Indigènes de l'Inde française et le suffrage universel, Moracchini, explained the failure of this renunciation by the attachment of Hindus to the religion of their fathers and of the consequences of this act, which implied severing all social and economic ties with others in their milieu. It is not surprising that the majority of renonçants were pariahs who, in fact, were not giving up much. Just like conversion to Christianity, this renunciation was in fact for them "a possibility of social ascent." If there were so few renonçants in the smaller establishments, this was because the class of pariahs existed neither in Mahé nor in Chandernagore and that in the last two enclaves, as in Yanam, there were hardly any indigenous Christians.[275] Moracchini suggested that it was out of political ambition that some Indians of the upper castes had renounced. A few years later, a governor would corroborate this judgment and would add that the ambitions of the leaders of the renonçants had contributed to the failure of this attempt at assimilation: "by belittling this movement to make it a party instrument, they succeeded in aborting it."[276] The leaders of the renonçants, instead of combating the prejudices, which endured among their followers, endeavored to convert the Brahmans by any means to their new religion. Moracchini asserted having seen some civil servants exercise pressure on certain natives

[274] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1518
[275] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1520-1521
[276] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1522

in order to constrain them, "in the interests of a supposed progress, to eat beef, drink wine or "to abandon their very secular costume in order to don the costume of Europeans, appropriate at most for cold climates. [277]

The Member of Parliament, Pierre Alype, argued that it would hurt the cause of the French if they attempted proselytism by coercion. Moracchini, on the other hand, thought that assimilation would be possible in the more or less long term. According to him, France would be successful in it, not by recognizing the right to vote only to those who would renounce their personal status or by conferring on the latter an influence, which would be out of proportion with their number, but by on the one hand, initiating Indians into the exercise of political rights and by expanding on the other hand education by the creation of French schools and affluence by economic development. In this regard, he cited the example of British India where, according to him, the establishment of schools and of a large railway network was more beneficial for the leveling of castes than money spent profusely by protestant missionaries in obtaining "hypocritical and precarious conversions." The Brahmans, concluded Moracchini, had always been respectful of universal suffrage. They had never revolted against this institution, but against those who attempted to exclude them from the Republic. Even the men of upper castes had accepted universal suffrage. It was the poor and ignorant men of the lower castes, the pariahs, who were opposed to it. To satisfy their desire would have been like replacing the ancient limited suffrage of the "censitaires" by the limited suffrage of the ignorant proletariat.[278]

[277] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1523
[278] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1523-1524

At the end of October and in November 1883, the renonçants won two elections, which gave them much to hope for. Fourteen of them had signed a petition earlier that year claiming that they should be registered on the first list as they deemed themselves on all accounts to be French citizens. Even the Topas were registered on the first list. The topas claimed that they were not any less good Frenchmen than the mixed population which was European only in name and which was of Indian origin like them. Furthermore, they argued that when the Republic had emancipated slaves and had made them French citizens, they were all subject to the same laws. Had it not registered them on the same lists as their former masters?, they asked. What would have been unreasonable would have been to put on different lists Frenchmen who were governed by the same laws, under pretext that some of them had a few drops of European blood flowing through their veins and that the others were Indians of pure blood.[279]

For Victor Schoelcher, the registration of the renonçants on the first list was a mistake, but in wanting to avoid making this mistake, the government made an even greater mistake. By the creation of a unified list, it handed over French India to a clerical-brahmanical coalition of people resistant to the moral emancipation of its inhabitants. Schoelcher proposed the setting up of three lists of electors, the first consisting of Europeans, the second of the "non-renonçants" and the third of the renonçants. Blancsubé approved this solution right away. The situation in India, he said, was in no way comparable to that in the Réunion islands and in the Caribbean where there were only Frenchmen and "completely assimilated people."[280] Peulevey categorically opposed this project, which formalized "the impossibility for the renonçants

[279] Weber, Vol. 3, pp. 1524-1525
[280] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1536

to assimilate themselves to Europeans" and would make of them "hybrids." He asserted that there must be only two lists since there were only two groups of people in India: those who were governed by the Code Civil and those who were governed by their personal status. In addition, the project of Schoelcher would give to the "clerical party" an "impregnable citadel", that is, the first list and would be dedicated to the existence of a "European caste" which would be "outside the native castes". He stated that Schoelcher's project would imply the racial superiority of Europeans and that the natives, and in particular the renonçants, would be incapable of ever becoming Europeans. The decree would thus condemn the politics of assimilation. One would witness the reestablishment in one of their colonies of this division by race that was so aptly condemned everywhere else.[281]

Universal suffrage whose aim was to assimilate India to France had produced the opposite result. It would henceforth allow the most traditionalists of Indians to consolidate the *mamoul* (tradition) and caste and to combat French influence. Universal suffrage had had the result of starting an unceasing struggle between French influence and ideas and Indian civilization. As the Indians were more numerous, and consequently, the masters of the electoral corps, it had given them a weapon through the vote to destroy everything that was French in the country. According to the French, it was out of line to think in fact of some day bringing together the two civilizations; the social condition of India was worse than slavery as "slaves can be freed and the Indian, planted in his caste can never come out of it."[282]

[281] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1537
[282] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1579

On 13 September 1877, reading "Le Gaulois", the French became aware of the gravity of the physical situation in this distant colony. This journal in fact published an article by the senator of India, Count de Richemont, who cited at length a letter, which he had just received from Pondicherry. According to this letter, the sufferings of people increased every day. The harshness of the famine increased little by little as the drought continued. The misery was horrible and the rate of mortality frightening. People coming from neighboring localities, lacking absolutely in everything, and in a deplorable state, had invaded the town. Every day, one found corpses of individuals dead from hunger on the streets. The free distribution of provisions continued; but they had often no strength left. They were often in pain, looking at those who had lagged behind at these places of distribution, exhaling while eating the meager rations given to them.[283]

As was explained in 1879 by the councilor, General Bayol, the distinctiveness of each establishment argued in favor of decentralization. According to him, it would be pure fiction to consider and to treat the five establishments as a department or a colony such as the Reunion islands, Martinique or Guadeloupe. Furthermore, he said that one could not in fact forget that the five establishments were separated one from the other by considerable distances, that the inhabitants of those territories differed in their origins, their language and their customs and that they were united only by the links which tied them to metropolitan France. He said that there hardly existed general interests really common to Pondicherry and its dependencies and, in these conditions, in the study of the institutions to be given to these establishments it would be more logical to be concerned with their exceptional position and of their special needs rather than with the desire to still assimilate these institutions to those of France or of the other great French colonies

[283] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1747

which differed from these in so many essential aspects. In his opinion, the dependencies had not ceased to demand autonomous control over their budget, that is their use of their own resources, diminished only by their share of the expenses incurred on the general administration of their colony. His conclusion was that one could not but acquiesce in the face of the fairness of these demands.[284]

With the seizure by Chanemougam of all the institutions of the colony, the pariahs lost all hope of seeing the improvement of their fate. In 1897, according to Governor Girod, the castes which had always dominated and whose authority was so carefully preserved in British India could at any time react against any movement to favor the pariahs and could create great difficulties for the French. He told the Minister of the Colonies that under the agitations and the electoral competition hid a more elevated question of general politics which it would be incumbent upon the Minister to resolve namely if the French should conserve the secular supremacy of the castes as was done by their neighbors the British or if, on the contrary, they should let power be transferred to inferior castes. Furthermore, Girod said that for whoever had lived in India, it was indisputable that there was a gulf between a man of caste and a pariah. Finally, Girod said that the future might tone down these divisions, which are at the same time both religious and social, but this future was perhaps too far off to have a significant influence on their manner of administering.[285]

The integration of the pariahs into Hindu society not being possible, the administration endeavored therefore to ensure for them a separate development. It was conscious that this policy for the time being sanctioned the segregation of which they

[284] Weber, Vol. 3, p. 1855
[285] Weber, Vol. 4, pp. 2047-2048

were victims. It was hoped that time, affluence and education would help pull them out of the state of abjectness in which they still found themselves and that the prejudices against them would diminish. According to Governor Angoulvant, the economic development of the colony should have been of benefit to the pariahs and to all the deprived people of the colony.[286]Subsequently, if it was difficult to reproach to the French party the timidity of its policy of "material and moral improvement of the pariahs" or to attribute to it the relative failure of the development of the colony, one could however accuse its leaders of having played apprentice sorcerers in setting up the pariahs against the "people of caste" and the Muslims against the Hindus with the aim of eliminating Chanemougam and of maintaining itself in power.[287]

In 1904, an incident between some Hindus and Muslims occurred over the possession of a paddy field and of some uncultivated land. The Muslims felt that the land belonged to them owing to its proximity to the tomb of a saint whom they revered. The Hindus felt that it was their right to derive revenues from this land for their temple. Some violence and casualties ensued as a result. A "matter of processions" was added to the dispute and poisoned a little bit more the relations between Hindus and Muslims. Processions were perhaps the most important part of professed cults in India, whether they be Catholic, Muslim or Brahman. One spent a great deal of money on these solemnities, which were accompanied by pomp and ostentation.[288]

In 1908, agitations against the pro-French party of Chanemougam took place in Karaikal. In Pondicherry, the Chanemougamists also seemed to want to "avenge their last defeats and to regain in part the influence they lost to the advantage of the

[286] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2051
[287] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2057
[288] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2061

Europeans." Once more, they put the unity of lists at the center of their concerns. They repeated that the Indians, who were by far the most numerous, must not be subordinate to a tiny minority of Europeans. Governor Rognon was convinced that these radical Indians, who so skillfully invoked Republican principles to restore their hegemony, were in contact with the nationalists of British India.[289]

After a reversal of fortunes during elections in 1909, the radicals placed their hopes in new electoral reform. They did not despair of obtaining the unity of lists, which would allow them to perhaps reconquer the majority in the different electoral councils. For Félix Falk, the duality of lists, which was based on a racial distinction, had "a strong odor of the Old Régime and is reminiscent of the era of ghettoes and of corporations." It was contrary to Republican principles and was humiliating for Indians considered "overall as being an inferior product of the human mind."[290]Henri Mager was aware that the unity of lists would be a fatal blow to French influence in the colony. But it was, according to him, what should be aimed at. In the interests of the colony, one must "remove from the center of affairs the few Europeans who, in order to satisfy their personal interests, moral as well as material, have taken to maintaining the *status quo*." Governor Lévecque considered this demand at least premature. According to him, one must recognize that the European or the assimilated element, however small it might be from different points of view, held in this country too important a place for it not to be allowed to distinguish itself from the great Brahmanical mass which was confused and ignorant one way or another.[291] Sadassiva left Pondicherry and decided to await the results of an election in Mahé. The day of his departure, he declared to Lévecque that he

[289] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2079
[290] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2082
[291] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2084

would fight with all his energy against Lemaire in order to make Brahmanism triumph against Catholicism. [292]

A decree of 19 September 1910 banned, on the entire territory of Karaikal, "the carrying of arms of any kind and principally of any firearms, sticks and projectiles of whichever kind." For the Brahmans, this decree was contrary to the policy of progress defined nearly forty years ago by Admiral Pothau, a policy that was beginning precisely to bear fruit. According to some petitioners who were against this decree, the Hindu had resolutely embarked on the path to progress, thanks to his marvelously gifted nature. The petitioners furthermore said that owing to Western civilization, the nature of the land, the economic traditions of the countries, the religious ideas, the moral sentiments, as well as the social habits and the political aspirations of a great many classes of the population had changed, which led, according to them to a British statesman saying that: "Marvelous in its past and its present, India cannot fail to surprise Europe in the near future."[293]

There was a political assassination on 12 April 1911. The morality of the political parties was such that Governor Martineau could not rule out the hypothesis that here in the East and even the Far East the history of these countries was full of intrigues and of plots where men did not hesitate to organize against their friends real attacks which could not be explained, and "where they will leave the odious parts for their adversaries while themselves assuming the morally beneficial part."[294]Martineau recognized that beyond the rivalries of the leaders, the objectives varied. The Gaebelé party, which was an assemblage of the Europeans (with the exception of the Pierre family), the Créoles, the topas, the renonçants and fifteen to eighteen thousand Hindus and Muslims, was "a party

[292] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2092
[293] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2106
[294] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2111

of conciliation and of understanding between the interests of Europeans and of Indians; its name changes and it becomes the Indo-European party." The Pierre party consisted of two to three thousand more Indians, who, according to Martineau, had no hatred for France, because in the situation of encirclement by the British, "this hatred would have been sterile"; but he also said that they did not love France either and, as much by their preoccupation to avoid all contact with their compatriots as by their distant aspirations and their certain desires, they constituted a nationalist Indian party of which Mr. Pierre had been the leader since the death of Chanemougam.[295]

Like the previous régimes, the Third Republic contemplated on more than one occasion the exchange of the enclaves of India. The earlier projects, elaborated in the 1880s, were limited to the lodges and to the secondary establishments. But, in the years preceding the First World War, the government agreed even to the cession of Pondicherry. In spite of the memories, which were associated with it, in spite of the refusal of its population to come under the yoke of the British, in spite of the industry of guineas and of the trade of groundnuts, which prospered then, the capital of Dupleix was threatened. The perpetual anarchy, which was present, more than the compensations offered by the British, explained that Paris was ready to abandon one of its oldest colonies.[296]In France, the "Indo-Chinese academic society", resuming the arguments of the "Petit Bengali," was opposed to the cession of Chandernagore. These arguments reiterated that the territorial enlargement of the headquarters could never compensate for the loss of political influence which France retained in the province of Bengal by the possession of this small patch of land called Chandernagore, with these small lodges

[295] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2112
[296] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2132

which were like so many forward sentinels, reminding the people of India that there was in this world someone other than Britain and the people of France, of the glories and errors of the past which she must turn to her advantage for the present and in the future in its dreams of colonial empire.[297]In 1855, the press, the "Morning Chronicle" and the "Journal du Havre" for example, had reported a supposed plan to exchange Chandernagore with the Dominican islands and Saint Lucia.[298]

Even though, personally, he was not in favor of the cession of Pondicherry, Georges Trouillot, the Minister of the Colonies, did not reject this eventuality as categorically. The enclaves of India had incontestably less value in his eyes than the small island of Mangareva. If nevertheless, as he told his Foreign Minister, he thought like the French ambassador in London that the exchange of all French territories in India would not be too high a price to pay for the acquisition of Gambia, he would not be opposed to this question being submitted to the Council of Ministers. He would only want to emphasize his arguments to those of his colleagues who seemed to have been opposed to making such a sacrifice.[299]The petitioners of Mahé who were against its cession used arguments of a sentimental and patriotic nature. They stressed that Mahé, "in a green and flowery state", was the most "enticing of the French colonies", capable "of rivaling in salubriousness with the best of sanatoriums of the Presidency of Madras." They also saw themselves furthermore as convinced that France would not cede to the British a colony conquered by the La Bourdonnais and Dupleix's of unforgettable fame.[300]

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[297] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2135
[298] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2138
[299] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2141
[300] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2143

If there was one establishment, which Paris desired more than any other to give up, it was Chandernagore. In addition to the political struggles which were witnessed by Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam one saw in this enclave the manifestation of a nationalism which was more and more vicious and the infringements of French sovereignty by the forces of the British in the pursuit of Bengali terrorists who found refuge there.[301]Governor Martineau confirmed the judgment of Bourgourd when he stated that everyone knew and recognized that Chandernagore was a French town only in name: all its interests were British and could only be British. Furthermore, he said that Mr. Bourgourd could also have added that not only were Chandernagore's interests British, but, what is worse, it was as if the French were not even at home there.[302]

In an article published by the "Colonial Annals", the local councilor of Yanam, Tota-Narishinhassoimy (Narasimhaswamy), asked the French government, which had "banished slavery, human sacrifice and the "sahagamanna", which meant burning alive a woman with the body of her deceased husband", to ban child marriage, as the British had done. According to him, colonization could only be understood if the colonizing people contributed by all means and in all domains to the well-being of the people living in the colonized country. Pauperization, the development of alcoholism and of prostitution proved that "the colonizing people" did not fulfill their mission in India. The weakening of the body, which resulted from malnutrition and from an excess of alcoholic drinks, favored the recrudescence of epidemics. [303]

Even if the number of free medical consultations was in rapid increase, many Indians were wary of western medicine and took to it only as a last resort. The Indian

[301] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2144
[302] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2292
[303] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2216

pariah certainly took less care of himself than the Kanak of Oceania or the African "negroe." Furthermore, constrained by difficult living conditions, the occasions for being traumatized were for him more frequent. Also, every day, in the free dispensaries, there was an uninterrupted procession of wounds several months old, of varied ulcers and of endless suppurations. All these lesions brought with them general health problems, deformities, vicious scars, and functional impotence; the patient generally decided to consult the doctor only after having exhausted the entire series of applications of empirical schemes.[304]

The uselessness and failure of the open professional school in 1896 were also as obvious. The French had established an industrial school; however, manual labor was not well regarded in India; it was the lower castes which were engaged in it; the students whom these schools recruited were of the lower castes (with their supposed "superstition and ignorance") but were not the castes of laborers, because these had no use for French education and would in fact be reproachful of it. They were thus condemned to have workers of inferior quality and they were in fact setting up a competing center for those with hereditary training instead of favoring them; this was not a very "skillful form of colonization."[305]

As a result, it was necessary to dedicate to primary education that is popular education, funds earlier allocated uselessly to secondary and professional education. Such a reform was bound to face resistance on many fronts. Popular education would not go very far. The French would get into conflict with the dominant castes because they would always try hard to prevent the dissemination of education; these castes, as

[304] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2248
[305] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2283

commonly perceived, were afraid that education would uplift the humble people, give them appetites and, turn obscure and servile workers into formidable rivals. The upper caste, the Brahman caste, had always tended to conserve the privilege conferred upon it by sacred texts, of receiving education while the other, warrior or laboring castes were in the habit of observing rules made by the Brahmans.[306]

From the onset, French rule in the enclaves during the 19th century was to be constrained by many adverse factors. The humiliating terms imposed upon it by the British would define the limits within which French colonization had to operate. In sharp contrast to the previous century, France could no longer wage war on England to enlarge its territory. There was to be no Dupleix or La Bourdonnais who would be tempted to view the existing French enclaves as merely toeholds on Indian territory for the establishment of an empire in India. If the French failed during the previous century to realize their dreams of empire, this was rather due to the interpersonal rivalries between their leaders where Dupleix was in favor of the development of a hinterland for the expansion of the activities of the French East India Company whereas La Bourdonnais favored the development of the French navy to facilitate its mastery of the naval routes to India and also due to the inability of the French East India Company to support the statesman-like vision of Dupleix. To a certain extent the differing objectives pursued by leaders of France cancelled each other out. In this sense, ironically, the very narrow confines within which the French operated owing to British domination is perhaps not less than what the French as a whole strove for in the previous century.

It is perhaps not surprising that the French government was more than eager to let go of Chandernagore, which, in its eyes, was increasingly coming under the British

[306] Weber, Vol. 4, p. 2284

sphere of influence. The actual cession of Chandernagore in 1948 by the French government to India before that of the other enclaves in 1954 can be better understood in the context of this situation in the 19th century. Furthermore, as was earlier pointed out, as each of the enclaves with the exception of Pondicherry and Karaikal which are both in Tamil Nadu is very different one from the other due to their geographical locations in different parts of the country with widely differing languages, cultures and ethnicities the development of colonization in these parts would imply a determination of the optimal institutions which could be set up in each of the enclaves. This determination, in theory, was perhaps a more arduous task than contemplating either the assimilation of these institutions to those of France or to those of other colonies or to the exchange of the enclaves as a whole with, for example, the island of Mangareva as suggested by the French Minister of Colonies, Georges Trouillot.

The attempted assimilation of local territories by France met with some formidable problems and obstacles. The Brahman, or members of the upper caste, would not be an easy prey. The Pariah, or outcaste, would be their most loyal follower and would represent the triumph of French ambitions. But the tensions between the outcastes and the people of caste would far outweigh the positive outcome of a successful conversion by the French of the Pariah. The plight of these Indians, as has earlier been pointed out, was worse than that of slaves as they could and would be emancipated. The caste system was an inherent part of Indian society, an essential constituent of its fabric. It could not be obliterated or dismantled. A foreign culture could at best try to come to terms with it.

Chapter 3

The Twentieth Century:

Identity and the French patterns

The French enclaves could not remain unaffected by the movement for independence starting to pervade British India at the beginning of the twentieth century. But the enclaves did not revolt then against France; very astutely, they used France against British imperialism. The dramatic events which took place in Chandernagore around the year 1908, a crucial year in the history of nationalism are very revealing in this respect.[307]

Chandernagore was no longer, at the beginning of the 20th century, the flourishing enclave which it had been at the early stages of its founding. As in the case of the other enclaves, in the case of Chandernagore too, the setbacks and defeats of France at the end of the 18th century (the Treaty of Paris, Napoleonic wars) had inflicted upon it a deadly blow. But it also suffered from a major handicap which had been specific to it since it had lost its commercial supremacy; this handicap was the distance of Pondicherry. The headquarters were no doubt distant in space, Chandernagore being three days' journey away by sea or land; but there was a distance in the minds of the administrators too, which made of it a kind of colony of a colony. The inhabitants of Chandernagore were proud Bengalis who chafed at being administered by civil servants coming from Pondicherry. They bitterly complained about the lack of clean drinking water, which regularly led to epidemics of cholera, the flooding of the Hooghly river due to the absence of dykes, of the insufficiency of police forces stationed there. They argued their

[307] "Chandernagor et le swadeshisme au début du XXe siècle-L'affaire Charu Chandra Roy"by Georgette David

case but in vain to the General Council that Chandernagore made large contributions to the revenues of the colony and that in return they received only a meager portion of the allocated budget. Later, they would even go so far as to claim, in vain in Paris, financial autonomy. Chandernagore seems to have been the unloved, abandoned child of French India.[308]

Young, ambitious people all studied in English and would leave to look for employment in Calcutta. Gradually, Chandernagore, formerly an independent town, came to be slowly absorbed by the neighboring big metropolis, and was nothing more than a suburb of Calcutta; that is the image which it projects today. French education had almost uniquely for its clientèle the poor population whose children could obtain scholarships; with time, the value of this education declined. These poor students would learn French with the intention of subsequently taking up studies in English at a higher level.[309]

The inadequate knowledge of French was responsible to a great extent for increasing the gap between Pondicherry and Chandernagore. The Chandernagorians complained about not having access to administrative posts, of not being able to go to work in Pondicherry and of being administered by the Tamils, the "Madrasis" as one used to say with a certain amount of contempt. One would then tell them in reply that the administrative competition was open to them as for any one else in the colony. Certainly but how could one appear at these competitions without having either the required knowledge or the degrees?, the people of the enclave would ask. At the sessions of the Conseil Général, the delegates of Chandernagore who did not have an adequate command

[308] Georgette David
[309] Georgette David

of the French language unlike their colleagues of Pondicherry such as Gaebele, LaPorte or Tamby, hardly had any influence on the deliberations. On the other hand, the *Swadeshi* spirit with which they were imbued, which was completely alien to the representatives of Pondicherry was responsible for creating between them a climate of mutual contempt and suspicion. In other words, there was not much understanding between Pondicherry and Chandernagore.[310]

However, people were beginning to take an active part in local political life. In fact, in 1908, the big local event was the municipal elections. The mayor at that time, a French businessman, Tardivel, was very controversial. He was accused of being interested only in his own personal affairs. He was said to have allocated free of charge for his jute factory a plot of land which had been denied to many others but most of all, he was blamed for his attitude towards the local population. He faced stiff competition from Bolomath Dash, the Bengali leader. There was a heated verbal exchange between them and the local population was also fired up in the argument. In April, a bomb was thrown into the dining room of the mayor when he was getting ready to eat. There were no victims but this led to great excitement among the local European population in Chandernagore as well as in Calcutta. However, the throwing of the bomb did not indicate that a war had been declared between the Bengalis and the French. It was mainly against someone who was generally hated and it was a sort of trial run for other attacks planned for British India. The governor, who had come to make an on the spot inspection, understood that French authority was not threatened in Chandernagore and he said it in his report of April 24, 1908. The local population was not hostile towards the French government. It just kept its distance, enjoying at the same time all the political

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rights they were entitled to. When there was a threat about a possible cession of Chandernagore in 1910, the revolutionary newspaper *Matri Boumi* would protest against the plan and would say that the French were fairer, more polite, and less racist than the British and that the local population had the possibility of making complaints in Paris and of removing undesirable civil servants, that it elected representatives who had power and who voted on the budget.[311]

In order to properly understand the feelings of the inhabitants of Chandernagore and of the political issues which agitated them in 1908, one must place them in their Bengali and Indian contexts. The movement for the independence of India, of which the birth happened in1857 with the revolt of the sepoys, has its roots going back even further in the 19th century in different parts of the peninsula and with heterogeneous perspectives. But it is towards the end of the 19th century that the movement would take a real shape, unity and force. It is then that was created in 1891 in Bengal the *Swadeshi* movement which essentially meant the boycott of all products of foreign origin and of the development of national industries.[312]

The movement was sparked off by the partition of Bengal in 1905. A new province was created consisting of East Bengal and Assam with Dacca as its capital. The major portion of the Muslim population of Bengal was located around Dacca, the ancient city of the Moghuls (18 million Muslims out of 31). Bengal had 53 million people of whom 43 million were Hindus and 10 million were Muslims. Since 1903, the announcement of this measure had provoked the agitation of the revolutionary leadership. By the time the partition became effective in 1905, the movement expanded into a mass

[311] Georgette David
[312] Georgette David

movement. It consisted of young people from good families, students, who constituted the spearhead of the movement. Bengalis did not accept the dismemberment of Bengal, their nation.[313]

In 1907, the movement, so far peaceful and lawful, took a new turn and became violent. In 1907 and especially in 1908, bombs exploded everywhere leading to strong concerns among British authorities and to real worries among the white population. In November 1907, two aborted attempts were made against the train of the lieutenant governor, Lord Fraser, near Chandernagore. In December, another, partially successful took place in Midnapore. On April 11, 1908 a bomb (as we saw earlier) was thrown into the residence of the mayor of Chandernagore and on April 30 was the famous assassination attempt of Muzzaffarpur.[314]

It can be asked why Chandernagore was one of the key places for the revolutionary movement. It was due to its exceptional situation of being a French territory which gave it three major advantages. Firstly, being French territory, it was a land of refuge where revolutionaries who were wanted in British India found shelter and enjoyed peace and relative liberty of action. It is thus that Sri Motilal came and settled down in Chandernagore where he founded an ashram during his life time. This ashram became a center of welcome for revolutionaries who were wanted in Calcutta. Sri Aurobindo lived there hidden for thirty nine days before embarking for Pondicherry. Pondicherry also, of course, was a land of asylum. The famous poet, Subramaniam Bharathi, stayed there for ten years and continued the publication of his journal, *India*. The second advantage was its special postal service. The French post was largely used

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by the revolutionaries, not so much for their correspondence as nowhere can mail sent by post remain secret, but for receiving literature considered seditious by the British authorities of India. It is thus that the *Indian Sociologist* and the *Gaelic American*, whose import into India had been banned in 1907, were introduced clandestinely into Calcutta through Chandernagore. Finally, in Chandernagore, the purchase of firearms was free. A network of importation of arms of Saint-Etienne, especially revolvers, was established. Emotionally, these revolvers represented much for the revolutionaries. Nirad C. Chaudhuri would recall ironically, in retrospect, in his autobiography: "The revolutionary and terrorist movement in Bengal rested entirely on a romantic vision of the revolver, invested with an unlimited potential for political agitation, a kind of Aladin's lamp of liberty." The arms were sent simply by mail. Due to vehement British protests, the government of Pondicherry issued an order on September 18, 1907 forbidding illegal carriage of arms. This order led to an outcry in Chandernagore. The inhabitants were worried about the insecurity of the town which would, if one were to believe them, be invaded at night by the gangsters of Calcutta. They claimed the right to defend themselves and underlined also the insufficiency of the police forces. In the face of these protests, the order was rescinded but a ruling strictly limiting and taxing the carriage of firearms was put into place soon after.[315]

The Charu Chandra Roy affair raised passions in Chandernagore in 1908 and ripples in Pondicherry and even in Paris and in London. An embarrassment for the administrators and diplomats, this incident brought out the ambiguity of the situation of the enclaves, of the play of forces between France, the colony and British India. It shows

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the difficulty for the administration to reconcile the practical considerations of good relations with Britain with the requirements of the respect for persons and for the law.[316]

On May 29, the Government of Bengal asked the administrator of Chandernagore to arrest Charu Chandra Roy, who was "residing at that time in Chandernagore", to search his house and to hand him over to the carrier of the message. One must note the astute choice of the phrase "residing at present in Chandernagore," which seemed to present him as a British subject who had taken refuge in Chandernagore and not as a French citizen who was a native of the town. Far from complying, the administrator referred the matter to Pondicherry. By a cable of June 14, the Governor gave the authorization of expulsion and of search of the house. The administrator did not seem to be satisfied; he agreed to arrest Charu Chandra Roy, but asked the British authorities to complete the arrest warrant. The arrest finally took place on June 19 and, on June 23, Charu Chandra Roy was suspended from his duties as deputy director of the Dupleix High School. It was an officer of the British police who executed the arrest and who searched the house, the French policemen assisting with the operation, which raised a great deal of criticism. This arrest provoked a wave of protests with ample repercussion in France. The points taken up were the innocence of Charu Chandra Roy, his honorability, the circumstances of his arrest and the fact of the extradition of a Frenchman.[317]

Charu Chandra Roy was here described as a French "subject", a term which was adopted to designate the natives of the Establishments who were electors, but who had not renounced their particular personal status. The fact that he was a Frenchman of

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Indian origin and not a Frenchman by race weighed in all along in this affair in the decisions and steps taken by the French administration. Hence the governor, in his telegram informing the Minister that he had authorized the extradition of Charu, specified that this servant was a native, something which would be underlined in pencil at the ministry. Reports, telegrams, demands for explanations came and went between the Governor of Pondicherry, the Ministries of the Colonies, Foreign Affairs, Justice and the French Embassy in London. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs clearly expressed its desire of being consulted beforehand in delicate matters of this kind.[318]

In the mean time, new elements were added to this already voluminous dossier: the British government asked the administrator of Chandernagore to submit to it the attendance registers of the college to verify the comings and goings of Charu. Incensed at this, the administrator refused. Even more serious, the charge against Charu was changed: from murder to one of conspiracy against authority, that is, a political crime for which it was usual to refuse extradition. There was considerable confusion within the French administration about what to do in this matter. It was finally decided that the French government would intervene in London but only in case of sentencing. The Foreign Office was contacted in this matter by the French ambassador in London. In the event, there was no sentencing. As the extradition had been sought on the basis of charges other than those confirmed by the court, the tribunal declared itself incompetent. Charu Chandra Roy would resume his political and professional activities and a few years later would abandon teaching to dedicate himself entirely to politics. From then on, Chandernagore vibrated in unison with the rest of India. Forty years later, it would be independence. Then, very naturally, Chandernagore would take its place in the mother

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country, even before the integration of the other French enclaves with the Indian Republic.[319]

After the independence of India and Pakistan from Britain on 15th August 1947, it became self-evident that the future of French possessions in India was uncertain. With a total area of 500 square kilometers, the five enclaves had barely 300, 000 inhabitants**,** as against 436 million Indians according to the census of 1951. They suffered from the disadvantage of being dispersed: around one hundred kilometers of Tamil country separated Karaikal from Pondicherry; Mahé was four hundred kilometers away in Kerala; the distance of Yanam in the Godavari delta was six hundred kilometers and Chandernagore in far off Bengal was at a remove of one thousand six hundred kilometers. French India resembled pimples on the map of the Indian Union, as was remarked in an article in the *Times of India* in 1952. Justifications for retaining these possessions appeared very tenuous: the smallness of the territory did not admit of a plantation economy, and if the textile industry in Mouttalpett and Modeliarpet, northern and southern suburbs of Pondicherry, provided the livelihood of forty thousand people, its production of six thousand tonnes of cloth and yarn represented only a miniscule portion of that of the entire French Union. By far the largest enterprise, the Anglo-French, with a market share of 60%, was mostly owned by Indian capital, while Savana, with a market share of one third represented the interests of four thousand stockholders in France, a drop in the world of French capitalism. If, finally, one adds that the French Ministry of Overseas Territories had only 676 Europeans and 4600 other francophones at its headquarters, one will see that, as opposed to Indo-China or Algeria, there could be no colonial lobby to weigh heavily on the decisions of the French government in relation to

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French India. Besides, after the renunciation of fortifications in 1814, Pondicherry had ceased to have any strategic value.[320]

During British rule in India, the continuance of the five enclaves of India could be ensured through the overarching political balance between the two great colonial powers and by the rediscovered and long peace between the two. The *modus vivendi*, however, was not without innumerable difficulties and occasionally even quite humiliating for France, so that she, a micro power in India, would deem it preferable to disembarrass itself of these possessions. From 1825 to the eve of the Second World War, various schemes for the exchange of territories with Britain had been debated by diplomats without ever coming to fruition. But the independence of India signified the end of this interplay of forces between Britain and France. Nehru, who came to Pondicherry as a leader of the Congress Party at the end of 1936 to support the striking textile workers had at that time dealt with the French authorities with tact, because of his sympathies with the Popular Front government. But his conviction, reiterated in many conferences was that the populations administered by France belonged to the Indian nation by natural law. This was not without reason as through the porous frontiers of the five establishments circulated the same men and women speaking the same languages, having the same customs, united for a long time by family ties and solidarities of caste. Chandernagore was the most striking example of such an osmosis: the town served as a residence to a working population whose daily migrations took them in large numbers to work in Calcutta, thirty kilometers away, for which the French establishment had already become a distant suburb.[321]

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[320] "L'Inde Française en Sursis 1947-1954" by Patrick Pitoeff
[321] Patrick Pitoeff

In this respect, the value of French India to France was essentially political: France took pride in establishing a plurisecular political culture, in introducing its political values, creating a representative system and associating the diverse population in a common republican, democratic and nationalist design. As for the public opinion in metropolitan France, such attachment as there was to these territories was of a sentimental nature. For the political class which had just founded the Fourth Republic, questions of principle outweighed pragmatism which was suspected of having at that time impelled the British to take precipitate action. Pondicherry could not be ceded without a last manifestation of its French ideal. One would thus state that article 27 of the Constitution be respected, which laid down that no cession of territories could be made without the consent of the affected people, an argument which very naturally led to a decision about a referendum.[322]

French leaders were not ready to leave India. In Paris, the French Ministry of Overseas Territories became the bastion of resistance. Behind the official discourses, a strategic defense of French India was decided upon and its planning was entrusted to the Inspector General of the Colonies, Tézenas du Montcel. Sent to India in the autumn of 1947, he suggested engaging France in a long war of attrition. In a crucial report, this civil servant argued that if Chandernagore was lost, the divisions of the newly born India could be exploited to the full. For the establishments of the South, a policy of waiting while resorting to the old methods of manipulation would be adopted. Someone capable of defending the idea of these territories remaining French would be promoted to a position of power and be made Governor. Given the circumstances, one needed an authentic leader, an ambitious person who was gifted at the same time with a strong

[322] Patrick Pitoeff

personality and a great doctrinal flexibility. This providential man would be Edouard Goubert, a Franco-Indian veteran of the Great War, chief clerk of the Court in Pondicherry and who, at the age of fifty-nine, had a solid political following and a seat in the representative Assembly as well as in the Council of Government. He would reject neither India nor France and his socialism would be without a face.[323]

From then on, all the elements were in place for the supposed referendum not to take place and while, for three years everyone talked about it, no one really wanted it. Reading the summaries of dozens of meetings, most often at the Quai d'Orsay, between civil servants and Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Overseas Territories, one is struck by the absence of the political will to succeed. Hesitations grew in number and strength: at times one complained about the intransigence of India and at others one worried about possible retaliations against the pro-French in case of an Indian victory, as everyone knew that "the secrecy of the vote in the establishments of India is pure fiction." [324] France thus slid towards its departure from India in a welter of confusion over its policies and objectives.

As a preliminary step towards the eventual abandonment of all the enclaves, France agreed to give up its *loges*. This was in effect a purely symbolic act as these *loges* were of not much use to France. In a recent study, Hugues Jean de Dianoux has shown that this cession had led to a series of errors and of irregularities. Firstly, these *loges* being French territory, there was no question of offering them- and to give them- without a vote in Parliament, as in other cases of cession of territory. Secondly, the inhabitants, being French citizens, should have been consulted. Thirdly, these *loges* were not

[323] Patrick Pitoeff
[324] Patrick Pitoeff

formally designated. It would have been proper to at least name them rather than merely describe them vaguely showing that the donor did not even know what he was giving. Lastly, and even more seriously, some of these *loges* were located in Pakistani territory. Because France could not in effect hand over to India the *loges* of Dacca and Jougdia, the *factoreries* of Chittagong and Sylhet and the fields of Serampour and Sola, which were then in Eastern Pakistan, now Bangladesh, theoretically these territories are, contrary to reality, still French[325].

Preceding the eventual transfer of the French territories, the French ambassador to India, Count Ostrorog was authorized on July 30, 1954 to convey the following propositions:

-The *de facto* transfer would take place before the *de jure* transfer;

French economic and cultural interests would be preserved;

The Indian government would take charge of the lost territories that is those occupied by the partisans of Dadala, Subbiah and Goubert;

France would renounce the referendum; the representative assembly and the municipal assemblies would meet in conference to make a statement on the *de facto* transfer and on its conditions;

In case of a vote in favor of cession, it would take place immediately;

It is only after this that a treaty would be drawn up, signed by the two governments and submitted for ratification;

During the negotiations, the Indian authorities relaxed their blockade of these territories. On October 11, 1954 as a result of a diplomatic breakthrough between the two

[325] Weber, Pondichery et les comptoirs français après Dupleix, pp. 364-365

countries a Franco-Indian treaty was signed in Delhi. Ostrorog had obtained everything that France could hope for:

The Indian Union would guarantee large autonomy to the former French enclaves, which would preserve their representational and judicial institutions;

The status of civil servants, their salaries, pensions and retirements would be preserved;

French would remain the official language as long as the elected officials would not have taken a contrary decision;

The educational institutions would be maintained; a French institute would be created.[326]

Article 1 of the 1954 treaty stipulated that the former French territories would maintain the distinctive administrative status which existed prior to the transfer of the territories. In effect, this article has ensured that the former French territories were not amalgamated into the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. People in these territories were not in favor of merger mainly for economic reasons. When in 1979, the Morarji Desai government floated the idea of merging these territories with neighbouring states, there were widespread riots in Pondicherry. Since then, no government in Delhi has tried to set aside the guarantee contained in this article. Article IV of the 1956 Cession Treaty stipulates that French nationals born in the territories would become Indian nationals at the coming into force of the treaty in 1962. Article V of this treaty allows those who wish to do so the option of retaining their French nationality by making a written declaration within six months of the commencement of the treaty.

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[326] Weber, Pondichery et les comptoirs français après Dupleix, pp. 396-397

An Indian citizen[327] who did not opt for French nationality in 1962 when Pondicherrians were given the option lamented his decision. He said that he was young and idealistic in those days and that it did not make sense for him to become a French citizen when India not too long ago had won a freedom struggle against the British. He said that now his family members were reproaching him for not having chosen French citizenship, as he would have been better off if he were a French citizen. He remarked, ironically, that many of the Indians who opted for French citizenship did not speak a word of French and were totally ignorant of French culture. He also said that on the final day in 1962 when the people were opting for French citizenship, there were long lines outside the Consulate General of France in Pondicherry. The gates remained open until the early hours of the morning and many people kept receding behind in the queue because they could not make up their minds whether they wanted to be French or Indian citizens. He felt that people were ill informed about the advantages of becoming a French citizen and that some people were not at all informed about it.

For Indians of French nationality, integration into the larger Pondicherrian society is not always easy. When they leave France to come and live in Pondicherry, they find that there is an ever widening gap between their outlook developed while living in France and that of the local people living in Pondicherry even if both categories are Tamil. Many of them feel dissatisfied over a number of problems of daily living. What follows is a typical series of complaints. While many of them as pensioners from the French army are very rich relative to the local population, the reality is that they feel their wealth is soon depleted. The local people are quick to exploit them. They are usually made to pay more for items of daily consumption such as vegetables, fish and meat purchased in the

[327] Interview on July 14, 2003

local market. Furthermore, some of them, having lived in France have also developed tastes and lifestyles that that they feel they need to maintain to some extent in Pondicherry. For some various kinds of French food, not easily available locally, such as steaks, cheese, salami and sausages are almost daily necessities. According to one person**,** Nilgiri's, a local grocery store which caters to the affluent class, sells such items at very high prices if it has them in stock. However, not everyone has such complaints. One Franco-Pondicherrian[328] now temporarily settled here requests his sister who lives in France to send him salami, for example.

For one Franco-Pondicherrian[329], unfavorable circumstances forced him to leave France and to live in Pondicherry. For him, life is not a bed of roses either. He sits everyday on the Goubert Avenue facing the sea, contemplating whether or not to leave and go somewhere else. This person is truly in a state of limbo. He even feels let down by his progeny. He misses their filial attachment which is such a prominent feature in most Indian families. Even though he considers himself to be French rather than Indian and has developed all manner of French tastes, he also desires that his children develop an Indian attitude towards him. Paul Michalon, in an unpublished dissertation on the Franco-Pondicherrian community, had suggested that the social relationships of the French population seem to be moving towards Indianization from the bottom and towards "francisation-marginalisation" from the top of the socio-economic ladder.[330].

The eighteenth century canal originally constructed for the purpose of draining the city's flood waters into the sea, ended up dividing Pondicherry into a White Town and a Black Town. This division suited the natives as the Hindus viewed the whites as

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[328] Interview with Jean-Baptiste Pinai, a *retraité militaire,* July-August 2005
[329] Interview with a Muslim Franco-Pondicherrian, a *retraité militaire,*July-August 2005
[330] Michalon, p. 88

outcastes because they consumed alcohol and beef and breached other Hindu taboos.[331] In present times, the White Town with its many buildings of European architecture is conveniently used by Pondicherry in its efforts to project its image as a French town in order to boost tourism. According to Georgette David, tourism is an important activity in the town: many Indians from all over India, attracted mainly by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and a large number of foreigners, attracted by the magic of the town's name and of its colonial past pass through Pondicherry in a continous flow. Some of them settle down in Auroville. Pondicherry is probably the Indian town with the highest proportion of foreigners. Hence it remains faithful to its tradition of being mid-way between India and Europe.[332]

According to one Franco-Pondicherrian[333] who has come back to take care of his mother, there are practically no more ethnic, original Pondicherrians in Pondicherry. They left after the departure of France. He feels that now there is too much noise, the town is too crowded and commercialized. In his view, the inhabitants of Pondicherry are in reality people from elsewhere who have migrated to Pondicherry as, being a Union Territory, it is economically better off than surrounding areas. In general, these migrants come from different parts of Tamil Nadu.

At the time of Independence of India, democracy was more advanced in Pondicherry than in the rest of the country and France was engaged in improving the system without regard to what was happening in the immense British India. When the British left India, it was clear to everyone that France would have to do the same. The

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[331] Interview with Mr. Bichat, a Franco-Pondicherrian, a *retraité militaire*, July 2005

[332] Pondichéry-des comptoirs français a l'Inde d'aujourd'hui, Georgette David, Kailash Editions, Paris 2004, pp. 40-41).

[333] Interview with Marius, a retired civilian Franco-Pondicherrian, July 2005

Indian government promptly proclaimed it. France was not in such a rush. She declared that she was in favor of self-determination in the establishments by way of a referendum, a solution which was accepted in the beginning by India which viewed it as nothing but a formality. But, in French political circles, there was a tug of war between those who did not want to dismantle the colonial empire and those who were in favor of the people determining their own future.[334]

For the Pondicherrians, the turn of events was problematic. They had become used to their dual identity; it had become natural for them. They had economic and human ties with France as well as with India. The thought of breaking these ties with France was weighing upon them. They accepted the idea of a merger with India but desired a period of transition so that integration would take place gradually without any group of citizens having to suffer. France tried to profit by this situation and prolong its presence.[335]

But India could not understand the Pondicherrians' reservations about rejoining the mother country. They could not understand that Pondicherry would not be integrated as easily as the princely states of India as it had its own history of nearly three centuries with its own institutions functioning in its own language. The distancing of Pondicherrians in the negotiations of the agreements between France and India resulted in weak guarantees for the maintenance of the institutions. This regrettable lacuna enabled the Indian government to complete political and administrative integration at a hectic speed. The territory acquired a political status which was very close to that which it had under French dominance before the transfer but it was made to function in a completely

[334] David Annoussamy, pp.192-193
[335] David Annoussamy. p. 193

different context. Within a span of fifteen years the essence of the French heritage had disappeared. Most of the Francophone section of the population preferred to leave the territory. The enclaves became barely distinguishable from the neighboring territories. The politicians of Pondicherry who allowed this to happen so as to bolster their standing with Delhi, realized that a political identity could not last without a cultural identity. They set about creating one artificially.[336]

Political integration has been supplemented by demographic integration. If the Indian administration nullified the French system, it took care to win the population over by improving its material well being. It found a way of being accepted in the economic and social development and succeeded in it. This policy led to a large influx of population from the rest of India and the original local population was submerged. This double integration which has erased the old character of Pondicherry is giving it a newer one, less defined but visible still. Pondicherry has become a converging point for medical care and higher education. Businessmen and scientists coming from other parts of India have made of it an intercultural home. France brings its contribution by the institutions which it maintains. Young people dream of going to France and learn French. Some Francophone Indians who have remained there ardently carry the torch and overseas Pondicherrians periodically return to rekindle the flames.[337]

According to David Annousamy, Pondicherry is not an old French colony, which has become independent and developed its institutions based on what it has inherited. It has been integrated with the rest of India, modeling itself on Britain through the adoption of the English language and British institutions. French plays a much more

[336] David Annoussamy. p. 193
[337] David Annoussamy. p. 194

important role than in any other Indian town. Due to its insertion in India, Pondicherry, even if it is small in size, has acquired many institutes of higher learning, research, industrial firms, hospitals, shops and of centres of spirituality: it is the work of people who have come from other parts of India. It is this new population which sets the tone of social life and which directs the economy. This new population coming from various parts of India gives Pondicherry a pan-Indian character. This richness coupled with the remaining presence of France makes Pondicherry an inter-cultural home.[338]

It may be argued that this is what makes Pondicherry unique and different from other parts of India and defines its cultural specificity. Historical circumstances have led to the intermingling of French and Indian cultures. However, this intermingling has gone beyond the mere state of hybridity. There has been a qualitative transformation which has led to creolization: something new has resulted from the interaction of the heterogeneous French and Indian cultures. The results are unpredictable and occurring at an exponential rate.

During my fieldwork in the former French enclaves in the summer of 2003, a questionnaire containing 12 questions with three parts to each question was distributed to a random sample of people in the five former French enclaves. The total number of respondents was 126: 38 in Pondicherry, 18 in Karaikal, 28 in Mahe, 18 in Yanam and 24 in Chandernagore. The respondents in Pondicherry were representative of a wide range of the population (and also included a few French PhD students from universities in Paris), those in Karaikal were principally the teaching personnel of the Alliance Française, those in Mahe were the teaching personnel and students of an evening class for beginners at the Alliance Française, those in Yanam were mainly the administrative and

[338] L'intermède français en Inde, David Annoussamy, Paris L'Harmattan, 2005, p. 190.

technical personnel of the Regional Administrator's Office and those in Chandernagore were mainly the students and teaching personnel of an evening French class for beginners at the French Institute/Museum.

The results of the questionnaire were computed by making a numerical count of the three choices in each of the 12 questions. The resultant response for each of the questions was determined by the response of the majority to each category of every question. There were very slight variations in the responses in each of the enclaves in comparison with the overall responses for all five enclaves taken together. A total of 75 respondents (17 in Pondicherry, 5 in Karaikal, 23 in Mahe, 13 in Yanam, 16 in Chandernagore) added their personal comments at the end of the questionnaire. The written responses demonstrated, overall, a favorable attitude on the part of the respondents towards French language and culture and a keen desire that concrete steps be taken to promote them.

The numerical results of the questionnaire showed that, overall, the perception of the inhabitants of the five former French territories of India is that this coming together of French and Indian elements has resulted in a *slightly different culture* which is *changing very slowly* and whose effects are *predictable to a certain extent.* The traces of French culture, according to the people surveyed, are overall *marginally visible*. Their overall perception is that French is *steady* and that the influence of France in these territories is *important*.

The resultant *slightly different culture* demonstrated by the results of the questionnaire implies the existence of a creolized culture. However, this creolization, because the culture is only *slightly* different, is at a minimal level. It is not a case of

hybridity, which is a static condition, because the slightly different culture is *changing very slowly*. French is perceived to be *steady*. If it were *flourishing* or *disappearing***,** the rate of change of the slightly different culture would be different. The minimal creolization has resulted in, overall, *marginally visible traces* (and *readily visible traces* in Pondicherry).

David Annoussamy says that Pondicherry, during the course of its short history, has seen the evolution on its soil of people from different countries. It has known periods of abrupt demographic expansion as well as periods of passivity which are as brutal. It has been for many a point of transit. Others, having come in pursuit of wealth, settled down there. Many of those who were born there are now spread all over the world. What is, however, constant about it is that it has always been cosmopolitan and that its destiny has been in the hands of those who have come from elsewhere.[339] This implies that the French character of Pondicherry is perhaps a particular case of the general situation of Pondicherry. Its Frenchness could be viewed as a special articulation of its general cosmopolitanism.

Paul Michalon has said that from 1947-1954, the attitude of Pondicherrian militants towards a possible referendum in favor of integration into India was characterized by a certain nebulousness. However, Michalon attributes this attitude to the Hindu's notion of the relativity of truth which is in sharp contrast to the cartesian notion of a clear choice between yes and no offered in a referendum. For the Hindu, he says, there are multiple levels of truth. It would be absurd to resort to the referendum in India, and especially in South India. One can ask a particular country from Europe to determine its choice in a definite manner. The Bengali is still able to decide in a formal manner.

[339] L'intermède français en Inde, David Annoussamy, Paris L'Harmattan, 2005, p. 90.

But one cannot ask the South Indian who is averse to categorical affirmations as well as to absolute negations. In his soul, and the whole history of his thought attests it, there are no air tight compartments between a yes and a no. In his yes, there is always some place for a no, and his no never excludes a yes. There are various plausible explanations for the religious foundations of such an attitude. The Hindu conception of religious truth is essentially pragmatic and subjective. For the Hindu, there is no absolute truth; consequently, there can be neither exclusivism, nor incompatibility of principle, but relativity. In this light, it becomes easier to understand the difficulty involved in making clear decisions as was required by the referendum. It is a philosophical attitude among cultivated people, it is an atavistic bent of mind among the masses which are used to maintaining a prudent reserve in the face of great problems which his ignorance makes it difficult to understand. If the Indian, by temperament, always hesitates between two absolutes, his confusion can only be greater when it comes to a choice like that between India and France. The civilized Indian of the former Indian French territories knew that India was his country and that he could not disown his land nor his brothers. But he also knew that he owed much to France which had brought to him the benefits of its administration and of its civilization. There are many who owe it their moral personality and material situation. Furthermore, the Indian is above all sentimental by nature. And the feeling for France is very much alive everywhere: an infatuation, a weakness and spontaneous sympathy. In this light, how would it have been possible to tell the French to leave? To ask him whether he wanted to be Indian or French was a question which for him had no meaning. This bent of mind originating from the difficult confrontation between the Hindu notion of relativity in which one conception of truth always gives way

to a feeling that there might be another possible truth and the very cartesian reality of a referendum probably explains (as much as the equivocations of French and Indian politicians) the attitude of Pondicherrian militants in the years 1947-1954.[340]

In Pondicherry, in the 19th century there was a lively debate on the theme of citizenship, some people considering it unacceptable if it meant the preservation of the personal status. One was content to recognize to the electorate of India a hybrid status of "subjects with voting rights." The decree of 1881, in this context, aimed to present the candidates as "French citizens." The metropolitan ideal of assimilation was perhaps part of a more long term strategy, which was not very naïve: to weaken British India by the flowering of citizenship and democracy in the scattered enclaves. Where there was no scope for arms, the French relied on the destabilizing virtues of universal suffrage and of the "reign of equality"—to which Robespierre had aspired – on the doorsteps of their powerful neighbor. In other words, this grand design went, so one believes, beyond the desire of a large section of the population of the Establishments (where the untouchables are very numerous) to emerge from the humiliating condition of an inferior being or a pariah, in a society where the links of domination-subordination are so old and so implacable. In such a society where infractions of caste rules are believed to affect the dharma which governs the entire cosmic order, there is often a temptation—and the history of relations between Hinduism and other peripheral religions shows it—to escape.[341]

The optants have some basis for feeling "doubly French because they have chosen to be so," and sometimes show it quite ostentatiously (that is the case of the retired

[340] Michalon, pp. 26-28
[341] Michalon, pp. 40-41

military personnel) by the decoration of their houses, the tricolor badges on their scooters or their large signet rings of blue-white-red stones; whatever their hesitation might have been at the time of choice and the ambiguities of their present situation, from their swagger it becomes evident that they know that they are French. Without making any value judgments, according to Michalon, one can say that for the majority of these Frenchmen, nationality does not correspond to anything intimate like the feeling of belonging to the French nation. The great majority (60 to 70%, according to the general opinion) is not francophone (which is, in fact, a very delicate point) and many are unaware even of the name of the French President and of the colors of the French flag.[342]

As many as 95% of the *optants* of 1963 were descendants of *renonçants*[343]-- those inhabitants of these territories who gave up their personal status in Hindu society in favor of French citizenship in 1881. Given that the *renonçants* belonged principally to the lower castes in the very hierarchical Hindu society, French citizenship also meant an escape from their downtrodden condition. Conversations with some of them during the summer of 2003 revealed that there is a subconscious fear among them of being rejected by France and of losing their citizenship. As a result, they firmly assert their French nationality. At the same time, they express their deep reverence for their indigenous culture. Many of the *renonçants* who did not reap the full benefits of French citizenship in the former French enclaves due to preferential treatment given to Europeans and to descendants of Europeans decided to migrate to Indo-China principally in the region of Cochin-China and found employment in the French administration there.[344] After 1957,

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[342] Michalon, pp. 57-58
[343] Weber, Pondichery et les comptoirs français après Dupleix p. 418.
[344] "Les Pondichériens dans l'administration coloniale de l'Indochine" by Claude Marius in Relations entre la France et l'Inde de 1673 à nos jours under the direction of Jacques Weber, p. 393.

however, they were repatriated, some to metropolitan France but mostly to the overseas *departments*, principally the Reunion Islands. Many of the *magistrats* were repatriated to French territories in Africa where the presidents of tribunals were Pondicherrians at the time of Independence.[345] This complex link between the French enclaves, Indo-China and other French territories can be viewed as another component of the identity of the inhabitants of the former French territories of India. There is yet another important link of Pondicherrians: with their ancestors who, in the 19th century, went to overseas francophone territories as *coolies,* in particular to the sugar plantations of the Réunion, French Guyana, Guadeloupe and Martinique.[346] People travel to and from these far-off territories to visit their ancestors and these distant links may have a bearing on the identity of present day Pondicherrians. The Tamilian *coolies* or the indentured laborers from Pondicherry were not allowed to speak their native language in the Réunion, forcing them to speak in the local créole. This is in sharp contrast to Pondicherry where people spoke either just Tamil or just French but did not mix the two.

Contrary to the various reports on this question, the fate of Frenchmen of Pondicherry is not determined in the tight space of the "white town"(the former colonial quarters) nor in "somnolence, boredom, provincialism." The rapid growth of the local population, of the main infrastructures, of traffic and of buildings is a witness to the fact that the former French enclave is not a decrepit museum of colonialism, but a real "boom town" with a promising future. The present and the future of the French community must be understood in this context.[347]

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[345] Ibid, p. 396.
[346] "Emigration indienne et commerce maritime: les facteurs externes du progrès" in Pondichéry et les comptoirs de l'Inde après Dupleix: la démocratie au pays des castes by Jacques Weber.
[347] Michalon, p. 61

Generally speaking, the French microcosm of the territory, which is largely inactive, appears to be immobilized in the face of the employment question, subjecting its standard of living to the declining value of the rupee or to some financial assistance, and thus always dependent on external agents. One can ask oneself if this life with a safety net even on a modest level prepares young people, in particular, for a lucid and responsible vision of professional life? Furthermore, because it is engaged very marginally as an active working population, the French community, submerged in the maelstrom of movements, of noise and of sweat of functioning Indian towns, wields no solid economic influence, and thus very little social or political weight. Not very numerous, and definitely on the fringes of active life, the Franco-Pondicherrians undoubtedly see, in the eyes of public opinion, their caricatured image with the features of the richest—and of the most visible—among them. At the risk of becoming isolated they also risk becoming unpopular and arouse jealousy.[348]

It is striking to notice, through daily conversations, the association which the man in the street makes between French and soldier: public opinion is not based on statistics but on realities which are most easily grasped—even though, of course, it is done in a simplistic manner. Whether he likes it or not, therefore, the *retraité militaire* represents for many the community of Frenchmen—or rather, as common usage reserves the term Frenchmen for the white population of the colonial quarters, the community of "Indians with French nationality."[349]Caught between an expatriate minority "confident of itself and dominating"(and withdrawn into itself outside its place and time of work) and most of the Indian population which denies it even the title of "French," the Franco-

[348] Michalon, p. 83
[349] Michalon, pp. 84-85

Pondicherrian community feels left to its own devices, being compelled to find within its bosom reasons and means to come to terms with the accidents of history. The internal social life of the French in India can obviously not be described or qualified in a few pages. The essence of its traits and its rites come from the Tamil world from which its members originate, and where they remain submerged, most particularly in the case of families of the most modest among them.[350]

Caught between two false and simplistic visions of worlds which are so fundamentally different, the Indian-French youth experiences a real acculturation at an age where one needs solid foundations. A young woman living in the Parisian region was of the view that an adult's life is constructed on the basis of questions which arise during these formative years, of the orientations and choices which are then made. It is also perhaps the time when the double cultural and linguistic belonging of an individual is the source of revelations, demystifications and of conflicts which have been assumed or not resolved.[351]

France, in this daily contact, carries the suggestion of unusual liberties: those of speaking up in class, of having responsibilities, of making personal plans for the future, to interact freely with certain teachers, and even to go to the "boum" organized twice a year by the Foyer du Lycée with the aim, according to the Proviseur, to enable these girls to come out of their homes! While the stuffed noises of the party are heard, the fathers' mopeds await, aligned along the pavement.[352]

But…how can one be a Franco-Pondicherrian today? Before attempting to answer this question, one must say and repeat that, contrary to the presentations that are

[350] Michalon, p.91
[351] Michalon, p. 142
[352] Michalon, p. 144

made by the French press, Pondicherry cannot be summarized as the "white town" dozing off at the time of siesta, but appears as a small regional capital with feverish activity and very rapid economic development. In this context, the French are viewed as being doubly marginal: very few among the inhabitants of the Union Territory of Pondicherry (1,2 % of the total population), they hold a very subdued place in the economy, which makes it a not very influential group…in the land of "arrangements."[353]Being second class citizens, they are allowed only residual political activity, like what the colonial era had to tolerate—or sometimes support. A docile and manipulated electorate (that is, despised), but often discouraged, the French of India would seem to deserve a better treatment from metropolitan France, which intervenes only half-heartedly.[354]

One could imagine (and hope) that, under the weight of their isolation, they would constitute a well knit microcosm, eager for unity and solidarity. It seems that this is not the case. Michalon says that after having used all along in his study the term community, for facility of language and for lack of a better word, his conclusion is that the French of Pondicherry do not form a community: they present rather the aspect of a society characterized by cleavages of caste, religion, levels of education, wealth, sex and clientelism. Rather than being a minority united in the face of its difficulties (which are real and very specific), the observer, however little attentive he may be, discovers a microcosm which does not permit simple characterization.[355]

Michalon has said that having come to the end of his study, it seems to him legitimate to suggest a different image of these Frenchmen of India from that which the press presents. There is something indecent and unfair about attempts to dismiss these

[353] Michalon, p. 155
[354] Michalon, p. 156
[355] Michalon, p. 157

few thousand French nationals at one end of the world as inveterate impostors, drinkers and pétanque players. Michalon says that in his interactions with these people he found a microcosm which is not dozing off under the tropical heat, but anxiously searching its way in a tortuous situation. Being the ultimate metamorphosis of the colonial adventure, the Franco Pondicherrians are the inheritors of a largely defective treaty, and for the most Europeanized among them, of a destabilizing cultural confrontation.[356]

Paul Michalon has been quoted so extensively because his insights are applicable to my own interactions with members of this community. The Franco-Pondicherrian community is a crucial object of study when trying to resolve or define the notion of creolization in the former French territories of India. They are really the gauge of the French presence in these territories. According to Jacques Weber, more than *l'hotel du gouvernement*, the Sacré-Coeur, *l'hotel de ville* and the statue of Dupleix, the Franco-Pondicherrians, the descendants of the renonçants of the *statut personnel*, remain the living witnesses of the long French presence in this country and, sometimes, the spokesmen of French culture in the subcontinent.[357] For while political treaties have determined the present whereabouts of members of this community who are now largely settled in France or other Francophone territories with a very small number still remaining in Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam, one can be led to ask the following question: who are the real Pondicherrians? As mentioned earlier, one prevalent view is that the Pondicherrians have all left except for a handful and that Pondicherry is now a town of people who have migrated from elsewhere. In that case, the real Pondicherrians would be defined as those inhabitants who belonged to the French Indian

[356] Michalon, p. 160
[357] Jacques Weber, Pondichéry et les comptoirs de l'Inde après Dupleix, p.411

territories during the era of French colonialism. In the rest of India, which was colonized by the British, the relationship with the former colonizer is defined mainly by the use of the English language and of the adoption of the institutions which it left behind. Decolonization in the case of British India did not affect Indians' relationship to their motherland. Besides, hardly any Indian living in India adopted British nationality. In the case of Pondicherry, decolonization led to an uprooting of Pondicherians of French nationality and to their migration and exile to the land of the former colonizer.

In the study of creolization in these territories, the Franco-Pondicherrian community can be viewed as a variable of considerable importance which will define the nature of creolization there. In particular, members of this community can concretize the relativity of the notions of deculturation, acculturation, assimilation and creolization which are key concepts in cross cultural interactions. They occupy the spectrum which extends from deculturation to creolization. While these are theoretical concepts where, in particular, assimilation and creolization apply to cultures as a whole, when studying this community one realizes that when they are viewed as variables the notions of deculturation and acculturation are no longer as airtight as they appear in theory. In theory, deculturation is a total adoption of the cultural elements which have been introduced by outsiders whereas acculturation is a partial adoption of these elements. The Franco-Pondicherrians in Pondicherry certainly retain their native roots as they are Tamil speakers and follow the norms of Tamil culture. As Michalon previously pointed out, their French nationality does not carry the same connotation of intimacy as belonging to the French nation. This raises questions about the process of deculturation and acculturation itself where it needs to be known whether in these processes the adoption of

whichever elements have been introduced must be qualified by the yardstick of intimacy. To what extent must extrapolations be made to the location of the colonizing culture for these processes to be successful?

In the Ile de France today, among migrants from Pondicherry, for example, the Tamil language has witnessed a revival of interest for several reasons. On the one hand, educational institutions modify their discourse and tend to attach value to the learning of the mother tongue among the young children. On the other hand, many adolescents regret having neglected the study of the Tamil language and blame their parents for not having insisted enough on their learning the language. This complex surfaces especially during their visits to India where their accent and their syntactical variety are subject to mockery, making them feel like outsiders to the Tamil community. An important factor which triggered among the Franco- Pondicherrians an awareness of the loss of value of language and culture was the mass exodus of Sri Lankans in the years 80-85. Franco-Pondicherrians all of a sudden found themselves facing, physically and culturally, people like them, who, in addition to having conserved their cultural markers speak a more authentic Tamil, less embellished with words of English or French origin. This purity of the Tamil language led to the rise of discourses valorizing Tamil language and identity advocated by regional movements which had been opposed to Brahmanical hegemony by actions such as the expurgation of Sanskrit words from the language or the opposition to Hindi as the national language. Thus, following the example of the Sri Lankans, some Pondicherrian associations in France cite as their objectives Tamil language classes for children and some *Bharata natya* dance classes.[358]

[358] Brigitte Sebastia, pp. 70-71

Another index of the revival of interest in Tamil language in the Ile de France is in the field of the Catholic religion. The celebration of ordinary or extraordinary Tamil masses is necessary for Pondicherrians who have only a weak knowledge of the French language but Pondicherrians see in them another perspective, that of creating among their children a revival of interest in their mother tongue. This is even more possible in the sense that the religious sphere, for Indian communities, is an important area of socialization for children. Several years ago, some Pondicherrian communities had the idea of integrating some young people into their choir by giving them the text of songs in Tamil language transliterated in Roman characters in the hope of arousing their curiosity for learning to read and write in the language. But this experience turned out to be a failure and today, the choirs are composed exclusively of adults.[359]

Brigitte Sebastia says that to be Pondicherrian in Ile de France is to share a common culture which consists of the language, the practice of rituals, the observance of certain prescriptions based on the notions of purity and impurity, hierarchy between members of the community, the conception of the family and so on. Also, even if all the Pondicherrians do not speak Tamil or do not know the caste of their ancestors, in everything which touches upon social and family life, they have conserved their cultural practices while absorbing those which they found interesting in the exogenous cultures. Hence, the aperitif, the place given to meals, the dancing evening or even French dessert served with champagne are part of most of the Pondicherrian ceremonies even of those which are branded "identitairement" as the feast of nubility. Even if the preferred daily food and even more so on special occasions, is rice cooked in the Indian way, hence its prevalence in ceremonies, Pondicherrian parents and children appreciate the variety of

[359] Brigitte Sebastia, p. 71

French cuisine. Yet they would not consume meats forbidden for the caste to which they belong.[360]

We see in the Pondicherrians of the Ile de France the reversal of the process of acculturation. In some cases, even of deculturation. Perhaps in the older generation, it is more acculturation since they are bound to more easily retain some or all the characteristics of their native culture. Deculturation would be more easily accomplished in the younger people as is the case of the children who have neglected to acquire solid foundations in the Tamil language. One can say that there is constant negotiation taking place about which elements of the exogeneous cultures they wish to appropriate. A gentleman whom I met in Pondicherry described the Franco-Pondicherrians as being Indian in France and French in India. Perhaps this description is not entirely accurate as the Pondicherrians of the Ile de France are not entirely Indian and the Franco-Pondicherrians in Pondicherry are not entirely French.

It can perhaps be inferred that a common reaction to the process of acculturation is to reinforce one's native roots, a little bit like the law in physics which states that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In the twentieth century, Tamil intellectuals reacted to the process of acculturation by asserting the merits of their own culture. This can be witnessed in the writings of C.Subramania Bharati**,** the eminent Tamil poet and promoter of nationalistic ideas, which eulogize how great India is and, in particular, extol the merits of Tamil culture. The resurgence of Indian nationalism is coupled with the special articulation of Tamil values. Bharati's vision of a new India was "founded on the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity and reinforced by love of

[360] Brigitte Sebastia, Les Pondichériens de l'Ile de France, p.81

humanity and love of God."[361] For him liberty and equality were building blocks of life and like Shelley he was enamored of the political philosophy of the French Revolution. He also held American democracy in high regard especially its egalitarian aspects.[362] Tamil intellectuals were aware of the disparities, both social and economic, which were present in the society of that time. They were especially sensitive to the economic condition of the downtrodden: farmers, workers and poor and hunger-stricken people. One can see Western influences on their notions of democracy and their social concerns are geared towards promoting equity and political justice.[363]

The interplay of tradition and modernity can best be brought out through the concepts of *Swadeshi and Swaraj* which were similar aspects of the nationalist ideology propagated by the Tamil intellectuals of the twentieth century. These intellectuals sought an inward inspiration by advocating the values of an Indian pre-British golden age. They did not seek a departure from Western influences but rather espoused a synthesis of ancient ideals with the benefits of Western thought and philosophy. *Swadeshi* had as its aim a literary and cultural revival which would be inspired by the glory of India's past. Their influence was confined not only to the Tamil region but to other regions as well. *Swaraj* pertained to developing a self governing India on the Western model. This was a direct result of India's experience with colonialism and of its disapproval. The transition of India from a cultural agglomeration to the beginnings of a new nation can be viewed through the intellectual debates about nationalism in South India.[364]

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[361] "Intellectual origins of Nationalism in South India"in French in India and Indian nationalism by K.S. Mathew, pp. 640-641
[362] K.S. Mathew, pp. 640-641
[363] K.S. Matthew, p.641
[364] K.S. Matthew, p. 642

One could perhaps, for the sake of argument, say that there was no creolization in the former French enclaves. From a certain point of view, the demonstration of a hypothetical lack of creolization in these territories would maybe not be very problematic, if by lack of creolization is meant a simple intermingling or juxtaposition of heterogeneous cultures without the emergence of a new reality. One need only observe the town and make inferences. To the naked uninitiated eye, Pondicherry can be said to be just like another Indian town. One Franco-Pondicherrian, however, said that he had visitors from the northern state of Gujarat who told him that after they had visited the town, they found something unique about Pondicherry, there was a certain calm about it, something difficult to explain which made Pondicherry different from other parts of India. However, he said that if one were to ask him, he would not be able to either notice or explain this difference as he was from Pondicherry and that his roots were too entrenched in the place. The same would apply, according to him, to other Pondicherrians whom one spoke to.[365] The original people who inhabited it were from Tamil Nadu and hence, can be regarded as the real inhabitants of the place. When the French arrived in 1674, Mughals were the dominant power in India. French colonization was an interlude in India's history. While initially the French East India Company followed by the French Government were interested mainly in trading, they also came to establish a French educational, administrative and judicial apparatus. If Pondicherry can be said to have been Frenchified during this period, the merger process in 1962 led to the dissipation of a sizeable segment of the francophone population. Integration into India led to its Anglicization.

[365] Interview with Ange, a *Creole Franco-Pondicherrian*, July 2005

Indian culture is too strong for anyone, let alone the French, to have distorted it.[366] According to some opinions of people who have been interviewed, the already existing traditional, classical and highly developed Tamil language in Pondicherry did not allow the French language to deform Tamil. The French language was thus essentially filtered by the strength of Tamil. Furthermore, the French territories were but a speck in the vast Anglophone India. There is a White town and a Black Town separated by a canal. There are many old European colonial buildings in the White town. There are French street names running through the town and the tourism office map lists all the street names by calling them *rues*. According to the wife of a French expatriate, who is a doctor working in Chennai and who lives with his wife and children in Pondicherry visiting them mostly on weekends, Pondicherry, even if small in size, forms a distinct part of the collective unconscious of Frenchmen living in France. She also thinks that the inhabitants of Pondicherry tend to segregate themselves into metropolitans, expatriates, Franco-Pondicherrians, Aurovillians, Ashramites, foreigners and Indians. She attributes this segregation to the legacy of French colonization.[367]Paul Michalon says that the relations between Franco-Pondicherrians and "whites" (to employ a simple and straight term) appear charged with ambiguities and implicit meanings, precisely because the latter invariably occupy the positions of power: the consulate, lyçée, the Alliance Française and Center for Professional Development and, for that matter, even the parish of Notre Dame des Anges.[368]

A local Indian resident of Pondicherry viewed the French element in Pondicherry as being a very tiny and insignificant part of contemporary life. He saw the principal

[366] Interview with Mr. Pierre Eluard, owner of *Satsanga Restaurant*, Pondicherry, July 2005
[367] Interview with Mme Yves Huttin, August 2005
[368] Michalon, p. 88

official instruments of the propagation of French, namely the French Institute, the Alliance Française and the French Consulate General as being islands by themselves with little contact and interaction between them. His opinion of the Franco-Pondicherrian community was that it was very narrow-minded and self-centered with a distorted notion of its own importance.[369]

According to Albert Rollin[370], a Franco-Pondicherrian, the following were the influences of French culture: alcohol, buildings, restaurants, the streets of Pondicherry and churches. For one thing, alcohol is very easily available in Pondicherry in contrast with the adjoining areas. It is true that because Pondicherry is a Union Territory, alcohol is cheaper than in the adjoining areas and hence, people flock to Pondicherry to consume alcohol. But, according to Rollin, this habit of drinking is a legacy of the French and even though it is not red wine that readily flows through the streets of Pondicherry, local liquor is available in plenty. This is especially in sharp contrast to the fact that drinking is taboo among the more conservative and traditional Indian families. In a traditional Indian family, one would not drink specially in front of one's elders but in Pondicherry it is not uncommon to have bottles of beer lying in the refrigerator to be consumed readily as refreshments irrespective of the presence of close family members and so on. With respect to the presence of restaurants, Rollin characterized Pondicherry as being a very gastronomic town with a wide variety of cuisines and where, in general, people like to eat well. This, he attributes also to the legacy of the French. In a typical restaurant menu, there are a wide variety of cuisines to choose from. For example, a typical Pondicherrian family may eat traditional food during the week and eat out during the weekend trying

[369] Interview with a Research Scholar of Ecole Française d'Extreme Orient, Pondicherry, June 2003
[370] Interview with Mr. Albert Rollin, June 2003

out the variety of continental and other cuisines available in restaurants. The menu card[371] of Seagull's, a local restaurant in Pondicherry, displays a large number of dishes with a French sounding name. The Tourism bureau of the Government of Pondicherry manages Seagull's.

According to one Indian citizen of Pondicherry[372], the elements of French culture in Pondicherry could be summarized as the monuments, the Lyçée Français, the French Institute, the periodical *Trait-D'Union*, the "Ecoles Indiennes à Programmes Français, the "Association des amis de la langue et de la culture française," whose aims were two-fold namely to organize conferences and to teach French to adults, the Churches such as Notre Dame des Anges, the statue of Jeanne d'Arc, the French street names, the statue of Dupleix, the Ashram where French is one of the principal things which is taught even though now it has become very commercialized, the *Hotel d'Extreme Orient* and the *Rendez vous* hotel where French meals are served, the Alliance Française, a monument in front of the palace of the governor which symbolizes the "Arc de Triomphe" in Paris and a water fountain which is located in a place which earlier used to be called the Place Charles de Gaulle, the Romain Rolland library where there is, among other things, a

[371] Menu Card viewed in June, 2003: There is, for starters, an "oeuf mimosa (egg yolk and mayonnaise blended with seasoning served piped in egg white)." There are two soups: "Consommé Julienne (clear consommé with Julienne strips of vegetables)" and "French onion soup (clear consommé served with egg drop and garnished with browned onion rings)." Among the stews, there are "chicken and vegetable fricasse" and "chicken and vegetable ragout." In the Continental Aroma section of the menu, there are the following dishes: "Poulet à la Sandaman (Pan Fried Chicken with Brown Sauce topped with red wine)," "Poulet Roti (Pan Fried Chicken served with Brown Sauce)," "Poulet Saute Mexicane (Pan Fried Chicken served with Brown Sauce," "Poulet à la Maryland (Crumb fried chicken served with boiled vegetables, potatoes and banana fritters)," "Fish Mornay (filet of fish steamed and served in a cheesy white sauce)," "Prawn Thermidor (prawn served in mustard flavored white sauce)," "Steak au poivre (Filet of Beef cooked to order topped with pepper sauce served with boiled vegetables)," "Bifteck (a delight of Franco-Pondicherry popular locally)," "Vegetable au Gratin (boiled vegetables served with a cheesy white sauce)," "Mushroom à la King (mushroom, tomato, capsicum in a red sherry flavored cream sauce served with a ring of rice)." For dessert, there is "soufflé."

[372] Interview with Mr. Lourdes Rassa, July 9, 2003

photograph of Romain Rolland and Mahatma Gandhi, and the ancient Roman ruins in Arikamedu(located outside Pondicherry).

In Karaikal, a local resident who was a professional notary was very cynical about the situation of French[373]. According to him, French in Karaikal had almost disappeared. He criticized the way French was taught at the Alliance Française of Karaikal. According to him, French language classes were taught in Tamil and the Alliance had been very politicized (the premises of the Alliance were shared by the Alliance and a branch of the Consulate General of France in Pondicherry). The President of the Alliance[374] when told about the criticism that French language classes were being taught in Tamil said that the students were adults and that if one spoke only in French, they would not understand anything and would give up their attempt to learn French. The notary also said that only one student had passed the language exam and that too because the student's father was a French teacher and had given his son French lessons. He said that the students at the Alliance already have French nationality and that they learnt French before going to France so that they might acquire some knowledge of useful expressions to use at the time of their arrival in France. He also said that Pondicherry had always been part of the tourism axis of French people but that was not the case for Karaikal. Since Karaikal is surrounded by the same state as Pondicherry (Tamil Nadu), everyone flocks to Pondicherry and hardly anyone to Karaikal. As a result, Karaikal feels neglected and this has been the case since the time of the French presence there (he told me that even in French India there had been only 6 or 7 French people in Karaikal).

[373] Interview on July 12, 2003 with Mr. Rajen de Sama
[374] Interview on July 12, 2003

However, there is one place in Karaikal where French education is of a respectable standard: the convent of CLUNY. The person who is in charge of the convent said that there are 110 students and 6 teachers (2 of French nationality and 4 Indians).[375] She said that she was very strict about following proper procedures for instructing French (such as, for example, speaking only in French in class). She also said that many students in her school (especially the male ones) have asked her to find girls of French nationality whom they might marry.

Mahé is truly the "ravissant petit village" as it is described. There is a church on the main road called St. Teresa's Church. It is known for its secular character where a festival held once a year in October gathers people from all religions. There is also an Alliance Française there. It was initially founded in 1982 as a branch of the Pondicherry Alliance. It then became independent in 2001. It holds French language classes for beginners and its President is an Indian. According to Mr. Palingden[376], President of the Union des Français de Mahé, there are 85 persons of French nationality (32 families, 26 military and civilian retired persons, 15 widows, 10 anciens combatants). There is also an "Ecole centrale et cours complémentaires." It is a school, which teaches students from classes 1 to 10. It was founded in 1805, has 75 students, 8 regular teachers (4 of whom have consolidated pay, 4 of whom are part time). All subjects are taught in French. The students who graduate from here go to the Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary School and later, to the Mahatma Gandhi Arts College. According to the instructors and the

[375] Interview on July 12, 2003
[376] Interview on July 10, 2003

principal of the school[377], they were facing many problems due to lack of support from the government. There were not enough teachers and the building was in bad shape.

Mahé has produced an eminent writer, M Mukundan. Mr. Mukundan used to be the deputy cultural attaché at the French Embassy in New Delhi but has now resigned from the post. Apart from that, he is principally a writer who has written 27 works of fiction in Malayalam, the language of the state of Kerala. He has received numerous awards and is the only (according to him) contemporary writer of fiction in the entire Union Territory of Pondicherry who has written about the presence of the French there. Two of his books have been translated into English: On the banks of the Mayyazhi (which has also been translated into French: Sur les rives de la rivière Mahé) and God's Mischiefs. The first one is about life in Mahé during the time of the French. The second one is about life in Mahé after the departure of the French and treats extensively the plight of the métisses in an independent Mahé. According to Mr. Mukundan[378], Mahé was initially bought for 16 000 pannams from a landlord to trade pepper and spices. According to him, it is the only enclave of Pondicherry where any intellectual activity thrives at all. There are small pockets in Mahé where people gather and discuss intellectual matters. He says that the state of Kerala is very politically conscious. When the French people left, according to him, the local people were crying and were nostalgic about the departure of the French as they had been very generous to the local people. However, soon after, there was a backlash against the French. The local people mutilated the colonial buildings and the statue of Marianne (located in a small park overlooking the confluence of the Mahé river and the Arabian Sea) was destroyed twice as national

[377] Interview on July 10, 2003
[378] Interview on July 27, 2003

sentiments began to be expressed. The theme of decolonization is thus a major theme in his works of fiction.

Yanam is located on one of the branches of the Godavari river, and surrounded by the state of Andhra Pradesh. Its area is 30 square kilometers. Due to the relative prosperity of Yanam vis-à-vis its adjoining areas (as it is a Union Territory), there had been a 4-fold migration from the adjoining areas to Yanam thus making Yanam like the rest of Andhra Pradesh[379]. In these conditions, it is easy to understand the exponential erosion of the traces of the French presence there. The visible remnants of the French presence in Yanam are: the St. Ann's Catholic Church built in 1846, the cemetery with tombs of French nationals, the Administrator's building, the Court building and another building. Also, French is taught as one subject in STPP Junior College. There is a lecturer from Pondicherry in this school. According to a native of Yanam[380], local people are generally proud to say that they had a French past.

An Indian of French nationality,Mr. Madhyam Shetty Ventana, broke into tears saying that Yanam is, "une petite France oubliée, abandonnée par la France."[381] Furthermore, he dictated to me the following paragraph: "Pour que la petite colonie Yanaon n'oublie pas la culture et la présence française en Inde, comme il n'y a personne pour apprendre la langue française presque oubliée il faut ici une Alliance Française et un instituteur français qu'on doit affecter ici de Pondichéry. L'Alliance Française à Yanaon a marché pendant un an- 1999-2000 mais c'était fermé parce qu'il n y avait personne pour s'en occuper. A Yanaon, il y a toujours les souvenirs de notre France. Pour bien

[379] Interview with Mr. Gautam Reddy, Administrator of Yanam, July 15, 2003
[380] Interview on July 16, 2003
[381] Interview on July 16, 2003. The translation of the quotation is as follows: "Yanam is a small France forgotten, abandoned by France." (contd.)

dire, la présence française de trois siècles en Inde et pour ne pas oublier les Français de Yanaon, il faut ici n'importe comment établir une Alliance Française à Yanaon."[382] Hehad been giving French lessons to his granddaughter who was going to France in two months. He also said that, "le gouvernement indien d'aujourd'hui n'est pas le même que celui de 1954- ils sont motivés par des intérêts personnels."[383]

A Muslim gentleman[384] who was a "magistrat en retraite" said that at the time of the transfer of power in 1954, the inhabitants of the former French territories had not been given a fair deal. He said that given a free choice, the people would have opted to remain part of France. In his opinion, also held by many other people in these territories, this betrayal is summed by the term "la farce de Kijéour." Kijéour is a village located a few miles from Pondicherry. According to him, one of the leaders of French India, Mr. Goubert was allowed by the then Indian Consul General in Pondicherry Mr. Kewal Singh to smuggle goods. However, apparently, Mr. Kewal Singh then got Mr.Goubert arrested. In exchange for the latter's liberation, he arm-twisted him to organize an election where people would vote for merger with India. According to the Muslim gentleman, the people in these territories would have preferred to remain a part of France due to the economic benefits they would reap from it in the same manner as their present desire to remain a part of the Union Territory of Pondicherry rather than merging the enclaves into neighboring states.

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[382] "In order for the small colony of Yanam not to forget the culture and French presence in India, as there is no one to teach French which has almost been forgotten, an Alliance Française is urgently needed here as well as a French teacher that one must allot here from Pondicherry. The Alliance Française in Yanam worked for a year in 1999-2000 but it was closed down because there was no one to look after it. In Yanam, there are still memories of our France. To reiterate, the French presence of three centuries in India and in order not to forget the French of Yanam, it is necessary to set up an Alliance Française in Yanam one way or another."

[383] "The Indian government of today is not the same as that of 1954-they are motivated by selfish interests."

[384] Interview on July 16, 2003 with Mr. Rafiuddin Mohammed

A retired "inspecteur des trésors"[385] in various French embassies around the world who had also spent some time in Madagascar and in the Reunion Islands said that "vous vous sentez comme un étranger ici." He had very few, if any, interactions with the local people. On that occasion, his grandchildren had just arrived from France on vacation. They only spoke French and interacted only among their own French speaking family members.

In Chandernagore (the local name for it is now Chandannagar), there is a French Institute/ Museum. The Insitute was a legacy of the Indo- French treaty signed in 1951. Its aims are three-fold namely to maintain a museum, to provide a library and to hold French language classes for adults in continuing education.[386] There is a great eagerness among the students about learning French and the facilities available to them in terms of audio-visual material to supplement their classroom activities are meager.[387] The Institute has 19 part-time staff. INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) started work on building of the Institute/Museum in 1990. In 1994, Government of India stopped the work by INTACH. The ASI (Archaelogical Survey of India) completed the work but the funds were depleted in 2000 and so only 60% of the work was completed. It has now been declared a Protected Historical Monument. A committee consisting of the Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the French Government has been set up to restore the building.

Additionally, French in Chandernagore is taught at the St. Joseph's Convent, at the Dupleix College and at the Kanailal Vidya Mandir (English and French sections). In the latter school, the medium of instruction is Bengali, the second language is English

[385] Interview on July 16, 2003 with Mr. Chanta Subba Rao
[386] Interview with Assistant Curator of the Museum, Mr. Makar, on July 18, 2003
[387] Visit to evening French class on July 18, 2003

and only the third language is French. One of the sections is called the French section because of a French bias. It also prepares the students for the C.E.P.E. (Certificat d'Etudes Primaires et Elémentaires). French is also taught at the Shitol Prasad Ghosh Adarsho Shikalaya, at the Durga Charan Rakhit Banga Vidhalaya and at the Krishna Bhavani Nari Shikha Mandir. According to the person who is in charge of French education, the syllabus should be revised, as it was too old (dating to the time of independence) and the books did not reach the students. According to a former freedom fighter[388], the West Bengal Government does not care about allotment of money to Chandernagore as it calls it a "foreign pocket", even though during the struggle for independence against the British many freedom fighters had taken refuge there.

A retired teacher[389]in Chandernagore said that the syllabi followed by the schools were outdated. A retired professor[390] of philosophy at Calcutta University, whose father was a revolutionary said that there was only one person in Chandernagore with French nationality (the others were all dead). According to him, the French government has given 5 million rupees for the renovation of the French Institute and that the French Consulate General in Calcutta (the oldest French Consulate in India) was abolished recently. He said that even during the colonial period, the majority of people (99%) used to work in Calcutta thus being obliged to learn English. Only 1% could find jobs in Chandernagore. This is in sharp contrast to Pondicherry which was a larger place and so more people found jobs, hence French was more prevalent. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Pondicherry found jobs in other French colonies such as Indo-China and thus there were more people speaking French there. According to him, there are no more

[388] Interview with Dr. Basant Kumar Das on July 19, 2003
[389] Interview with Mr. Nilmuni Kumar on July 19, 2003
[390] Interview with Mr. Deva Datta Ray on July 19, 2003

"bacheliers (those who have a baccalauréat)" in Chandernagore. He remarked that even in Laos, Cambodia etc. French is disappearing due to the American influence and that it had already disappeared in Chandernagore.

According to Brigitte Sébastia, Pondicherry, as the headquarters of the former French enclaves, has a very French appearance whereas the other enclaves have been completely Indianized. Even Karaikal which was the most French town after Pondicherry hardly displays any traces of its French past in spite of its proximity to Pondicherry distance wise but also in terms of the common Tamil language which it shares as well as the family ties which unite the inhabitants of the two towns.[391]Brigitte Sebastia also says that the statistics of 1988 reported by William Miles (1195, p.18) show that out of a total of 12364 Franco-Pondicherrians residing in the Union Territory of Pondicherry, 11569 live in Pondicherry whereas only 699 live in Karikal, 46 in Mahé and 50 in Yanam. These numbers illustrate in a very clear manner the predominance of natives of Pondicherry among the Franco-Pondicherrians of Paris.[392]

Creolization implies the dissipation of an atavistic culture. The atavistic culture defines notions of legitimacy and, hence, that of identity. Thus, creolization can be said to dissipate notions of legitimacy and of identity. Furthermore, the dissipation of the atavistic culture can lead to the creation of a composite culture. Therefore, creolization can lead to the composition of a new legitimacy and of a new identity. In the case of the former French territories, the notion of legitimacy has taken a relative connotation. Because the present day notion of who are the real Pondicherrians cannot be divorced from the link with France, Francophone cultures and the French language, one can say

[391] Brigitte Sebastia, p. 7
[392] Brigitte Sebastia, p. 8

that the present second or third generation Pondicherrians are the legitimate Pondicherrians. The others can be termed as migrants who have settled there. Since many of the second or third generation Pondicherrians have migrated to France and to other Francophone territories, one can say that the links with their motherland are real in the sense that it legitimately belongs to them. On the other hand, since Pondicherry was colonized by the French, the legitimacy of a French link with Pondicherry can be called into question.

Chapter 4

The Contemporary Period:

One language or a multitude?

According to the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis, our view of reality is conditioned by language. In the absence of any demonstrated proof, this remains a hypothesis. Our perception of the world is filtered through language. Different versions of the hypothesis qualify the manner in which this filtration occurs. At one end of the spectrum, the hypothesis claims that behavior patterns are affected by language. For example, people react differently to stimuli from two different languages. This is the weak version of the hypothesis. The most extreme version of the hypothesis states that language dictates behavior. In this version, people are helpless victims of the structure of a particular language in that they have no control over the way they see, perceive and feel.[393]

The language of the colonizer can be viewed as a variable of considerable importance in the process of cultural interactions. I will call it a variable because at various levels language can be viewed as a catalyst for the induction of cultural elements. The degree of the catalyzing effect can vary in different circumstances. In the context of the former French territories, the induction of French into the multi-lingual Indian environment plays a subsidiary role in relation to the dynamics of the other languages already manifested there. Nevertheless, according to the weak version of the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis, even if French plays a minor role its very presence would still have a filtering effect and people would be affected by the stimuli of the language and by extension to the cultural elements which it represents. The French speaking Indians of

[393] Robert D. King, Nehru and the Language Politics of India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, pp.190-191

French nationality are perhaps an illustration of the extreme version of the hypothesis. They are French nationals. They speak French. They have French tastes: eating habits, manner of thinking and so on. They also speak Tamil, Malayalam or Telugu. The tilt is towards French.

The process of examining the impact of French can be viewed in various ways. We could create sets and subsets. The French nationals of Indian origin could constitute the core subset. This subset could be part of the larger subset of people of Indian origin, which would include largely Indian citizens, but not exclusively as we could also have Indians of other nationalities as well. The largest set could be Indians who do not speak any French at all. While keeping other variables constant, each subset could be the gauge of a certain degree of *francisation*, which would disappear completely as we reached the largest set containing the preceding subsets.

The impact of French could also be viewed through its ripple effect. In the wave theory of light, the light waves move out from the center in concentric circles. The induction of French into this environment would have a ripple effect on the inhabitants of the territories. The ripples would subside as they reached the non-French speaking Indians. Nevertheless, the waves would still hit them and according to the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis the people would be affected by the stimuli of the language even if in this case, it may so happen that the waves might just bounce back. However, even if they just bounced back they would still have had an impact. Furthermore, the concentric circles of waves could also be the previously mentioned subsets.

According to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the act of observing a subatomic particle changes its momentum due to the light wave bouncing off the particle. Carrying

the analogy of the light wave one step further, one can say that the induction of French into the former French territories has changed its momentum. This momentum would be a function of the cultural dynamics of India in general and of these territories in particular. For the purposes of the present analysis, let us isolate the language variable in the cultural environment and look more closely at the dynamics of interaction of languages.

In British India, political boundaries were determined at random in order to constitute economic and administratively viable units. Divisions based on linguistic considerations were usually put on the backburner. In post independence India, Prime Minister Nehru's initial priority was to foster the spirit of a nation. In this effort, he was of the view that there should be one national language, namely Hindi, which would presumably unify the nation. English would continue to remain an official language for a period of fifteen years for the purposes of assuring a smooth transition to the new nation but would then give way to Hindi. Gradually, however, regional factions began making demands for the re-organization of state boundaries along linguistic lines. Starting with the constitution of the state of Andhra Pradesh, which wanted a state with the Telugu language as its unifying factor, Nehru gradually gave in to the demands of the regional factions. Furthermore, the southern states were against the imposition of Hindi as the national language.[394] Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam had long literary traditions which were older than Hindi which had a relatively young literary tradition and Tamil is thought to be nearly as ancient as Sanskrit.[395] So while Hindi remains the national language, it is not mandatory to know it in the southern states. English continues to

[394] Robert King, Chapters 3 and 4.
[395] Robert King, p. 90

remain the link language in India even though it is spoken by only 2 to 3 % of the population.[396] The language dynamics in the former French territories are largely determined by the interplay between the local languages namely Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam and English.

Even though the Constitution of 1950 designated Hindi as the official language of India, in post Independence India and in contemporary times the only language which is understood by the educated élite from all parts of the country is English. For all practical purposes, the lingua franca of India was and is English. English is, in a sense, a double-edged sword: the language which is used on a daily basis in various fields such as government, academics and business and at the same time being the language of the former colonial masters which has left deep scars in the collective unconscious. There was opposition to Hindi as the national language in varying degrees starting from the southern states, in particular the Tamilians, and to a slightly lesser degree by the non-Hindi speakers of northern and central India. The non Hindi speakers would, for one thing, become less competitive in the job market vis-à-vis the Hindi speakers.[397]When the national identity of a country is threatened, it is a universal phenomenon to react by moves to preserve the national language.[398] However, in India's case, this pervasive fracture along linguistic lines seems to be an aberration in this law. B.G. Tilak, who was one of the first Indian political leaders to advocate for Hindi as the national language as well as for the creation of linguistic provinces had said that the most effective way for drawing a nation together was through language.[399]With respect to English, it cannot be

[396] Robert King, p. 3
[397] Robert D. King, pp. 73-74
[398] Robert D. King, p. 80
[399] King, p. 81

said that it was evident that it would be rejected as the national language even though it was never really on the cards either. Former British colonies such as Singapore did resort to the use of English even after becoming independent. But in India, English symbolized very deeply the traumatic experience of India with Britain.[400]

The attitude of Indian intellectuals towards English has always been ambivalent. While they realize the indispensability of English, at the same time they make of it a convenient scapegoat. Nehru was no different in this respect. He did not believe that it was going to become the lingua franca of India except in the case of the élites. He did think that it would be of great practical value in as much as it would be the language of science, technology, business and for international dealings. But he was of the view that other languages such as French, German, Russian, Spanish and Italian should also be taught at Indian universities. In the final analysis, English is the antithesis of all the ideals that India's Independence leaders had espoused. Hence, it is natural perhaps that it could not be endorsed wholeheartedly to be what India stood for.[401] Nehru, however, was convinced that English would be the language for official transactions as well as a harbinger for the future as it would be the language of science and technology which is what would take India forward.[402] Furthermore, he also realized that there was an innate danger in abolishing English altogether in favor of Hindi as this would lead to inbreeding and isolation from the outside world. Hence, there was a need to stay in touch with English as well as with other foreign languages.[403]Nehru has been credited for making English acceptable in India on these terms and it is owing to his efforts that English is

[400] King, p. 90
[401] King, p. 91
[402]King, pp. 126-127
[403] King , p. 127

likely to remain indefinitely in India.[404]But he was also clear that English could only be the language of the elite and not of the masses. The education of the latter, according to him, should be in the regional languages but modernized and developed with respect to its scientific and technical vocabulary.[405]However, in spite of the great advantages of English, according to Nehru, it could never take the place of any of the native languages.[406]In this respect, he wholeheartedly approved the desire of the constitution makers to regard all Indian languages on an equal footing which meant that Bengali or Tamil were no less Indian national languages than Hindi.[407]As if this was not enough, he also believed that a language develops not only by its use but by its contact with other languages. Thus, according to him, the interaction of English and other foreign languages with the native Indian languages would have a healthy effect on the latter. His reading of Indian history made him aware that India had lived for hundreds of years in a closed, inbred environment and that this had led to stagnation not only in Indian languages but in all other aspects of Indian culture. He attributed this partly to the introspective character of Indians. He believed that the British colonization of India changed the insular character of Indian culture and its languages by making them more open and dynamic. For example, different literary genres such as the novel, drama and short stories were introduced as well as scientific and technological ideas.[408]

Hypothetically, if India had been unfortunate enough at the time of Independence to have as its leader someone who was completely anti-British arguing in favor of the complete abolition of English from India or by someone who did not have enough

[404] King, p. 131
[405] King, p. 197
[406] King, p. 204
[407] King, p. 219
[408] King, p. 220

political clout to argue for the retention of English, India would today be a very insular society without any significant links to the outside world which it now has owing to English being an international language. Furthermore, if English had been abolished there would probably not be one India but two or several. For the South Indians would never have resigned themselves to having Hindi as a national language and would, in all likelihood, have seceded from the union. In other words, the elimination of English in India would have led to balkanization of the country.[409]

The consequence of the drive to make Hindi the national language reinforced the demand not only for the use of English but also for the creation of linguistic provinces with their own regional languages. The forced imposition of Hindi meant that there was a corresponding assertion by regional factions to create their own administrative units with full discretionary powers to use their own languages. The neutral character of English vis-à-vis the other Indian languages made it the ideal candidate for being the language of the central administration. No one would ever be convinced that Hindi could be an impartial language at the centre.[410]History demonstrates that effective governance in India in the time of Asoka, Akbar, the British Raj, Nehru and today has meant "light government in strong hands."[411] Decentralization, far from being a threat to India's unity, in fact fosters it. It is perhaps an axiom that giving full sovereignty to different regions over their culture and language is the best way to avoid controversies and disputes about the determination of the culture and language at the centre.[412] It is through their different

[409] King, p.210
[410] King, pp. 210-211
[411] King, p. 212
[412] King, p. 212

languages that different parts of India develop their separate identities which do not have a single root but in fact are divided into multiple layers.

The current Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in an acceptance speech at his alma mater, Cambridge University, very aptly stated that English in India was seen as just another Indian language.[413] While not entirely condoning the impact of British colonialism, he admitted that one of the beneficial aspects of the British Raj was Indians' accessibility to English language and literature even though the English spoken in India may not be recognized by the former British colonizers as it is an indigenized version of the language. He also stated that many other countries in the world had also adapted English to their milieu. In an article analyzing Manmohan Singh's speech, NS Jangannathan states that Macaulay is not well perceived among patriotic Indians due to his ill-informed denigration of Indians' literary and intellectual heritage. However, Jangannathan admits that Macaulay was instrumental in inducting English into the educational apparatus of Indians as much as he was in the codification of civil and criminal law and the law of evidence. Jangannathan says that the beneficiaries of English range from world-class creative writers to the personnel in call centres. Jangannathan says that before Independence, Indians were justified in being hostile to English even though he admits that the most prominent fighters against British rule were English-educated, among whom Gandhi and Nehru were notable masters of English prose. Jangannathan also says that this issue becomes hazier when English is viewed as a hangover from the days when it was the language of the oppressor and from educational theories which state that the best mode of learning is through one's native language.

[413] "Carry on Doctor Singh" by NS Jaganathan, The New Sunday Express Magazine (The New Indian Express), August 7, 2005, p. II.

Jangannathan, while admitting the conclusions of the latter theory, says that nothing should prevent one from learning English as a second language which can be integrated into a well-structured syllabus starting from primary school. He says that children are by nature polysyllabic and hence are adept at learning other languages. Jangannathan also points out that there is also a very materialistic twist to the command of English in the world today. He illustrates this notion by pointing out that in the profession of Business Process Outsourcing which is significantly adding to the Indian Gross National Product, India has an edge over China which, he says, is setting up crash courses in English to make inroads into the global market for this skill. Jangannathan also points out that in the nineteen forties, D F Karaka, the editor of a popular weekly magazine, had a humorous column called "Boycott British Language" that made fun of Anglicised Indians which is in sharp contrast to the fact that"every new edition of Oxford English dictionary lists hundreds of new words of Indian origin." He also points out that many English language newspapers liberally introduce Hindi stock phrases into their columns which amuse and even annoy non-Hindi speaking Indians.

One can empathize with the leaders of India's Independence movement and subsequently with newly independent India's leaders in the difficulties which they would have encountered in formulating adequate language policies for the emerging Indian nation. As Robert D. King points out in Nehru and the Language Politics of India, he did not know of anyone in either India or the West who, in 1947, was clear about how language issues are tied up to society, class, caste or religion.[414]He even suggests that the architect of India's independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi, may have been naïve in his assessment of the nature of India's language issues. For example, he says that Gandhi

[414] Robert D. King, p. 209

was unwavering in his view that Hindustani should be the national language of India. He preferred Hindustani to either Hindi or Urdu thereby underlining his desire for Hindu-Muslim unity and more particularly Hindustani was defined as a "resultant of Hindi and Urdu, neither highly Sanskritized nor highly Persianized and Arabianized."[415]Robert King suggests that Gandhi's view that allowing the development of other languages would be a threat to India's unity was too simplistic in terms of the reality of the situation. Gandhi's view was that the subservience of other languages to Hindustani would be "a sacrifice and not a suicide."[416]

One can perhaps defend Gandhi's stance by pointing out that countries with only one national language are more politically stable than multi-lingual ones. Belgium, eastern Canada, Sri Lanka, many of the former Soviet Republics as well as African countries which gained independence after the second world war are cases in point. In all these countries, two languages are spoken by large numbers of the population and, consequently, political stability is harder to achieve over a longer period of time.[417] Furthermore, even though the literary tradition of Hindi is relatively young dating back to 1800 relative to the literature of Bengali, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu or, for that matter, almost any other Indian language, the candidacy of any of these languages for becoming the national language was never seriously considered for the very reason of their pride and exclusivity. Exalted as they might be, they were nevertheless very local and regional in character and, hence, they could not acquire a pan-Indian character of the nature of Hindi.[418]

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[415] Robert D. King, p. 82
[416] Robert D. King, p. 82
[417] Robert D. King , p. 53
[418] Robert D. King, pp. 76-77.

Questions about the national language were put on the backburner, without really disappearing from the scene, once India became independent. This is a very touchy issue today especially among those who belong to the Hindi speaking belt: what had been a key unifying factor during the Independence struggle was likely to become a divisive factor. It was for this reason that Nehru did not dwell too much upon this issue after Independence.[419]But it can be said that Hindi is the *lingua franca* of northern India. It is spoken more widely than before outside the Hindi heartland. Outside India, more people study it now than during the colonial period. The Hindi language has evolved into a much more modern language with a greater literary strength. Outside India, Hindi is akin to being India's national language: symbolically, we can see this in the Hindi lettering on Air India airplanes.[420]

Bh. Krishnamurti describes the bicultural nature of ethnic groups defined by a language. According to him, these integrate tradition with modernity. Their languages have a very traditional base but at the same time they display properties of being able to adopt and to assimilate features of a modernizing Western language. He alludes to sociologists' definitions of a 'Great Tradition' and of many 'Little Traditions'. In the domain of languages, he does not believe that in India there is one 'Great Language' at the national level and other 'Little Languages' at subnational levels. His view is that the pace of modernization of the national language of India is the same as that of the other major Indian languages. He has formulated a list of historical features of language development, both positive and negative, which state that"(I) they all have literary traditions of varying degrees of antiquity,(ii) the prose style among other genres

[419] King, p. 88
[420] King, p. 89

developed under the influence of English, (iii) they all have flexible, modern, standard varieties and there are different degrees of distance between the emerging standard and the other social/regional non standard varieties, (iv) almost all modern Indian languages borrow from Sanskrit as a learned language and each has Perso-Arabic vocabulary in some domains (especially in judiciary, revenue and administration) and (v) all lacked politico-economic expressions before 1947."[421]

Language plays a crucial role in defining ethnic unity and cultural identification even more so than geography or religion. A case in point is that of the nation of Bangladesh. The Bengali language defines the identity of the Bengali people who are divided between the state of West Bengal in India and the country of Bangladesh, the population of Bangladesh being over one and a half times the number of Bengali speakers in India. When Bangladesh was constituted in 1971, it took the name *bangla* referring to Bengali and *desh* referring to country to make up the name *Bangladesh*. *Bangla* refers neither to the Bengali people nor to the territory of (East) Bengal but in fact to *Bengali* as a language.[422] In similar vein, the Arabic language defines the identity of the Arabs and the French inevitably associate their culture with the French language.[423] Furthermore, it can be said that language is a highly conservative form of cultural behavior and is resistant to enforced change even more so than religion. Referring back to Bangladesh, formerly known as East Pakistan, which shared with (West) Pakistan the common religion of Islam and a common struggle for independence from Britain and partition from India, language transcended religion and a common history in making it secede

[421] (Language, Education and Society, Bh. Krishnamurti, New Delhi, Sage Publications Inc, 1998, pp. 30-31)
[422] Robert D. King, p. 27
[423] Robert D. King, p. 27

from Pakistan and becoming the new nation of Bangladesh- the land of Bengali speakers. Governments, when they intervene in language issues, walk on treacherous ground due to its highly resistant nature.[424]

To what extent has language been a unifying or a dividing factor in the multi-lingual mosaic of India? More so than even language, Brahmanical ideology has played the most important role in unifying India. Brahmanical ideology includes the standard features of Hinduism namely caste, cow worship, religious ceremonies and cremation but it also includes the intellectual authority emanating from the wisdom of India's great classical texts such as the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Brahmanical ideology was able to penetrate itself into the Deccan and South India by means of the Sanskrit language and the sacred texts which were written in Sanskrit.[425]For Nehru, the theme of the unity of India, which was the central guiding factor of all his actions, was symbolized by the Sanskrit language.[426]

One aspect of the evolution of Pondicherry was concern about the future of the French language, about which some Pondicherrians seemed to have expressed some worries. Since February 1955, the *Trait d'Union* was reminding one that "French as the official language of this territory should continue to remain the standard language for all correspondence." In August of the same year, it vented its opinion in an article called "Why abolish the French language?" as there had been a vote in the assembly against the use of the French language. The article stated that at the time of printing it had learnt that the assembly had voted unanimously a motion asking for the progressive suppression of

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[424] Robert D. King, p. 42

[425] Nehru and the Language Politics of India , Robert D. King, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.11

[426] Robert D. King, p. 177.

the French language. They were surprised that by this motion directed against the spirit of the Franco-Indian agreements and against the interests of the youth of the state of Pondicherry which, they believed, should conserve its character. They could not, above all, understand how a great number of their representatives formed by French culture had allowed themselves to be swayed to vote for a motion which would not benefit anyone.[427]

The fact was that the use of the French language in the former French establisments was, in effect, losing ground. Nehru's view in favor of the preservation of French culture in Pondicherry had always been clear. But all the civil servants of the Indian government did not share the same conception of the cultural future of the Establishments, as is demonstrated by a position which was made known by the jurist Alain Coret in 1957. Article 27 of the 1954 Treaty had created a joint commission for education: "The equivalence of degrees and university grades awarded to those originating from French India: *baccalauréat*, *brevet élémentaire, brevet d'études du premier cycle*, with degrees and university grades awarded by Indian authorities, will be established after a comparative examination by a joint commission named by both governments…" The issue was therefore, as was pointed out by Alain Coret, "not about a competent cultural commission to sort out all cultural questions after the *de facto* transfer, but on the contrary, of a commission whose competence was very specialized." The author added that the work of this commission was "made more difficult owing to changes occurring continually on the Indian side and of the inflexible attitude initially adopted by the latter." It is, in fact, exactly this attitude which is of interest. The Indian delegation suggested in fact the initial suppression of French and of its replacement by Tamil, a suggestion which was to become the subject of a referendum proposed by

[427] Piesse, pp.90-93

students' parents, but which was finally abandoned. The question of the development of the use of the French language was a central concern of Pondicherrians loyal to France. In January 1958, two Pondicherrians, Mr. Pierre and D. Richard, sent a paper to Paris in which they criticized the parliamentary report by Devinat (which was the first report prior to ratification). The aim of the two authors of this partisan paper was to bring out what they called the "violation of the agreement of 21 October 1954 by the Indian government", which was concerned with, among other things, the place of the French language in Pondicherry.[428]

In this paper, the two authors said that except for the speech in French by the High Commissioner of the state of Pondicherry for the opening of the representative assembly, French, English and Tamil were used concurrently by the elected members at all the local assemblies. The English language was about to become the official language of the state of Pondicherry. All the official correspondence was conducted in English or in Tamil. Even on the notice boards, English and Tamil had taken the place of French. French primary education had been subjected to a serious infringement. English and Tamil had acquired a prominent position to the detriment of French, which had been relegated to a secondary one. The French language was about to disappear from their territory in the near future, may be in a maximum of two or three years.[429]

If such alarmist predictions were made concerning the future of French in the former Establishments, it is that this paper was meant to rouse opinion and especially the French parliamentarians who, after the favorable opinion of the reporter Devinat, had to proceed to the vote authorizing the President of the Republic to ratify the Cession Treaty

[428] Piesse, pp. 90-93
[429] Piesse, pp. 90-93

of the Establishments to which the authors were opposed. Furthermore, Mr. Pierre and D. Richard tried to warn the French authorities about the advance, illegitimate according to them, of the English language. This development seemed, however, absolutely logical in the sense that English was nothing more than the only common language of the Indian Union of which the former enclaves were now an integral part. The French authorities, who seemed to be in agreement about this, were not in the least bit concerned about the place which was from now on reserved for French in Pondicherry as is demonstrated by the substance of a note from the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of November 1959:

"The French of the enclaves are worried about the future of our language in Pondicherry. They are asking that French remain officially in place during a period of 25 years. Article 28 of the treaty states in this respect that "French will remain the official language of the Establishments as long as the elected representatives of the population will not have taken a different decision. It does not seem that the apprehensions of our compatriots is well founded."[430]

As the reporter Boschat stated in 1962, article 28 of the treaty was in effect observed. However, he added that within the administration there existed a certain tendency towards anglicisation. In May 1963, the representative assembly of Pondicherry voted a resolution according to which it desired that French remain the official language of the territory but that the maternal languages of its members such as Tamil, Malayalam or Telugu as well as English and Hindi would be considered as associate languages of French. For the French authorities, this vote raised the problem of the interpretation of article 28 of the treaty. They came to the conclusion that if article 28

[430] Piesse, pp. 90-93

in question guaranteed the continuance of French as the official language in the establishments, it did not exclude the addition of other official languages; however, the text of the treaty did not, in itself, give the elected representatives of the people the right to decide upon this addition. On April 3, 1965 *The Pondicherry Official Languages Act, 1965* was finally adopted. This law was in continuation of that of 1963 on the administration of the territories of the Union which, by a conditional clause, upheld in its entirety the status of the French language in the former establishments. *The Pondicherry Official Languages Act* stipulated that Tamil, Malayalam (for Mahé) and Telugu (for Yanam) could henceforward be utilized as official languages in the Union Territory, as well as English.[431]

In 1965, the participation of Pondicherrians at en event concerning the whole Indian nation and which shook up South India in particular, namely the quarrel of languages, demonstrated that the inhabitants of the former enclaves were oriented largely towards other questions than that of the place of the French language in their territory. In the beginning of 1965, some violent events suddenly put the linguistic question at the forefront of concerns.[432]

According to the Constitution, January 1965 was meant to consecrate the replacement of English by Hindi as the official language of the Union. The Indian constitution had in fact devoted eight articles to this problem and anticipated that at the end of a transitory period of fifteen years starting from its promulgation (26 January 1950 celebrated every year in India as Republic Day), Hindi, written with the Devanagari

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[431] PONDICHERY DE 1954 A 1963,de la République française à la République indienne, histoire d'une transition, par Gabriel Piesse- Maitrise d'Histoire Contemporaine, Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, Université de Nantes, Juin 1999, pp. 168-169).

[432] Piesse, pp. 166-170

script would become the official language of the country and would be used by the central administration as well as in the relations between the states and the Federation. The latter, however, had the freedom to adopt, for their internal needs, one or more of the local idioms. The facts of the problem of languages in India were, schematically, the following: according to the official directory of 1964, there were 845 idioms, of which 15 languages were recognized as such and spoken in 1951 by 325 million inhabitants out of a total of 360 million. In the mind of the constitution makers, there was a need to give to the Union a common language and which would not be a legacy of colonialism. The evil thus denounced was that one did not get along from North to South and from East to West of the subcontinent and English was relegated to its position of foreign language, geographically, politically and historically. However, beyond the debate which saw notably the articulation of the argument according to which Hindi would not be adapted to the needs of the modern world and which had led, in the face of insurmountable difficulties of the strict application of the Constitution, to the adoption of a law in 1963, anticipating the maintenance after the setback of 26 January 1965 of English as the "additional official language," the constitution makers did not seem to have taken into account a fundamental aspect of the problem. The reality was that for the people of South India, there was no question of learning Hindi.[433]

The consecration of Hindi as the official language of the Union set up a spark of violence, even if the date of 26 January 1965 brought about only very slight changes after the voting of the law of 1963. It was the students who protested the most violently. Since January 1965, some bloody demonstrations took place first in the state of Madras, then the agitation spread to the neighboring states of Andhra Pradesh and Mysore, the

[433] Piesse, pp. 166-170

students of Kerala and of Bengal contenting themselves with starting solidarity strikes. The agitation did not spare Pondicherry, where two people were killed. During the riots of January and February 1965, one could count several scores of victims in the southern states. During these events the authorities of New Delhi accused the separatist Tamil party, DMK, to be the instigator of problems. For Jean-Paul Garnier, the French ambassador in India, if this movement had not been new, its deep cause could be found in the very prickly linguistic chauvinism of the inhabitants of the state of Madras. The violence of these two months, which illustrated the strength of the regional sentiment in the Dravidian South, was thus bringing out the rivalry between the North and the South. But the particular interest of this incident lies in the fact that in taking part in this quarrel of languages and in the anti-Hindi agitation, the Pondicherrians showed that they were very deeply concerned with one of the most important debates that India had known since Independence. The impact of this quarrel of languages in the former French enclaves showed that the Pondicherrians before viewing themselves as the eventual inheritors of the colonial adventure of France in India, were integrating themselves in the regional movement which was taking place in the South and which culminated in the rise of the Dravidian party D.M.K. One could thus witness in their participation in this great national debate the sure sign of a successful integration in the Indian Union and of its diversity.[434]

In the 'Report on education in French India from the 18th century until now' which he published in 1922, the head of the public instruction service, Valmary, explained why French, which imposed itself in the Reunion Islands or in the Caribbean, remained a foreign language in the French enclaves. In contrast to these islands deprived

[434] Piesse, pp. 166-170

of a past, of traditions and of literatures and where the Creole "patois" could not rival with the French language, the five Establisments bore the imprint of a very ancient civilization, proud of its past and which considers itself to be at least the equivalent of French civilization. Furthermore, as if this was not enough, when it looked for modern or western ideas and when it needed a language which was more international than its mother tongue, this population had at its disposal the English language, the language of business and of science, the language of politics, a literary language which overflew from British India to the humble French possessions.[435]

William Miles equates classical French colonization with linguistic imperialism. For France, in terms of its role as an overseas power, the pedagogic imperative of promoting the French language superseded all other aims such as spreading its religion or expanding its economic activity. He says that Pondicherry was the principal francophone point in South Asia. However, in spite of the relatively small size of the former French enclaves, French never permeated them to a significant extent. He cites an assessment by the head of the French Indian public school system in the 1940s about the lack of cultural diffusion of French in Pondicherry:

> Who is the French traveler disembarking at Pondicherry for the first time who does not experience a true disappointment?...Not a newspaper stand, no dailies, not even a weekly; no café, pastry shop or French hairdresser, and we've been there for close to three centuries!... A Frenchman passing through feels almost as homesick in this oldest French colony as if he were traveling in a foreign country.

[435] Jacques Weber, Pondichéry et les comptoirs de l'Inde après Dupleix, p.353

He says that the native languages, in particular, both Tamil and Bengali prevented French from effectively competing against them. Due to their rich and highly developed literary traditions, these languages posed a formidable challenge to French. Like Weber, he points out that this was in sharp contrast to other Francophone territories where French was introduced in an environment where the languages had a rich oral tradition but weak literary ones. He also says that in response to the other great obstacle to French, namely the omnipresence of English, French pedagogues rather than waging a losing battle decided to adopt a practical attitude by introducing English as a medium of instruction in their schools. They even went further by introducing the local languages as a medium of instruction.[436]

Paul Michalon says that the project of assimilation conceived since the first third of the 19th century would collide with the competition if not from the English school system (the rivalry in this domain was not significant) at least from the English language, otherwise more widely spread in the peninsula and as "European" as the French language. The "francisation" of India, which the French ancestors had dreamed of, was thus condemned to fail, caught in the grindstone of such powerful cultures whose enormous pressure would be compounded by the pathetic extent and scattering of the French enclaves. The objectives of French educational policies collided head-on (and continues may be to a certain extent to do so) with the values and gestures of the Indian world. It is in fact difficult to introduce scholarly obligations in a world which is moulded by a stratification into castes, the inferior status of girls and women and children's work. French colonial power, in the face of the impossibility which it encountered in dabbling in these domains- though it succeeded in such efforts in

[436] William Miles, Imperial Burdens, p.109

metropolitan France- and thus to bring society into harmony with its plans, had to content itself with merely taking action and being disappointed with its failures in educational matters.[437]

Weber, Miles and Michalon have perhaps regarded the prevalence of French in these territories in relative terms and hence pointed out the lack of effectiveness in its propagation due to the strong resistance from the native languages as well as from English. However, it is also possible to view the presence of French in these territories in absolute terms. When that is done, the influence of French cannot be entirely insignificant. Mr. Claude Marius, a Franco-Pondicherrian, said that when he had visited the North Indian state of Rajasthan which has a very large number of tourists, he had met a couple of tourist guides who spoke French. He asked them where they had learnt French. To this the tourist guides replied that they had learnt it in Pondicherry. Mr. Marius then asked them why they had decided to come all the way to South India to learn French in Pondicherry and not in Mumbai or Delhi or, for that matter, in some other town in North India. To this, the tourist guides replied that in the North Indian towns, they would just be learning French in one of the Alliances Françaises whereas in Pondicherry, they were able to reinforce the French which they learnt in the Alliance by practicing it within the town as they could find many more opportunities for speaking and practicing French there.[438]

With respect to the Alliance Française, its goals in Pondicherry as is the case for Alliances Françaises elsewhere in the world are three-fold namely to teach French language, to promote French language as a vehicle of French culture and to counteract

[437] Michalon, p. 115
[438] Interview with Mr. Claude Marius, July, 2005

the effects of American cultural imperialism. The current budget of 85,000 euros for the Alliance Française in Pondicherry seems to be rather low given the historical importance of French there. Among some of the activities undertaken by the Alliance in June of 2003 was the promotion of a local Tamil production of an adaptation of Jean-Paul Sartre's "Les Mains Sales." On one occasion, it also organized a musical evening where there was a performance by four groups: traditional Tamil, rock, pop and jazz. The staging of such musical shows would enable the artists to gain recognition and to become part of cultural exchanges between France and India.[439] The budget of the Pondicherry Alliance Française was in the middle category of those in India which totaled 15 and in fact, 25 inclusive of all the branches. The budget for the New Delhi Branch was the largest (411,000 euros) and the one for Bombay was 394,000 euros. A large number of students enrolled in the Alliances Françaises were motivated by their desire to obtain better grades in school. Those in the northern part of India learnt French to facilitate their emigration to Canada. The major problem of Alliances Françaises in India in general is that there are not enough classrooms and not enough qualified teachers to teach the language. In terms of numbers, the Alliances Françaises in India have the third largest number of students in the world after Mexico and Brazil. Enrollments are increasing at a gradual pace. The results of a study published by the British Council demonstrated that French was the most popular foreign language in India in terms of numbers of people learning it. English is not viewed as a foreign language since it is one of the link languages in India.[440]

[439] Interview with Mr. Alain Thomas, June 2003
[440] Interview with Mr. Jean-François Chenin, August 2003

There are discrepancies in the perception of inhabitants about the prevalence of English in Pondicherry and of its influence on the local language, namely Tamil. According to Mr. Marius, there is a difference in the Tamil which is spoken in Pondicherry as opposed to the Tamil which is spoken in the city of Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu. In his view, the Tamil in Pondicherry is very pure and unbroken and hence, he feels that there are more opportunities for speaking good Tamil in Pondicherry than in Chennai. He thinks that because of the English influence in Chennai, the Tamil speakers there have a tendency to anglicize and perhaps creolize Tamil with anglicisms and English words. The result is that the Tamil spoken there is very jarring and impure. He believes that because the influence of English in Pondicherry is not that great, people are not likely to anglicize Tamil and hence, there are more opportunities to speak and hear pure Tamil. According to a French expatriate[441] who grew up in Pondicherry and now lives there, due to the high degree of commercialization of Pondicherry owing to which people from all over come there, the shopkeepers on the Jawaharlal Nehru Street (formerly Dupleix Street), one of the principal arteries of the town, have some knowledge of English. This, he believes, is in contrast to other parts of Tamil Nadu where shopkeepers speak only Tamil and no English.

Mr. Claude Marius also said that the enclaves of Pondicherry were among the oldest of the French colonies but that they were truly French only in the period 1814-1954, as prior to 1814, they had often changed hands between the French, British, Dutch and the Portuguese. He said that France generally had had a more pervasive influence on its colonies than the British principally due to its policy of assimilation. He also said that France had followed a policy of equality where they made no distinction between classes.

[441] Interview with Mr. Michel Lemaire, July 2005

According to him, one of the reasons why French proliferated in Pondicherry was that the Pondicherrians who left to go to Indo-China and so on came back to Pondicherry since it was French territory until 1954 and thus these Pondicherrians were entitled to the economic benefits of a French territory. This is in sharp contrast to Tamils and Gujaratis from other parts of India who emigrated elsewhere but did not come back due to unattractive economic and living conditions in India. According to him, there were strong links between the French policy of assimilation and its educational policies. Take for example, the proliferation of French in Mauritius, which was a British colony. French, according to him, spread in Mauritius due to the sound educational policies of the French. He also said that at the linguistic level, there had been no creolization of French and Indian cultures in Pondicherry because when the French colonized Pondicherry, there was already a pre-existing, traditional, classical Tamil culture. Mr. Albert Rollin, another Franco-Pondicherrian, remarked that there were a certain number of Tamilized French words such as "l'encre, robinet, cornice and canne." The Tamil word for ink is pronounced as "tinda." This, according to him, comes from the word "tinte" referring to this characteristic of ink.[442] Mr. Claude Marius viewed Tamil as the classical language of the South (like Sanskrit in the North) while, according to him, the other South Indian languages such as Malayalam and Telugu were vernaculars. Thus, according to him, there was merely a juxtaposition of the two languages in Pondicherry. People either spoke Tamil or French but not a patois of the two. This is in contrast to the Reunion Islands where the Tamil indentured laborers were not allowed to speak their native tongue and were forced to speak in French.[443]

[442] Interview with Mr. Albert Rollin, June 2003
[443] Interview with Mr. Claude Marius, June 2003

With reference to the Franco-Pondicherrian community, Paul Michalon says that at present, the doors of France are open, and studies are perceived as the stepping stone allowing one to have access to it: at least education now gives one the opportunity to explore the culture towards which one is heading…but remains singularly negligent about the one from which one originates. How, under these conditions, can one acquire the indispensable cultural apparatus which is claimed by one's nationality by at the same time deepening one's Indian roots allowing one later to confront the loneliness and the interrogations of exile?[444]He says that the question of living languages illustrates this dilemma in a rather striking manner. French being, for the vast majority of students, used only in class and during school time (Tamil regaining its rights when the bell rings), English or the native language having the status of "first language"(that is, in practice, of a second language), the youngsters in these schools develop only second languages. The great Tamil poet, Subrahmanya Bharathi, often said that, "those who did not work on their mother tongues would be reborn as monkeys…"Without going as far as this worrying perspective, how does one structure one's personality on the basis of two or three languages which have been imperfectly integrated and developed? Like the school children who recite: "gymla lapin et chasseur velayard vo!", many children in this world-notably among the immigrants from metropolitan France- live in this condition of "forced bilingualism."[445]

It is clear that measuring the impact of French in these enclaves can be done in a relative manner. The frame of reference must be specified because there are various ways in which one can gauge the pervasiveness of a language. The macro picture of the

[444] Michalon, p. 122
[445] Michalon, p. 123

dynamics of languages in India certainly does not leave much scope for the profusion of French. However, at a micro level, one can perhaps view its pervasiveness. For the purposes of analysis, one can even carry out certain thought experiments which may or may not have a bearing on the actual situation.

To begin with the interaction of French with its closest European counterpart, namely English. It has been shown that French was always overshadowed by English in the enclaves and that when a non indigenous language was sought out, English was readily available for use. Official language policies of the Indian government have favored the proliferation of English not because of a conscious desire on its part but more by default as Hindi would not be acceptable to South Indians. If Hindi could not be the link language in the South, none of the other South or North Indian languages could be the link language for India. Hence, there was no possibility of removing English in South India. English is reviled in India when it is viewed as the language of the former colonizer. However, it is welcome for its practical value and due to its link with the outside world. On the other hand, it is welcome in South India due to the unacceptability of Hindi. Hence, with respect to French in the former French territories, the colonial presence of English has given way to its post-colonial desirability in South India and hence in the enclaves. French, as the language of the former colonizer in the French enclaves, does not have a national value and remains a local concern. Pondicherrians can reject French and go on with their lives. They cannot reject English because that would be inviting Hindi in as much as they are part and parcel of Tamil culture in particular and of South Indian culture in general. However, the official apparatus has not removed French and hence, it remains in place as one of the official languages of the Union

Territory. However, English, Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu are also official languages of the territory.

Jawaharlal Nehru had pointed out that the induction of English had administered a shock to the native languages and cultures and as a result, the latter became more open and dynamic. He had said that languages grow not only by use but by interactions with other languages. According to him, the growth of the native languages should be encouraged not only through their interaction with English but also through their interaction with other foreign languages such as French, German, Italian and so on. By extrapolation of the situation with English, one can perhaps surmise that the induction of French had also administered a corresponding shock to the languages and cultures of the enclaves and hence made Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Bengali (in Chandernagore) more open and dynamic. While French can be said to have been as well as remaining overshadowed by English, one can also wonder and determine the implications of the interaction of French with English. This question acquires some significance especially in terms of the North Indians who either visit or live in the former French territories. It can acquire significance also with respect to the non-French foreigners who either visit or live in the former French territories. For both these categories of people, the likelihood is that they would be communicating in English. Hence the interaction, either in theory or in reality, with what remains of French in Pondicherry.

We must address issues of dilution, dissipation, diffraction. When languages interact, they are diluted, dissipated and diffracted. However, these processes can also take place at an infinitesimal, microscopic level. The shock effect of English on Hindi resulted in the introduction of literary genres and of scientific and technical vocabulary.

In this case, while Hindi may have been diluted with respect to its initial purity, it can also be said to have been enriched due to the novelty of the elements which were introduced. There would also have been the reverse effect of Hindi on English. The transition from purity to dilution can be viewed as creolization, that is, the gradual acquisition of traits from a heterogeneous entity. Atavistic cultures become composite cultures by the process of creolization. Similarly, atavistic languages become composite languages through the same process. However, it must be determined whether these interactions take place discretely or through a continuum.

In terms of the interaction between French and the local languages, the evidence suggests that there was no radical transformation of one by the other. However, when we make an attempt to scrutinize the borders between these two languages, we can notice that there are certain blurrings of the edges as demonstrated by the existence of very few Tamilized French words. According to the extreme version of the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis, the local people would be prisoners of the native languages as for example, Tamil. They would have been minimally affected by the stimuli from French. The re-assertion of Tamil as a result of the threatened imposition of Hindi would have strengthened the influence of Tamil. In the case of the Franco-Pondicherrians there is a continual existence of Tamil alongside French. In this case, the people are simultaneous prisoners of both Tamil and French. Within an atavistic ethnicity, there are two atavistic languages. There is no continuum between the two. The Franco-Pondicherrians are carriers of two cultures but are not middlemen who see things differently from either the locals or the French. Unlike the deformation of Tamil by English among some of the inhabitants of Chennai, the Franco-Pondicherrians tend to maintain the sanctity or purity

of both French and Tamil. However, the Creoles leant towards metropolitan culture. At the level of languages, they neglected the local language and expressed some contempt for it. Their Tamil, which was bad, was interlaced with French. They deformed certain words to show that they belonged to a certain category of persons. The whole was not comprehensible to the people of the country. The Creoles occupied a position which came after the metropolitans. They could not occupy important places and were employed mainly as cooks.[446]

The major difference between English and French in India is perhaps, as the current Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pointed out, that English is viewed as just another Indian language. It has become part and parcel of the linguistic makeup of India. While the number of Indians who speak English is relatively low in absolute terms, nevertheless it is much interspersed so that it is spoken in every part of the country. Since India has many centers, each of which with its own indigenous language, the Indian English can further be qualified as Tamil English or Punjabi English and so on. In other words, each Indian state has its own brand of English specified according to the particularities of each Indian language. In the case of French, we could make the same analogy and say that there is not an Indian French but a Tamil French (for Pondicherry and Karaikal), a Keralaite French (for Mahé) and an Andhra French for Yanam. However, due to its low prevalence and that too only in South India, French could not be viewed as just another Indian language. Hence, the relationship of Indians to English is now not so much a relationship of formerly colonized to the language of the colonizer but to one of its own languages. In the former French enclaves, French is not the lingua franca. It is spoken only by a select group of people who exist specifically in the former

[446] Interview with Mr.Srinivasan, August, 2005

French enclaves. French does not as such percolate into the rest of Tamil Nadu or into the states adjoining Mahé or Yanam. Hence it is certainly not like an Indian language or a language of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, or Andhra Pradesh. It is not even a Pondicherrian language but the language of certain Pondicherrians. Hence we could speak of the relationship of Indians to French, the language of certain Pondicherrians. These Pondicherrians, for the most part, have real links with either France or with other Francophone territories. In that sense, the French which is spoken by these Pondicherrians in India is purer than the English which is spoken by Indians in India. To that extent, English can be said to be more creolized than French. French, however, would be refracted through the particularities of the native Indian characteristics of its speakers.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari say that for a language, there is no ideal interlocutor or auditor. Neither is there a homogeneous linguistic community. They say that language is, according to Weinreich's formulation, "an essentially heterogeneous reality." There is no mother language, but a seizing of power by a dominant language in a political multiplicity. Language stabilizes itself around a parish, a bishop's place or a capital. It becomes a bulb. It evolves by stems and subterranean ebbs and flows, along river valleys, or along railway tracks, it moves along oil stains. One can always engage in internal structural decompositions on a language: this is not fundamentally different from a search for roots. There is always something genealogical about a tree and hence it is not a popular method. On the contrary, a "rhizome" type method can analyze a

language only by decentering it on other dimensions and other registers. A language closes in upon itself only in an impotent manner.[447]

In Pondicherry, there is a church called Notre Dame des Anges. Every morning, there is a mass in French. It is the only place in India where a French mass takes place. It is a meeting place for French speakers in Pondicherry. The majority of people who attend this mass are French speakers of Indian origin. The priest is a Frenchman who has been in India for over fifty years and in Pondicherry for over twenty years. We can thus say that it is a place from which French is diffused and where it perhaps stabilizes itself also. While there may be several places in Pondicherry where French is available to the local public such as in the Alliance Française and the Lycée Français where French is spoken, these are institutions where the crowd is specifically learning the language. In the case of Notre Dame des Anges, there is a certain heterogeneity about the constitution of the interlocutors.

It is perhaps the "rhizomatic" method which has here been used to analyze the language dynamics in India. We have seen that the dominant Hindi language could not seize power in South India as it did in North India. Instead, the Tamil language proved to be an effective counterweight. English, while not a dominant language, seized power by default due to the unacceptability of Hindi in the South. As an aside, it can be mentioned that due to the vast popularity of the Bombay film industry in North India as well as in South India, movie goers in South India watch North Indian films with great relish. As a result, they do become conversant with Hindi through this source at least. While the overwhelming evidence may suggest that French, in this vortex of languages, has very little chance of surviving due to its being swallowed up by more powerful forces, when

[447] Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Mille Plateaux, Introduction: Rhizome, p. 14

we go by the definitions of Deleuze and Guattari, one can argue that French can and perhaps has percolated itself in different ways. In that sense, their definition is consistent with the applicability of the wave theory of light to it as was done in the beginning.

In the Notre Dame des Anges Church, the French spoken by the priest is metropolitan French. We can view it as the wave moving out in concentric circles. The interlocutors are diverse. They replenish, if we might say so, their supply of French and diffuse it further to their immediate surroundings. In this way, French is diffused, dispersed, diffracted and so on. The Deleuzian definition of the non homogeneity of the linguistic community is consistent also with the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis which suggests that their may be different degrees by which people are affected by the stimuli of a language. Since the extreme version of the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis says that language dictates behavior we can say that some of the audience members in the mass at the Notre Dame des Anges are compulsively there. These could, as they usually are, be members of the Franco-Pondicherrian community. The dictation of behavior can also here be qualified as the Franco-Pondicherrians are in effect bilingual. The Tamil component of their personalities would give them a choice about whether or not they should attend the mass.

Language is the central unifying element which bonds people together. When the colonizer leaves, there is a vacuum left behind which gets filled by elements of the formerly colonized. In the case of Pondicherry, the departure of the Pondicherrians with links to France reduced the chances of French acquiring an important role in Pondicherry. It can be said that French was not tampered with and certainly not in official terms. It just became submerged due to Pondicherry's integration with the rest of India. When the

British left India, the future of English was left in the hands of those who had used it. When the French left Pondicherry, they ensured that the future of French would be determined by the inhabitants of Pondicherry. While nothing was done contrary to this wish, the fact of allowing the local languages and English to become part and parcel of the linguistic make up of Pondicherry meant that French would be relegated to a place of secondary importance. The older generation in Pondicherry is still very attached to French language and culture. It tries to transmit its knowledge and enthusiasm for it to the younger generation. It can be said that the older generation acquired a good feel for French because the French colonizers were interested in imparting a love of French language and culture to the natives. In sharp contrast, the British were mainly interested in governing and hence kept their distance from the natives. The older generation brought up during the time of the British did not really transmit British culture to the younger one. Among Francophone Pondicherrians, the love for France is real. There is a certain sense of pride in knowing the language and culture of the French. The French consulate maintains good relations with the French community.[448]

People never felt any real animosity towards the French. This is in contrast to the British who, as has been pointed out, were reviled and thus English symbolized what was wrong with the colonial relationship. Thus English plays a contradictory role in India: as icon it stands for something to be forgotten but as practical value, it is held in high esteem. French, on the other hand, as icon symbolizes something positive but does not as such, have much practical value. For the Russian aristocracy or the English royalty in the Middle Ages, French was the language of the élite. Hence, in Russia, even today French

[448] Interview with Dr. Sourindhrin in Pondicherry, July 20, 2005

has elitist connotations. In Pondicherry, the Franco-Pondicherrians belonged to the lower castes of Indian society. Hence, to that extent, there was no elitism about it. In the post-colonial situation in Pondicherry, acquisition of French nationality is a prized commodity because of the financial benefits it is expected to bring. Hence learning French has also become something to be sought after if only for practical reasons of emigration and not for its use in India as such except perhaps for employment in the hotel and tourism industry. Nowadays, there are cynical reasons also why students opt for French in schools in Pondicherry. One of these reasons is that it is easier for them to obtain good grades in French than in the local languages especially Tamil.

The common perception of India is that it was a British colony and hence the immediate association which one makes is of India with English. Nevertheless, the French as well as the Portuguese were also there. In fact, the French were there the longest since the former French enclaves became legally part of India only in 1962. The nerve center for French in India is Pondicherry. The French language, which can be regarded as the vector of French culture, has its greatest concentration in Pondicherry. Even though the prevalent language and culture in Pondicherry is Tamil and English, as in the rest of India, can be used as an alternative in general, one can say that French in Pondicherry is not restricted to the four walls of classrooms at the Alliance Française or the Lyçée Français. Nor is it restricted to the many French tourists who pass by Pondicherry on brief vacations. Certainly, the Franco-Pondicherrians are the natives who are its most natural speakers. The term “native” applied to them is filled with ambiguity as they epitomize a certain double-sidedness. In India, the imaginary of languages consists of the North Indian group of languages, the South Indian group as well as

languages of former colonizers such as English, Portuguese and French. While English is widely spread throughout the length and breadth of India, French is very local in character. Even within its localness, it is not very evident. The search for French in Pondicherry requires some narrowing down of one's field of vision. It is there but focused in a dispersed manner.

French, as we have seen, can never pose a threat to English in India. There is as such no resentment of people speaking French towards those speaking English or vice versa. In the broader global context, the national Indian politics of languages is perhaps not very different from what happens in the rest of the world. Globally, when we think of English in the present age, we often think either of American English or of British English. It is usually more common these days to speak of American English principally because of the economic power of the United States of America. The fact of the United States being such a powerful nation economically and militarily is, apart from other ways, demonstrated in the influence of English all over the world. As for British (Indian) English in India, American English has become the lingua franca of the world not so much due to the numbers but due to the power which it represents. One can also talk about a case of striving for uniformity and seeing how in an age where multilingualism is one of the key issues we deal with two democratic issues which are simultaneously a need for uniformity as well as a need to preserve local traditions. When one deals with issues of trying to retain uniformity, one is inevitably led to the issue of keeping one language the predominant one such as English as it is these days with the influence of American English. On the other hand, you also have local traditions which need to be expressed and maintained and in this context it is perhaps interesting to look at a post-

colonial society such as India and to see how Indian culture, its literature and its works are modified by its expression in English and to judge in the end whether its modification is in a way an expression of its own intrinsic worth.

The case of French in India becomes the reverse of that of English. It is surrounded by other dominant languages. The striving for uniformity has made French subservient to all other languages. It becomes difficult to preserve the language of a former colonial power when that language cannot as such serve as a unifying factor in the native context. Fortunately for French in Pondicherry, France was also not the dominant power which caused resentment among the indigenous people. As they are generally viewed with sympathy and a certain sense of nostalgia, it can be said that the language still has some hopes of survival.

Conclusion:

Acculturation, Creolization or real Indianization?

I first arrived in Pondicherry in the summer of 2003 with an open mind and with the aim of investigating whether or not nearly three centuries of French presence in Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé, Yanam and Chandernagore had led to something new and unexpected. Being a North Indian myself, I had never been to South India except briefly when I was 5 years old. South India is very different from North India and is practically a different country. I had to figure out for myself how to proceed with my research. I had devised a questionnaire which I would eventually distribute. My mother tongue is Hindi and I did not speak a word of Tamil. Fortunately, a knowledge of English can get one through most situations. It did not take me very long to find out that it is relatively easy to get to know people and that Pondicherry was a small town. However, small towns in India are usually very provincial and not very developed. But Pondicherry was different. There were many French colonial buildings in what was called the White Town and across the canal, the Black town was very crowded and commercialized. I later discovered that Gandhi, Nehru and Mission streets were the principal arteries of the town. Someone later told me that within these three streets, you could find practically anything ranging from modern computers to the most traditional of handicrafts and that people from all over Tamil Nadu came here for shopping. The Sunday market on Gandhi street is known for attracting all classes of Pondicherrian society. The roads of Pondicherry follow a grid pattern which is unique. The grid pattern is based on ancient Dutch plans copied by the French.

I discovered that various scholars had earlier examined various aspects of Pondicherry from different angles. Paul Michalon's dissertation was a sociological study of the Franco-Pondicherrian community. I found his insights to be very perceptive and realistic. In the summer of 2005, I made the acquaintance of some of these Franco-Pondicherrians and had extensive conversations with them on a regular basis (and I also met other Franco-Pondicherrians during the summers of 2003 and 2004). I would, for example, wake up every morning at 5:00 and go off to the sea side and wait for them until they came back from their early morning walks or jogs. For nearly two months I did that. Through these informal conversations, I tried to unravel the enigma of Pondicherry. I would even go so far as to say that it was these early morning conversations with these *anciens militaires*, pensioners from the French army, French nationals of Indian origin on the Goubert Avenue of Pondicherry which were the climax, the highlight and even the most interesting and enjoyable part of this very unusual project.

I had been trying to grapple with the notion and meaning of creolization for the last two years. There were academic formulations and treatises which had been written about it. I had read about the history and politics of Pondicherry. But when I made friends with these people, the whole idea of creolization seemed to have come to life. I was searching for the definition in purely human terms. These were people who had been born in Pondicherry, had grown up there, gone and lived in France for many years as non-commissioned officers in the army and had come back either to be with family members or to live their retired lives. There it was. Conversations in French with native Tamil speakers. They had seen the development of Pondicherry from the time when it was still legally French territory. I was told that in those days, on July 14, French flags

could be seen in windows across the streets whereas now the only thing that happened was a wreath laying ceremony at the *Monument des Morts* by the *anciens militaires* attended by the French Consul General and his entourage, the representative of the Lieutenant Governor and members of the Franco-Pondicherrian community and French expatriates.

I kept prodding them to find out more. I was slowly getting insights into their personal lives, about their sentiments and views on various things. I was beginning to see that creolization was about language, culture, identity, customs, religion, economics, history, eating habits and what have you. But in order to come to grips with it, one had to proceed with patience, one step at a time. For example, Jean Baptiste Pinai, one of these friends mentioned in a previous chapter, told me about a *petit pain* which was a unique feature of Pondicherry. This kind of bread could only be found in Pondicherry. He would tell me that his family was very fond of *petits pains* and that these would be delivered to his house. When he was absent, they would be delivered at a neighbor's house who would then hand them over to him in due course showing that his neighbors could be trusted. But all along he made the distinction between the Pondicherrians who had been there for several generations and those who had migrated there. It seemed, according to him, that the Pondicherrians who had been there for several generations had a greater civic sense than the newcomers.

In this group, there was also a Muslim gentleman who had lost his wife and who now spent most of his time going on pilgrimages to other parts of Tamil Nadu and to other parts of India including the North. He found Pondicherry to be distinctly different from the rest of India. He said that in Pondicherry no one was bothered about the

religious differences among people unlike in North India which he felt was very religion and caste conscious. This was corroborated by others who also said that there had been no communal riots in Pondicherry and especially that there had been an 'entente cordiale' between Hindus, Christians and Muslims.

While my conversations with these people were in French, symbolizing the nature of creolization, that is, the interaction of French and Indian cultures, slowly I was getting a sense of perceiving something new that I had not seen before. This was the Whorf Sapir Hypothesis at work. The stimuli which I received from French spoken by these Tamil speakers was different from the stimuli received from English speaking Tamilians. I was getting a glimpse into Indian society through a French prism. Being a North Indian myself who was more familiar with the Hindi speaking belt and being a native Hindi speaker, I was nevertheless in my subconscious mind making all the connections between French, South India, the Tamil world and Hindi, North India and English.

I was beginning to understand that without a tolerance for ambiguity, I could not hope to grapple with the notion of creolization. Ambiguity meant the search for multiple meanings of words, symbols and signs. Paul Michalon had studied the Franco-Pondicherrian community as a sociologist and hence his interest was in the dynamics of this community. For me, this community was a means of apprehending the notion of creolization. Hence, my conversations with the Franco-Pondicherrians were geared towards formulating an abstract concept. When I spoke to many local people who were not necessarily conversant with French, the word creolization did not mean anything more than something to do with the Creoles. They would then say that you will find creoles working as domestic help in the houses of French expatriates and so on. One

gentleman asked me if creolization did not imply connotations of inferiority or impurity. When I defined creolization as the resultant of the interaction of heterogeneous cultural elements to a very eminent person of Pondicherry who is considered to be an authority on many matters, he seemed to think that the definition itself was erroneous and that creolization really referred to the White colonizers inhabiting the colonies. I was discouraged and disappointed by that remark.

But really, the whole point of this dissertation was to look at the particular in terms of the general. How were these relatively microscopic entities in particular related to India in general? That led me to think about variables. I think that the key to understanding creolization lies in visualizing a system with many variables. It also means the ability to carry out many thought experiments. When we increase one variable while keeping others constant, how does the system change? What if we increase two or more variables and so on? The idea of having variables implies that creolization is a dynamic process. For that reason, the relatively small size of Pondicherry lends itself to isolating and examining certain variables in creolization. Hence it is a very good natural laboratory for examining the process. It is generally believed that the Reunion Islands, for example, are an excellent natural laboratory for observing creolization at work because there are many different cultures present there and it has been extensively studied by anthropologists and so on. In the case of Pondicherry, there are many local variables as well as foreign variables but it has not been studied as a venue for creolization.

A fundamental mistake which I was making all along was to latch on to the French element while trying to determine if there had been creolization in the former

French territories of India. It seemed to me that if I could not find some aspect of French culture which was prevalent in some form or the other in combination with whichever Indian element, there was not likely to have been any creolization. It is only after I wrote the chapters that I discovered where I was making the error. However, it was when I realized the mistake which I was making that I understood the meaning of creolization. It came to me as a revelation, enlightenment and an insight of incredible value. It really meant that I had failed to view creolization as a system of many variables. That meant that even if the French element had disappeared, only one variable had been removed from the system but it could have disappeared after having made a change to the system. Hence, even without the French element present in some form or the other, there could still have been a creolization. It is then that I understood that creolization meant an "unexpected synthesis" of heterogeneous cultural elements. As it turned out, in my mind, I was mistaking creolization for hybridity. It meant that in order to conceptualize creolization one had to make a leap in one's thinking to move from the notion of hybridity to creolization.

However, it must be said that in the course of the investigation and of writing the chapters, I was gradually making the progression towards understanding the concept of creolization. I have occasionally taken shots at it in some parts of the chapters when I have not been fully lucid about it. Just as well. For full lucidity belongs only in the conclusion. It can perhaps be said that the aim of the dissertation was not only to determine whether or not there was creolization in the former French territories of India but to really understand the meaning of creolization. If I really knew what creolization meant right from the beginning, why bother to write a dissertation about it? The chapters

of the dissertation can be viewed as an ongoing process of trying to grapple with the notion of creolization. Some ideas may be guesses, others hints, yet others half-baked and trite. There may be prejudices and dogmatic viewpoints. But as a whole, they are the reflection of a struggling mind trying to make things clear where ambiguity rules the roost.

There is a certain level of intensity about creolization. Hence, a small area of high convergence is a ready target for creolization. Pondicherry has these ingredients. People from all over India come here and it probably has the largest number of foreigners per square foot. Nowhere else in India is there such a concentration of colonial buildings as in the White Town. One person had mentioned that there was a certain sense of calm which is corroborated by the fact that Hindus, Muslims and Christians live in great harmony. Many high officials and civil servants from other parts of India after having served in Pondicherry retire there because it is very compact and one does not have to go very far to find anything that one needs. My judgment is that it is the best town in India. It is probably the closest equivalent to a United Nations in India in terms of the variety of representations present there per square foot. The tourism bureau projects it as a former French town. But here they are capitalizing on the notion of hybridity as I was initially doing by underlining the French and Tamil strains which run through the town. They do not make generalizations by viewing Pondicherry as a system with many variables with or without the French variable. While speaking to many people by asking them whether they thought that there had been creolization in the former French enclaves, most of them seemed to think not because they were mainly confusing it with the notion of hybridity and their general view was that the French had not left a significant imprint. I guess that

it requires some initiation to understand the notion in its completeness. Hybridity is a linear state whereas creolization is exponential.

The starting point for my interest in this topic was, of course, the French language. It seemed to me that language was an important constituent of the notion of creolization. I chose to devote one chapter to its study. For one thing, the issue of languages, especially in India, lends itself to the study of a system of many variables. But all along, when I spoke of language, it was also as a representative of a culture, in other words I wanted to view the French language as the encapsulation of French culture. As it turns out, its study opened a Pandora's Box with the associated issues of the language politics of India. In broad terms, it meant that an increase in English would lead to a decrease in French. A decrease in Hindi in South India would lead to an increase in English and hence a decrease in French. An increase in Hindi in South India was inconceivable but, in theory, that would mean a decrease in English and an increase in French. All these increases and decreases could take place while keeping Tamil, the local language of Pondicherry and Karaikal, Malayalam, the local language of Mahé, and Telugu, the local language of Yanam, constant.

William Miles, in his book, Imperial Burdens, has spoken about the notions of "legitimacy and psychology" with reference to the Franco-Pondicherrians in Pondicherry.[449] He argues that they lack political legitimacy and that they are economically and psychologically dependent on France due to the severance of their links with India. Even though they are financially well off due to their pensions which they receive in European currency, the French state in reality is very reluctant to continue paying them these pensions. He also points out that they lack a proper homeland. While

[449] William Miles, Imperial Burdens, p. 172

they are juridically a part of France, they do not belong culturally there and it is the reverse situation for them in India. My own assessment of the situation on the ground led me to conclude that present day Pondicherry lacks a certain sense of legitimacy. Ironically, for me, this lack of legitimacy came from the departure of the Franco-Pondicherrians and I can only repeat the phrase, "Les Pondichériens sont tous partis" which I heard from some people during my field trips there. There is certainly a sense of legitimacy which comes from being legally part of India. In that sense, the present day Pondicherrians are legitimate. But so rampant is the perception that Pondicherry is now constituted of migrants from other parts of Tamil Nadu and from other parts of India that I viewed these people as being, in a sense, the false proprietors of Pondicherry. Pondicherry was legitimately the home of the Franco-Pondicherrians**.** The Franco-Pondicherrians left because the Treaty of Cession governing the *de jure* transfer gave them the option to take up French nationality. Here again, one has a system of many variables. Perhaps, the best explanation of creolization in this case comes from the fact that with the exponential decrease of the Franco-Pondicherrian variable, the system was affected and a consequent change was brought about. One aspect of that change was the induction of many other variables, such as inhabitants of other parts of Tamil Nadu as well as of India.

It would be noteworthy to look at the five articles of the Treaty of Cession which allowed the Franco-Pondicherrians to opt for French nationality. These articles of the treaty may be regarded as the catalysts which brought about creolization manifested in the departure of the Franco-Pondicherrians which left a vacuum which was filled by

migrants from elsewhere. According to article 4, the legal residents automatically became Indian citizens:

> French Nationals born in the territory of the Establishments and domiciled therein at the date of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession shall become Nationals and citizens of the Indian Union, with the exceptions enumerated Under Article 5 hereafter

Article 5 gave them the right to opt:

> The persons referred to in the previous article may by means of a written declaration drawn up within six months of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession, choose to retain their nationality. Persons availing themselves of this right shall be deemed never to have acquired Indian nationality.
>
> The declaration of the father or, if the latter be deceased, of the mother, and in the event of the decease of both parents, of the legal guardian shall determine the nationality of unmarried children of under eighteen years of age. Such children shall be mentioned in the aforesaid declaration. But married male children of over sixteen years of age shall be entitled to make this choice themselves.
>
> Persons having retained French nationality by reason of a decision of their parents, as indicated in the previous paragraph, may make a personal choice with the object of acquiring Indian nationality by means of a declaration signed in the presence of the competent Indian authorities, within six months of attaining their eighteenth birthday. The said choice shall come into force as from the date of signature of the declaration.
>
> The choice of a husband shall not affect the nationality of the spouse.
>
> The declarations referred to in the first and second paragraphs of this Article shall be drawn up in two copies, the one in French, the other in English, which shall be transmitted to the competent French authorities. The latter shall immediately transmit to the competent Indian authorities the English copy of the aforesaid declaration.

Article 6 stipulated that those residents who were outside the territories but still within India would become Indian citizens but with the right to opt for French citizenship:

> French nationals born in the territory of the Establishments and domiciled in the territory of the Indian Union on the date of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession shall become nationals and citizens of the Indian Union. Notwithstanding, they and their children shall be entitled to choose as indicated in Article 5 above. They shall make this choice under the conditions and in the manner prescribed in the aforesaid Article.

The French citizens who were outside India automatically remained French citizens. Article 7 allows them to opt for Indian nationality:

> French nationals born in the territory of the Establishments and domiciled in a country other than the territory of the Indian Union or the territory of the

> said Establishments on the date of entry into force of the Treaty of Cession shall retain their French nationality, with the exceptions enumerated in Article 8 hereafter.

Article 8 spells out how the nonresident Indians of French nationality can opt for Indian citizenship. This includes their children as well. According to paragraph 3 of this article, however, French nationality can also be acquired in the following situation:

> Persons having acquired Indian nationality by reason of a decision of their parents…may make a personal choice with the object of recovering French nationality by means of a declaration signed in the presence of the competent French authorities with six months of attaining their eighteenth birthday.

The option clause of this treaty is considered to be unique in the history of decolonization and hence it can perhaps be said that the document in itself, and in particular these five articles, could be regarded as an example of creolization. The comprehensiveness of the treaty is remarkable in the sense that it took into account all the variations which could occur: in the places where the French subjects were residing: in the French territories, in India and abroad as well as a variation in the people: adults, minors, husbands and wives.[450] Hence, again, we have a system with many variables.

The population of French nationality in Pondicherry, estimated at around 10 000, consists largely of Indians who opted for French nationality and who remained in the country or who came back there after retirement. They enjoy a situation which is close to that of double nationality. According to article 17 of the Cession Treaty, the French who resided on 1 November 1954 in the Establishments have the same rights of residence, movement, trade and profession as the other inhabitants there. According to the agreed minutes of 16 March 1963, they also enjoy civil rights notably of the right to acquire,

[450] William Miles, Imperial Burdens, p. 45

possess, manage, rent all property, movable and immovable, rights and interests to enjoy and dispose of them in the same way as the citizens of the country.[451]

While this population is on the verge of disappearing, some European French are trying to settle down in Pondicherry where, due to the favorable exchange rate, they can lead a life of ease. Some have set up businesses. The hospitality industry seems to be their preferred field of activity even though they may have made advances in other areas as well. Thanks to them, French dining etiquette which risked disappearing has known a jump in vitality. The French Consulate General covering Tamil Nadu and Kerala in addition to Pondicherry is located in Pondicherry because of the large French population there; it is a place where not only the interests of French citizens are taken care of but also where the generosity of the French state towards destitute French nationals and towards the larger population there and in surrounding areas in times of natural disasters is in evidence. The consulate is in charge of the "Monument aux morts" which France was anxious to keep in its possession at the time of transfer. It is the rallying point with a high sentimental value for the *anciens militaires* who constitute the bulk of the French population. The French authorities when passing through Pondicherry make it a point to lay a wreath in honor of the Pondicherrians who sacrificed their lives serving France during the two world wars. This sober monument, with an elegant silhouette, catches the attention of passers by and perpetuates the memory of vital links which have existed between France and Pondicherry.[452]

The media are fascinated by the Franco-Indian population of Pondicherry, but they do not focus their attention on the expatriate Pondicherrian population in France.

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[451] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , pp. 187-188
[452] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 188

Many of those expatriates come to Pondicherry more or less regularly to rediscover their roots, to revisit their families who stayed on and to stock up on jewelry, clothes and, of course, spices. It is to be noted that the emigrated population of Pondicherry in France is proportionally greater than the emigrated population of the rest of India in the rest of the world. This high density could be viewed as another manifestation of creolization, something new and unexpected resulting from a Franco-Indian treaty giving Indians the right to opt for French citizenship. Their impact is accentuated by the French tourists who are pleased to include Pondicherry in their tours. Organized tours have institutionalized this trend. In this regard, one can witness a seasonal upsurge of Francophony in July-August and in January-February, which can very easily be noticed on the sea side esplanade where French tones gush out. Some merchants wait for these two seasons and, in their shops, they try very hard to speak French.[453]

This Pondicherrian community in France, estimated at around 50 000 people is on the whole younger, more educated than the one which has stayed on in Pondicherry. It is the foliage of which the Franco-Indian population of Pondicherry constitutes the roots. At first, the Pondicherrians did not want to exhibit their Tamil aspect; they strove to appear perfectly French. With an increase in their numbers, they started adopting some of the customs of the country of their origin. This became more pronounced when the Tamil population practically doubled due to the arrival in large numbers in France of Tamils from Sri Lanka, who were ardent defenders of Tamil culture. Signs in Tamil became familiar in certain quarters in Paris. Some candidates for the Baccalauréat in Paris desire opting for this language. They have a large number of associations bringing

[453] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , pp. 188-189

together either Pondicherrians of a suburb or all those who have a common cultural objective. Some of them bring out periodic publications. One of them, which is known as "Centre d'Information et de Documentation de l'Inde française"(CIDIF), has a biannual publication worthy of being preserved.[454]

There are in Paris Hindu temples; they are in general old halls where statues of Hindu divinities have been installed; there is even a procession of the chariot of Poulléar which each year takes on more splendor. As far as the Catholics are concerned, it is possible for them from time to time to participate in Tamil masses in some places of Paris and the Parisian region. A Tamil chaplain is posted at the seat of Foreign Missions, rue du Bac in Paris. He is available for baptisms, marriages and burials in Tamil in all of France for those who desire it. The Pondicherrians have succeeded in installing statues of Notre Dame de Vélangany in Pontoise and in Sarcelles.[455]

The Franco-Tamil population can easily obtain in Paris books and periodicals in Indian languages, cassettes of Indian music and of course, videos to watch Indian films at the time when they come out in India. Shops and Indian restaurants are plentiful near the Gare du Nord where Pondicherrians like to gather. Quite paradoxically, it is those who show themselves in France to be the most attached to their Tamil culture of origin who are the most useful for the conservation of French culture in Pondicherry, as it is they who return there often and naturally propagate this culture around them without any expenses incurred by the French government. The Franco-Indian community of

[454] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 189
[455] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 189

Pondicherry and of France constitutes a living relic which prolongs the secular political and cultural links which have been extinguished in law.[456]

According to me, the second article of the Treaty of Cession is the catalyst which brought about the creolization in the administrative structure of Pondicherry which led to the formation of the Union Territory of Pondicherry:

> These Establishments will keep the benefit of the special administrative status which was in force prior to the 1st November 1954[date of the de facto transfer]. Any constitutional changes in this status which may be made subsequently shall be made after ascertaining the wishes of the people.

The politicians of Pondicherry could see that the Union Territories Act gave them less than what they expected. In fact, behind the appearance of an autonomous apparatus of governance, there are many vital questions which remain within the powers of the Lieutenant-Governor or of the Central government in Delhi. Other Union Territories, such as Goa understanding the severe limitations on their autonomy, asked to be made states and succeeded. The same claim was made on several occasions by the politicians of Pondicherry. It was explained to them that, in this event, they would lose the substantial grants which the territory received from the central government. Since then, the politicians have asked for Pondicherry to be made a state with special status which would give it all the powers of a state as well as all the money of a Union Territory. Such favors had been granted to certain Union Territories which had become states, as it was a question of backward states which were strategically important. Pondicherry does not satisfy any of these two criteria: it is better placed, even in relation to the big states, from the economic and educational point of view.[457] In the process of claiming more and more advantages, one risks jeopardizing the status of a separate entity which was granted solely

[456] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 190

[457] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , pp. 181-182

owing to Pondicherry's characteristic of being an ex-French territory. This specifity becomes weaker with the passage of time. It is known that the administration of these dispersed territories is costly. The Indian government, which is not as short of resources as it was 20 years ago, leaves things as they are. The governments of neighboring states do not seem to be particularly concerned either, even though the smuggling of alcoholic drinks becomes an irritant from time to time. The present situation continues due to inertia, which it would be wise not to disturb.[458]

As mentioned earlier, article 2 of the Treaty of Cession stipulates that any constitutional modification of the special administrative status in effect at the time of the cession could take place only after consulting the population. This clause was inserted in response to the demand of the Pondicherrians who had then expressed the need for a transition period of 25 years. The Indian government was not inclined to grant them that then. Now, fifty years have elapsed. The francophone part of the population, which had demanded the prolonged transition period, has largely emigrated to France or has extinguished itself. The clause for the popular consultation, having been inserted on the request of this population, has therefore lost its raison d'être. Even if one strictly follows the stipulations of the treaty, it would apply only to those who were residing in Pondicherry when the French ruled the Establishments and at the most, to their descendants. Furthermore, the population of the enclaves which was 369 000 in 1961 on the eve of the cession became 973 000 in 2001. It almost tripled. This increase has been around 30 % every 10 years, in other words almost double that of the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu revealing a strong immigration. In these conditions, one can say that the

[458] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 182

clause of consultation has become obsolete. Moreover, it was never observed in the case of all the fundamental modifications which were made after the transfer.[459]

Pierre Pichard says that foreign as well as Indian visitors all agree that the architecture and urban texture of Pondicherry are unique and that these give Pondicherry a specific atmosphere which makes it different from other Indian cities. This further reinforces the thesis for creolization. Pierre Pichard attributes this specificity to several historical factors. For one thing, Pondicherry is not an ancient Indian city. It was a fishermen's village which was developed into a town and then a city by the French. As a colonial city, it is very different from other Tamil towns not very far from it such as Kanchipuram or Tanjavur. It also differentiates itself from other ancient Indian cities in that it is located right on the sea. Secondly, as a French city, Pondicherry was insulated from British rule. While other cities such as Madras or Bombay grew into what they are at present, Pondicherry is not very different from what it was during the eighteenth century. Most other cities have evolved from their ancient characteristics. Thirdly, after Independence, all modernization efforts have mostly occurred in the suburbs. This has left the inner part of the city more or less intact. In recent times, however, the population pressure due to migration from other parts of Tamil Nadu as well as from other parts of India coupled with the increased urban development which this has led to is likely to threaten this special characteristic of Pondicherry.[460]

In the French houses, one can discern the influence of the 'hotel particulier'of the urban aristocracy of the 17 th and 18th centuries in France. It had a symmetrical plan and

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[459] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 182

[460] Pierre Pichard, Indo-French Dialogue in Architecture: The Case of Pondicherry, pp. 1-2

would usually open on to a garden rather than directly on the street. The Pondicherrian adaptation consisted in combining both courtyard and garden in one compact space. In the original model, courtyard and garden were separate. The use of flat, terraced roofs differentiated Pondicherrian houses from French ones. This can be attributed to the prevalence of cyclones and of gusty winds but it can also be attributed to the influence of Greek and Italian architecture which the French modeled in response to hot climates.[461]

One can see some European influence in local Pondicherrian houses as well. In the traditional Tamil house, the entrance is from the street. The wooden door is finely carved behind a traditional verandah with columns made of timber. It opens into a courtyard with a room on one side. The French influence in some of these houses can be seen in higher ceilings than normal. In many instances, we can see the local structure on the ground floor characterized by the presence of timber columns and wood carving. The upper storeys are more French. As a result, one can notice wooden pillars supporting walls and masonry columns and which are probably structurally not very sound. The house of Ananda Ranga Pillai, the Dubash or translator of Dupleix, is perhaps the best known example of this mixed architecture where the ground floor is like the traditional Tamil house and the upper storey very French.[462]

With reference to Ananda Ranga Pillai, H. Dodwell has said that one can deduce from Ranga Pillai's Diary that the Indian mind in the 18th century needed to be shaken up by an external agent such as the French colonizer. Perhaps, this is not inconsistent with the view of Dupleix that India was ripe for European intervention in the eighteenth century or, for that matter, with former Prime Minister Nehru's view that Indian

[461] Pierre Pichard, Indo-French Dialogue in Architecture: The Case of Pondicherry, p. 8
[462] Pierre Pichard, Indo-French Dialogue in Architecture: The Case of Pondicherry, pp. 10-11

languages needed to be startled into life by contact with European languages as they had become insular and inbred. H. Dodwell says that, in the eighteenth century, the French in actual fact did not shake up Indian society outside the realm of politics. He says that like the other European powers in the East at that time, their view was that they must either keep their distance from the natives or aim to revert to proselytism and never really thought that there could be a middle route to take. He says that like the other Roman Catholic countries, the French were inclined to favor proselytism unlike the Protestant countries except for Denmark which preferred to remain aloof. But even if the French converted the natives, this did not mean that there was any cultural contact with them. Hence, even if there was in Pondicherry at that time a substantial Indian Christian congregation as for example, that of Ranga Pillai's uncle, the Chevalier Guruvappa who was a Christian, it remained essentially Indian in character.[463]

With respect to Dupleix, H. Dodwell has also pointed out that apart from his exalted qualities, there was a certain violence in his temper which clouded his judgment and the subtle character of his mind made him appear insincere and secretive. Dodwell says that in his judgment of other people, Dupleix was likely to be very uncharitable, express his opinions of others in offensive language and would act on it in a dubious and unacceptable manner. For example, in his report in 1750 about the character of the servants of the French Company, Dupleix had adopted a very condemnatory attitude towards people except those who were in his inner circle. Three of them are described successively as being a "fool", "having no morals", "untrustworthy and corrupt" in a language which leaves a painful impression and points to his "suspicious and passionate" character. He would resort to lying rather than being truthful if it served his immediate

[463] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol.12, Introduction, pp. xxii-xxiv

interests. Dodwell says that this enabled Dupleix to combat Oriental courts "with their own weapons" but that a wise statesman should resort to deceit only as a last resort and even then it is never likely to be of advantage to him. The use of deceit, according to Dodwell, turned against Dupleix because it was used in every day business and for petty purposes.[464] While much has been said about the brilliance of Dupleix, his ideas and his vision for the role of France in India in the eighteenth century and onwards, it must perhaps also be borne in mind that there were certain flaws in the founding architect of the French colonial enterprise in India. Symbolically, this can perhaps be extrapolated to the French colonial attitude during that entire century.

In the nineteenth century, according to article 12 of the Treaty of Paris, France was not allowed to keep an army; it was allowed to keep only a police force to maintain law and order. Strictly speaking, this means that France was technically not a colony. This was part of the British design to severely constrict the powers of the French. But any discussion of French colonialism in the nineteenth century or beyond must take this fundamental fact into account. The nineteenth century is significant because it was then that France tried to set up an electoral apparatus which would make the former French territories of India more democratized at the time of Independence than British India. The setting up of free schools for Indians in 1827 was part of France's general policy of assimilation. The beginnings of democracy can be seen in the implementation of the edict of 23 July 1840 calling for the creation of an assembly where Indians would have half the seats. In the nineteenth century, there was a certain arrogance manifested by Pondicherry towards the other enclaves. The role of Karaikal was to cater to the needs of Pondicherry. As for the other enclaves, they were viewed as mere currency of exchange

[464] Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol. 4, Introduction, pp. xi-xiii

for the enlargement of Pondicherry. One can also see that there was a continuum in the scale of preferences according to the following hierarchy: Whites, Topas, Indians as in the decree of 1826 stipulating a distribution of funds among the population.

In religious terms, there was a certain empathy of Europeans towards Hindus due to the mildness of their character and the systematic organization of their lives where their dwelling places were arranged according to their professions. This was in spite of the fact that the notion of the pure and the impure shocked them. Jacques Weber has said that the foreigner could not escape the effects of the caste mentality of Hinduism. He says that Islam and Christianity had been profoundly Indianized. France would not be able to assimilate the Indians because the French had realized that in order to remain in the colony they would have had to come to terms with the Hindu religion.

In the nineteenth century, a hybrid constitution was formed which embraced Western and Indian cultures. It was liberal and democratic, decentralizing, conservative and paternalistic. French conservatives thought that this was putting the cart before the horse by imposing administrative and political assimilation before cultural assimilation. Instead it would perhaps have been more effective to expose them more thoroughly to science and French culture before making the transition to political institutions as the British did. This would have been feasible as the French more than any other colonial power had endeared themselves in the eyes of the natives due to their respect and deference towards them. It is the use of these principles which had allowed Dupleix to make inroads into Indian territory which policy the Count Dupuy in 1819 had tried to revive. It is perhaps for this reason that the French are now still viewed with a high degree of respect in the former French enclaves.

In the nineteenth century, there was certainly a contradiction between the imposition of universal suffrage and the hierarchy of castes. Universal suffrage implied equality whereas the caste system was by definition unequal. According to Ristelhueber, the Indian caste system actually placed the French in the category of outcastes or pariahs as, for one thing, they offended Hindu sensibilities by eating beef, for example. Thus, the French became the outcastes even though they were the sovereigns. The "ridiculous matter of footwear" raised to a public level the question of assimilation. Chanemougam proved to be the antithesis of Ponnoutamby in opposing moves to impose universal suffrage. In the end, the introduction of universal suffrage favored the Brahmanical coalition which had imposed its supremacy on Indian society. These factors prevented Hindu society from being assimilated. Furthermore, as these enclaves were located far apart and in different parts of the country there was no real common factor among them. Thus, as was pointed out in 1879 by the Councilor General Bayol, it made more sense to decentralize the Establishments rather than to assimilate them collectively to France.

Chandernagore, in every sense, represented the extreme case of the situation in the enclaves. It was located furthest away from Pondicherry. It was the only North Indian enclave whereas all the others were South Indian. There is no denying the fact that North India is different from South India not only literally but also due to the fact that the people and languages of North India belong to a different family from that of the South Indian one. If there was one enclave which Paris would have liked to have disburdened itself of, it was certainly Chandernagore due to its susceptibility to British influences. Already in 1855, the "Morning Chronicle" and the "Journal du Havre" had reported about a plan to exchange Chandernagore with the Dominican Islands and Saint

Lucia. Of course, this view was not shared unanimously by the French public as in France, the "Indo-Chinese academic society" had advocated the need to retain French influence in the crucial and strategic area of Bengal.

The civil servants of Chandernagore could not quite accept taking orders from those of Pondicherry. It was a conflictual situation as both Bengalis and Tamilians are known for their pride and linguistic and cultural chauvinism. There was a symbiotic relationship between Chandernagore and Calcutta as the residents of Chandernagore would go to work in Calcutta and where they did not have much use for speaking French and of propagating French culture. This lack of a vibrant French culture further increased the divide between Chandernagore and Pondicherry. As far as the inhabitants of Chandernagore were concerned, they made good use of the ambiguous nature of Chandernagore as a French enclave by furthering their own interests against the British.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the local people of Chandernagore were not against the French government as such as can be witnessed by the protest of the revolutionary newspaper *Matri Boumi* against a threatened plan in 1910 about a possible cession of Chandernagore where it projected the French as being on the whole better colonizers than the British. Bengal being the center of nationalist movements in British India in the beginning of the 20th century, it was inevitable that the inhabitants of Chandernagore would feel the pulse of the Independence movement more than those of the other French enclaves. Being a land of asylum, Chandernagore would be a haven for revolutionaries fleeing British authorities even though Pondicherry was also a land of asylum. Chandernagore would also serve as a receiving post for literature which was considered to be seditious by the British authorities. Finally, since the purchase of

firearms was free, it was not unusual for revolutionary activities to be planned from Chandernagore.

The Charu Chandra Roy affair is illustrative of the interplay between the French and British governments and the French colony and reveals the precarious nature of relations which existed between the three at that time and of the ambivalent stance taken by the French themselves towards one of their own subjects. The extradition demands by the British authorities of Charu Chandra Roy, a resident of Chandernagore on murder charges were met by the Governor in Pondicherry because Charu Chandra Roy was a French subject of Indian origin. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not convinced that the Governor of Pondicherry should have acceded to the British demands because he was of Indian origin and not of French stock.

Even though in French political circles, the perceived value of the enclaves was waning, there would still be reluctance among them to let go of the Establishments. The principal resistance would come from the French Ministry of Overseas Territories. In 1947, the Inspector General of the Colonies, Tézenas du Montcel, would advocate the need for France to keep Chandernagore as he feared that with its loss, the repercussions for the other French enclaves would be disastrous.

It is upon the invitation of an Indian prince that the French established themselves in Pondicherry. Many of them lived there, procreated, made grand projects, struggled, won victories, overcame disappointments and left their bones. After many generations, their descendants returned to the country, not without regrets. The impact of their passage is still present in the buildings. Initially a dependency of Surat, Pondicherry then became its equal, and then became the capital of the French Establishments in India.

Indian princes and French merchants sought each other for their respective profits; however, their relations were often stormy. The Indian princes tended to treat the French merchants condescendingly and with haughtiness and tried to extract from them as much money as possible. But they were careless to allow the French to bring in armed forces; they even went to the extent of soliciting their military aid in their internal strifes. The Europeans soon realized that with their superiority in firepower and their well trained and disciplined troops they could triumph over Indian forces who were numerically superior. The Europeans then began to make their own choice of alliances to ensure their supremacy. At this stage, the French and the British were the only ones on the battleground. The British finally triumphed.[465]

The struggle for supremacy between the two ended with five enclaves and eight lodges under French control. These were scraps of territories which the British agreed to leave to France and which they regretted later. Yet the French keenly wanted to hold on to them in order to continue their trading activities in India which proved ultimately to be a disappointment. The two parties tried on many occasions to exchange these territories for others located elsewhere but they were forced to give up these plans due to obstinate opposition from the inhabitants of these territories.[466]

These dispersed territories, united politically under the name of French Establishments in India, have known different political régimes. In the beginning, the power was exercised by the Company which was regarded as a vassal of the king. On the ground, there was a sovereign council presided by a governor. He often consulted an Indian notable named by him, who would progressively become the leader of the Indians.

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[465] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 191
[466] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 191

The king subsequently took direct charge of the administration. At the time of the "Restauration," an elaborate political organization was put in place. The governor was the dominant figure, all the auxiliary organs which were later going to develop subsequently were already present then in an embryonic stage. The territories felt the repercussions of the French revolutions, but their effect was transient. During the 3rd Republic, the public made its presence more and more felt in the decision-making process. At that time, there were three centers of power: the governor who was officially the repository of the power of the French Republic, the representatives of the people in the French parliament who through the intermediary of the Minister of the Colonies could influence the governor, and the elected councils of the Establishments whose powers increased progressively.[467]

The picture became more complicated owing to the fact that the population was not homogeneous. The Europeans wanted to monopolize all the power for themselves, the French government did not want to alienate them as it was dependent on them for the maintenance of the French presence. It thus devised a system of lists giving the Europeans who made up a tiny minority more seats than to the Indians in the elected councils of the territory. But it did not want to tarnish in this discriminatory manner the parliamentary representation. The Member of Parliament was elected under universal suffrage where the vote of one Indian counted as much as that of one Frenchman. In this regard, the Indians, who had an advantage due to their greater numbers, had a Member of Parliament of their choice. This could have led to a clash between Indians and Europeans. But due to the inherent competitive nature of politics, Indians as well as

[467] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , pp. 191-192

Frenchmen both became divided; as a result, there were two camps, each one having some Frenchmen and some Indians. Hence, the confrontation between Europeans and Indians was avoided to give way to struggles between parties and their programs. The European population still had more advantages; but the situation subsequently evolved in favor of Indians due to two factors: the education of Indians and the emigration of Europeans. Universal suffrage without distinction of race or gender was introduced after the Second World War and a new political structure with a democratic format was put into place.[468]

According to context, contemporary Pondicherry can have several meanings: a) the Union *Territory* of Pondicherry, which consists of Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam , b) the Pondicherry *region* covering 179 villages as well as 7 communes and including the city limits of the town of Pondicherry, c) the Pondicherry *municipality* or *city* which also consists of the urban outgrowth on its borders in the last few years, d) the limits of the old *town* of Pondichéry which is primarily the contemporary White Town and was during the time of the French surrounded by four boulevards which separated it from its surroundings.[469]

As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, according to Brigitte Sébastia, Pondicherry as the headquarters of the former French enclaves, has a very French appearance whereas the other enclaves have been completely Indianized. This is corroborated by the results of the questionnaire which I distributed to a random sample of the inhabitants of all the former French enclaves in the summer of 2003. The majority of respondents in Karaikal, Mahé, Yanam and Chandernagore have stated that the traces of

[468] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède Français en Inde , p. 192
[469] William Miles, Imperial Burdens, p.13

French culture are *marginally visible* whereas the residents of Pondicherry have said that the traces of French culture are *readily* visible.

To sum up, according to me there has been an overall change in current terms due to nearly three centuries of French presence. Creolization has occurred in the following manner: after integration with India, the French influence decreased at an exponential rate. However, the vacuum left behind by the French was also filled at an exponential rate. This is characterized by the unique pan-Indian and cosmopolitan nature of Pondicherry and its specific economic, administrative and demographic status. Changes, largely in the form of economic development and population migration, are occurring at a hectic speed and due to the small size of Pondicherry, the changes are very visible. This conclusion applies primarily to Pondicherry city but to a lesser degree also to the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The issue of creolization in the enclaves of Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam is related to the changes in the economic, administrative and demographic spheres. There are migrations to Mahé from other parts of Kerala, to Karaikal from other parts of Tamil Nadu and to Yanam from other parts of Andhra Pradesh. There are frequent comings and goings of people to and from the four units of Pondicherry Union Territory. Hence, migrants to any of these parts get re-located to any of the other parts through work or family obligations. Due to the greater size of the city of Pondicherry, it is certainly much more pan-Indian than the other enclaves and certainly the only cosmopolitan one of the four units. There are hardly any Europeans or Frenchmen of stock in the other enclaves.

Pondicherrian identity has a multiple significance. Links with Pondicherrians in Francophone territories and in France is one part of it. The other part is linked to its

current union territory status whereby union territorihood makes the inhabitants of the union territory economically and administratively different from the neighboring states to which they are adjoined. When delving into the question of Pondicherrian identity, I became aware of how Pondicherry is in a certain sense a hub. It links the largest concentration of people of a certain Indian origin (namely Pondicherrrian) in a specific part of the world (namely France) with the most cosmopolitan town in India per square foot. Added to it, it is also probably the most pan-Indian town in India, at least per square foot. Hence, the keyword here is concentration which is symbolic of creolization.

We can see the results of *acculturation* in the Francophone Franco-Pondicherrians as they have acquired considerable traits of French culture. We cannot really say that *deculturation* has occurred in their regard as they do retain many traits of their native culture also. I do believe that the interaction of heterogeneous cultural elements in them have made them *creolized*. For one thing, my extensive interactions with the Franco-Pondicherrian community led me to believe that the French speaking Pondicherrians who had acquired French nationality and links with France over several generations had a different perspective of Pondicherry and India than the non Francophone, English speaking Pondicherrians.

Even if French is still recognized as one of the official languages of Pondicherry, competition from English continues to remain the main obstacle to its increased prevalence even though more and more people want to learn French for, among other reasons, employment in the hospitality or tourism industries. But this trend is not Pondicherry specific but is rather true of the whole country. The unacceptability of Hindi

as an official language to South Indians makes the reality of English as a lingua franca an irreversible trend and hence, a perpetual threat to French.

My overall conclusion is that nearly three centuries of French presence in the former French territories of India has produced a new and unexpected reality given the initial circumstances. This makes the city of Pondicherry (and to a much lesser extent the other former French enclaves of Karaikal, Mahé and Yanam) unique and different from other parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and India. Chandernagore, as a former French enclave, is indistinguishable from West Bengal apart perhaps from its former French quarters which make that segment of Chandernagore only ornamentally French.

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire:

1) Do you speak a) French, b) a variant of French or c) no French at all?

2) In your opinion, is French in Pondicherry a) flourishing, b) disappearing or c) steady?

3) Do you think that the interaction between French and Indian cultures in Pondicherry has led to a) a very different culture, b) a slightly different culture or c) no difference in the existing culture?

4) If there is a very different or a slightly different culture in Pondicherry, is it a) constantly changing, b) changing very slowly, c) steady?

5) Do you feel that the traces of French culture in Pondicherry are a) readily visible, b) marginally visible or c) invisible?

6) In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, how do you rate the position of French? Do you think that French is a) important, b) marginally important or c) not important at all?

7) Do you think that the effects of the new culture are a) predictable, b) predictable to a certain extent, c) unpredictable?

8) Are there literary publications (novels, short stories, drama) in French? According to you, there are a) many, b) few, c) none.

9) How often does French appear in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television)? According to you it appears a) frequently, b) rarely, c) never.

10) Do you think that the issue of French has been politicized? If so, has it been a) heavily, b) moderately, c) not at all?

11) According to you, who has a greater say over the question of French in Pondicherry? Is it a) the central government, b) the state government of Tamil Nadu, c) the state governments of each of the respective enclaves?

12) Do you think that the influence of France in Pondicherry is a) important, b) moderately important or c) not important at all?

13) In the space below, please feel free to comment on any other issues, which, according to you, would throw further light on this study:

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The total number of respondents was 126: 38 in Pondicherry, 18 in Karaikal, 28 in Mahé, 18 in Yanam and 24 in Chandernagore. The respondents in Pondicherry were representative of a wide range of the population (and also included a few French PhD students from universities in Paris), those in Karaikal were principally the teaching personnel of the Alliance Française, those in Mahe were the teaching personnel and students of an evening class for beginners at the Alliance Française, those in Yanam were mainly the administrative and technical personnel of the Regional Administrator's Office and those in Chandernagore were mainly the students and teaching personnel of an evening French class for beginners at the French Institute/Museum.

The results of the questionnaire were computed by making a numerical count of the three choices in each of the 12 questions. The resultant response for each of the questions was determined by the response of the majority to each category of every question. There were very slight variations in the responses in each of the enclaves in comparison with the overall responses for all five enclaves taken together. A total of 75 respondents (17 in Pondicherry, 5 in Karaikal, 23 in Mahe, 13 in Yanam, 16 in Chandernagore) added their personal comments at the end of the questionnaire. The written responses demonstrated, overall, a favorable attitude on the part of the respondents towards French language and culture and a keen desire that concrete steps should be taken to promote them.

The numerical results of the questionnaire show that, overall, the perception of the inhabitants of the five former French territories of India is that this coming together of French and Indian elements has resulted in a slightly different culture which is changing very slowly and whose effects are predictable to a certain extent. The traces of French culture, according to the people surveyed, are overall marginally visible. Their overall perception is that French is steady and that the influence of France in these territories is important.

The resultant slightly different culture demonstrated by the results of the questionnaire implies the existence of a creolized culture. However, this creolization, because the culture is only slightly different, is at a minimal level. It is not a case of hybridity, which is a static condition, because the slightly different culture is changing very slowly. French is perceived to be steady. If it were flourishing or disappearing, the rate of change of the slightly different culture would be different. The minimal creolization has resulted in, overall, marginally visible traces (and readily visible traces in Pondicherry).

A detailed breakdown of results and responses follows.

NUMERICAL TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Overall Results for all five enclaves: Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé, Yanam, Chandernagore.

	a	b	c	d	e	
1)	52.5	22.5	48	0	3	Speak **French**
2)	41	23	56	0	5	French is **steady**
3)	33.5	65.5	25	0	2	The interaction between French and Indian cultures has led to a **slightly different culture**.
4)	20	61	30	0	15	The slightly different culture is **changing very slowly**.
5)	44.5	76	5.5	0	0	The traces of French culture are **marginally visible**.
6)	61	56	8	0	1	In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, the position of French is **important**.
7)	20	80	16	0	9	The effects of the new culture are **predictable to a certain extent**.
8)	17	45	55	0	6	There are **no** literary publications (novels, short stories, drama) in French.
9)	25	59	31	0	11	French appears **rarely** in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television).
10)	2	25	90	0	8	The issue of French has **not at all** been politicized.
11)	26	20	65	2	12	The **State Government of Tamil Nadu** has a greater say over the question of French.
12)	70	49	5	0	2	The influence of France is **important**.

d- other response
e- no response
The stated response is the response of the majority

Pondicherry

	a	b	c	d	e	
1)	23.5	7.5	7	0	0	Speak **French**
2)	10	8	18	0	0	French is **steady**
3)	7	23	8	0	0	The interaction between French and Indian cultures has led to a **slightly different culture**.
4)	9	17	5	0	7	The slightly different culture is **changing very slowly**.
5)	25.5	12	0.5	0	0	The traces of French culture are **marginally visible**.
6)	17	16	4	0	1	In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, the position of French is **important**.
7)	5	23	5	0	5	The effects of the new culture are **predictable to a certain extent**.
8)	9	18	6	0	4	There are **no** literary publications (novels, short stories, drama) in French.
9)	9	23	2	0	4	French appears **rarely** in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television).
10)	0	13	20	0	5	The issue of French has **not at all** been politicized.
11)	12.5	2	17.5	2	4	The **State Governments neighboring each of the respective enclaves** have a greater say over the question of French.
12)	22	15	1	0	0	The influence of France is **important**.

Karaikal

	a	b	c	d	e	
1)	14	4	0	0	0	Speak **French**
2)	7	6	4	0	0	French in Karaikal is **flourishing**
3)	2	13	3	0	0	The interaction between French and Indian cultures has led to a **slightly different culture**.
4)	2	7	6	0	3	The slightly different culture is **changing very slowly**.
5)	4	14	0	0	0	The traces of French culture are **marginally visible**.
6)	4	12	2	0	0	In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, the position of French is **important**.
7)	2	12	3	0	1	The effects of the new culture are **predictable to a certain extent**.
8)	0	6	10	0	0	There are **no** literary publications (novels, short stories, drama) in French.
9)	3	7	5	0	3	French appears **rarely** in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television).
10)	0	5	13	0	0	The issue of French has **not at all** been politicized.
11)	2.5	3	11.5	0	1	The **State Government of Tamil Nadu** has a greater say over the question of French.
12)	4	13	1	0	0	The influence of France is **moderately important**.

Mahé

	a	b	c	d	e	
1)	9	2	17	0	0	Speak **no French at all**
2)	14	0	14	0	0	French in Mahé is **steady/flourishing**
3)	11.5	8.5	8	0	0	The interaction between French and Indian cultures has led to a **very different culture**.
4)	3	16	8	0	1	The very different culture is **steady**.
5)	4	23	1	0	0	The traces of French culture are **marginally visible**.
6)	24	4	0	0	0	In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, the position of French is **important**.
7)	7	14	6	0	1	The effects of the new culture are **predictable to a certain extent**.
8)	3	1	24	0	0	There are **no** literary publications (novels, short stories, drama) in French.
9)	6	8	13	0	1	French **never** appears in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television).
10)	0	1	27	0	0	The issue of French has **not at all** been politicized.
11)	0	2	25	0	0	The **State Government of Kerala** has a greater say over the question of French.
12)	22	6	0	0	0	The influence of France is **important**.

Yanam

	a	b	c	d	e	
1)	3	0	14	0	1	Speak **no French at all**
2)	5	5	7	0	1	French in Yanam is **steady**
3)	8	7	2	0	1	The interaction between French and Indian cultures has led to a **slightly different culture**.
4)	2	7	7	0	2	The slightly different culture is **changing very slowly/steady**.
5)	2	13	3	0	0	The traces of French culture are **marginally visible**.
6)	6	11	1	0	0	In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, the position of French is **marginally important.**
7)	3	12	2	0	0	The effects of the new culture are **predictable to a certain extent**.
8)	0	7	11	0	0	There are **no** literary publications (novels, short stories, drama) in French.
9)	2	6	9	0	1	French **never** appears in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television).
10)	1	2	14	0	0	The issue of French has **not at all** been politicized.
11)	10	1	4	0	3	The **Central Government** has a greater say over the question of French.
12)	8	8	2	0	0	The influence of France is **important**/**moderately important**.

Chandernagore

	a	b	c	d	e	
1)	3	9	10	0	2	Speak **no French at all**
2)	5	4	13	0	2	French in Chandernagore is **steady**
3)	5	14	4	0	1	The interaction between French and Indian cultures has led to a **slightly different culture**.
4)	4	14	4	0	2	The slightly different culture is **changing very slowly**.
5)	9	14	1	0	0	The traces of French culture are **marginally visible**.
6)	10	13	1	0	0	In relation to all the other languages and cultures of India, the position of French is **marginally important**.
7)	3	19	0	0	2	The effects of the new culture are **predictable to a certain extent**.
8)	5	13	4	0	2	There are **few** literary publications (novels, short stories,drama) in French.
9)	5	15	2	0	2	French appears **rarely** in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television).
10)	1	4	16	0	3	The issue of French has **not at all** been politicized.
11)	1	12	7	0	4	The **State Government of West Bengal** has a greater say over the question of French
12)	14	7	1	0	2	The influence of France is **important**.

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE:

PONDICHERRY:

"Pondicherry is becoming a Tourist destination for the francophone. The French influence makes a good story for adding to the Tourism & cultural history of Pondicherry." **Mr. Ashok Panda, INTACH, Pondicherry.**

"I feel the Indo French cooperation which is always present should continue for the benefit of Pondicherry. French touch is important for tourism and the economy of Pondicherry." **Dr. Nallam- President-Historical Society, Alliance Française, Pondicherry**

"In Pondicherry, the importance of French, for the students, is based upon only scoring good marks (than the other languages like Tamil or Hindi). We should advise the youngsters about the importance of the second international language of the world. We should make clear that learning French may be useful for the future (studies and job opportunities)." **A member of the Alliance Française of Pondicherry**.

"The French people are no more in Pondicherry because the new generation like to live in Paris. Here, there is only the French college (Lyçée Français)- before it was called the Collège Français. There is also the Alliance Française, Mairie (now called Pondicherry Municipality), Chambre de Commerce, Foyer du Soldat, Hopital Général, Hopital Maternité, St. Joseph de CLUNY, L'Eglise Paroisse, French Institute, Ecole Française, French consulate. These have not yet disappeared." **R.E. Franklin- Clerical worker, Ecole Française d'Extreme Orient.**

"Students learn French to obtain better grades. Very few are really interested in the language." **S Jaykumar- Professeur de Français à Calvé College**.

"Il y a une certaine identité de vues sur les grandes questions internationales et une certaine similitude dans la manière de les aborder. Les deux pays luttent pour leur identité culturelle." **M. Alain Thomas, Directeur Alliance Française de Pondichéry**.

"I like French culture in India in Pondicherry. The Government should take necessary action to children to learn French Language." **G Saravanan, Librarian, French Institute of Pondicherry**.

"Je suis d'origine indienne mais de nationalité française. Ayant vécu pendant 20 ans en France, j'ai decide de m'installer à Pondichéry (ma ville natale) depuis quelques années et j'avoue que j'ai vraiment l'impression d'etre un peu en France grace au peuple français qui est toujours présent au cours de toute l'année, les noms des rues et puis également la presence des institutions comme l'Alliance française qui développe largement la culture française au peuple indien." **Deva, Secrétaire, l'Alliance Française de Pondichéry.**

"Here based on French people, cost of living is high. They were ready to buy anything even if it is high [they never bother], but Indian pupils cannot do like that. So, in market

and other shops they expecting French peoples." **K. Ramanujam, Librarian, French Institute of Pondicherry.**

"The beautiful French houses are being preserved and appreciated. Romain Rolland's library is active in French culture." **Fanny, Teacher at the Ashram**

"The relations in different fields can (and must) be developed between France and India through Pondicherry." **Muhammad Mustafa, Member of CSFE, Pondicherry.**

"According to me, the French is disappearing in the media like radio and newspapers and local television. This can be elaborated for certain extent. Most of the Indian, France citizenship are living in the Pondicherry with the aid of France government. but they are not able to speak even in English or French. Most of the places, the French culture is disappearing. This can be protected through, above said medias. Being myself a wildlife Ecologist, this is my small comment in the study." **L. Muthu Andavan, M.S. Ph. D Wildlife Ecologist.**

"Though French had Pondicherry as their territory for many years and have built French type houses, today the French influence is reduced only to architecture, and a few French schools. It is only one small element in the great mix that Pondicherry has to offer, such as the Ashram, Auroville, different religions, educational institutions and the natural beauty." **Lalit Verma, Aurodhan Art Gallery.**

"*Alliance Française and other French departments can offer free French classes for middle class or poor people who are living in Pondicherry. *Local language like Tamil's literary activities (short stories / poems/ novels) to be translated into French by French cultural organizations." **Pudhuvai Rajani, Pondicherry**.

"*Sri Aurobindo Ashram give importance in French language mainly the works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Most of the works of the Mother are in French language. *School of Sri Aurobindo (Sri Aurobindo's International Education) give first importance in French language then comes other.*Alliance Fr./ other institution of French also arranging classes for people which helps to grow Pondicherry as a French city." **Ron, Pondicherry**

"Basically the influence on French culture in Pondicherry is constant. However, the influence on economy is directly dependent on policies of the central government. Only since the opening of the economy, more particularly since globalization more and more French investment is entering in the South." **R Ananth, Attaché (Presse) French Consulate.**

"The traces of French culture are readily visible in the part of Pondicherry known as the "White Town". In other areas, these traces are almost non-existent and one could mistake these areas for any other town in Tamil Nadu." **Anurupa Naik, Head Librarian, French Institute of Pondicherry**

MAHÉ:

"I think French is very good languagage, I like French because in today's world French is very important language. French has been using many people in India and other countries." **Rafeeq Abdulla, French student.**

"French language is easy to study. It is very important for me." **Rasna, French student.**

"French is a very interesting study. By studying French, we can go to any part of the world. By studying French, we can go for job wherever we want and also whenever we want." **Aswin, French student.**

"It's very interesting and if anyone knows French and English, it is very easy to acquire higher jobs in India as well as in other countries." **Arjun R, French student.**

"French is very useful to get jobs and it help us to score marks in higher secondary. It is useful to communicate with people in France. So we should give importance to French." **Sarath Lakshman, French student.**

"It is better than any other language." **Saimya Krishnan V.K., French student**.

"People should be made much more aware of the French culture, and the beauty of French language." **Jehiya Janardanan, French student**.

"*If we study French, easily we get a job. Not at all in India. *French language is better than any other language." **Dilna Dinesh, French student**.

"French is a very useful and beautiful language. If someone studies it, it will help him to get a job easily in India or abroad or even he would be respected by people. It is called as a music language for we can talk it musically." **French student**.

"French is a very sweet language. It is an interesting language and very easy to accept." **Jazeera Mustapha, French student**.

"In India, we have more than 14 Alliance Françaises. Those in cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Pondicherry Alumni get more facilities for having been well versed in the language. And they get more exposure to French culture. But in the case of AF Mahé above said is not true." **Dinesh KP**.

"It's a very nice language. There are many peoples knowing English in many countries but there are some people who know about French. So it is more important to study the French." **French student**.

"Il existe encore une école française à Mahé où les élèves préparent pour l'examen de Brevet Elémentaire. De plus, dans le collège et dans les écoles "Higher Secondary Schools of Mahé, un grand nombre d'élèves choisissent Français comme seconde

langue." La langue française a un bon avenir encore à Mahé. L'Alliance Française de Mahé joue un grand role dans la propagation de la langue française et de la culture française." **VP Balachandran, Retd. Head Master.**

"It is so sweet to study and speak it. So easy to speak as compared to English. I love it so much. Au revoir." **Je m'appelle Shijin k- Student.**

"Comment allez-vous? French is a language that is spoken world wide, it is one of the beautiful languages to speak and to understand. It gives world wide opportunity to job appliers. Je m'appelle Anup. Très bien." **Anup P.P.**

"French is a sweet language. If we know French and English we get good job. I am very happy to study French. It is very easy to talk, friendly and informal. The method of learning French was very easy." **Je m'appelle Joemon Joseph: French student**.

"French language will be very important in future." **Ponniam Sanil, P.O. Ponniam, Thalassery, Kerala.**

"French is a magnificient language. If we know both languages, French and English, it is a chance to get a job not only in India but abroad also. In Mahé, Alliance Française is doing much to propagate this sweet language which is a language of a Western culture." **N Purushothaman**.

"French is very interesting language. This language is not difficult to study. French pronunciation is good. I love this language." **Preseeth, French Student**.

"L'Alliance Française de Mahé, Ecole Centrale et Cours Complémentaires de Mahé diffusent la langue, la culture et la civilisation françaises." **V.P. Divakaran**.

"Nowadays, 'French' has very importance. French is one of the good language which can be studied very easily." **Anima Pauitharan, French student**.

"French is a 'very sweet language.' It is an interesting language and very easy to accept." **Abhisheka, French student**.

"If French is a universal language and it is included in the studies." **French student .**

KARAIKAL:

"Concrete measures should be taken to preserve French language in Karikal." **M. Chanemougavelou, Enseignant.**

"In Karaikal, there are traces which remind the people about the presence of French people and their culture. For example, some of the names of streets are yet in French, some of the buildings constructed during the French régime are still present. It is a

wonder to see some illiterate people using some French words like Bonjour, bonsoir, étagère etc." **C. Anebarassou.**

"La France pourrait mieux faire pour propager la culture française dans l'Alliance de Karaikal." **V Varadaradju- Professeur, Alliance Française, Karikal**.

"The Government of France may take necessary steps to encourage the French institutions in Karikal for its betterment." **Prof C. Deivasigamany, Directeur, Alliance Française, Karaikal.**

YANAM:

"French culture can be seen in Yanam, since Yanam was one of the French enclaves in India." **L Rama Rao, Superintendent, Regional Administrator's office**.

"I am interested in introducing French in Yanam. Please try to introduce French from 1st standard onwards as a 3rd language since the Yanam people are more interested and try to appoint French professors so that French culture will again reappear." **A Yanam native**.

"French people i.e. the original people are very generous. I like French language very much. I know the language. I learnt with the help of books. Here, there are no French schools. Therefore, there is no chance to learn French for those who are interested. In my opinion, I feel like my mother is India and my father is France. Both countries are same to me. I have eligibility to go to France. I may go to France for a short period." **A native of Yanam.**

"French language and French culture, French administration is very good one and employment opportunities, old age pension and other pension benefits are helpful especially to Yanam people. In Yanam, French nationals getting more benefits." **Satyanarayan, Office of Regional Administrator**.

"People in Yanam are proud of having French background. Still the French festivals would be conducted regularly. People used to remember the old French régime and the development at that time. It gave good marks of understanding and friendship to accumulate with other culture people and share the joy in life with others." **S. Madhusudhana Rao, D.I.O. NIC, Yanam.**

"French Government administration is a very good one. Yanam French nationals are getting more benefits like employment, financially and so many other ways." **Mrs. Prakash Rao, LDC Office of the Deputy Collector.**

"Yanam is growing gradually politically, economically, socially and industrially. People are migrating from different places as for poor people it is easy to live here because electricity etc. is cheap here compared to other states and people come for work in the factories over here." **Father Kurian Cheriankala. Parish priest, St. Ann's Catholic Church.**

"French language is slowly disappearing in Yanam. It should be revived. Many people of Yanam are staying in French. To keep good relations with French people, everybody of Yanam should know French." **B.S. Chandra Shekhar. Scientific Officer. NIC, Yanam**.

"French language is a beautiful language and one should learn definitely. France is a beautiful country which one should visit in his life time. French is a language having one meaning for one word. Whereas in other languages it is not so. That's why all the documents are written in French language. I love the French people." **Lankey Venkateshwara Rao V.D.C. Office of the Regional Administrator.**

"French language is very beautiful, many International Agreements are made in French words." **Chinta Subrahmanyam Rao, LDC Office of Regional Administrator**.

"It is very appreciable that the French Government providing jobs to the French nationals who are residing in Pondicherry Government and also providing many more facilities to them." **Resident of Yanam**.

"Yanam people feel that French relations are keeping them as different people. Many of them are trying to keep the French culture." **K. Ramakrishna. LDC Yanam**.

"This is important and useful for the future guidance." **V Subrahmanyam.**

CHANDERNAGORE:

"There should be more scope to learn French and a good propaganda regarding the future prospects of learning this language. This is the second most important global language, but not much has been done to spread this language world wide." **Ms. Suparna Roy- French Student.**

"As it is a foreign language and very much unknown to us so it is better if we are able to listen to some good French pronunciation with good instruments and watch some good French movies here. The condition of the library must be improved in order to give us a better knowledge." **Samir Bhattacharya - Student**.

"If the media is conscious about the interest of this language it can get so much popularity." **Ms. Suchismita Sadhu- French student.**

"We learn this language because day by day globalization, international culture affect the country. So we study this language." **Kasturi Banerjee-French student.**

"I think it is important to open many institutes for the study of French language, as most of the people know English Literature, and French literature influenced English literature and most of all it is the 2nd International language." **French students**.

"*The number of French institutes must increase slightly if not heavily.*The faculty should be more apt to teach the amateurs. *French magazine and Media should focus on India as one of its foreign destinations. *The cost of teaching French in India should be reasonable as India is price sensitive." **French students**.

"We think that if we would speak in French in this institution frequently then it would be better." **French Students**.

"If we hear cassettes, then we shall improve our study and if we get some books which may help us to improve soon." **Student**.

"I think the French scholars should visit in this institute so that we learn the proper pronunciation. The style of speaking, I mean the spoken French or any language is always changing so we should update ourselves. So, I think, this visit of you people is very important for us." **Student**.

"We should get a good career of this French language in West Bengal. This could help many people who studied / are studying French and have a good merit in it." **Priyanka Mukherjee-French student**.

"If the media is conscious about the interest of this language and get so much popularity." **Sayantika Paul- French student**.

"The issue of French should be politicized and eager students must be given facilities to pursue their studies in French." **French students**.

"People in India must possess much interest in this language and should be aggressive. French in India is not so popular and to make it more aggressive people have to work hard on it." **Prosenjit Halder- French Student**.

"If the Indo-French cultural exchange leads to the betterment of the young people, French language study will flourish more." **Kaushik Chakraborty-Asst. Teacher (English).**

"French in India is materialistically not so important. Hence it is always in the backside of the language scenario. My personal feeling is that French has to make a mark in India, it can only be done by the French nationals- by developing commercial and cultural links with India." **Kamal Kumar Aggarwal- Engineering Student**.

"In this era of a smaller world due to greater communication accessibility and globalization, the study and usage of the French language should be encouraged institutionally, French being the second widely used in the world, only after English." **Dr. Syed Siraj, Doctor.**

"There should be many more French institutes set up here enabling interested students to learn this language." **Subhasis Chakravarty- Assistant Teacher, Bitna Chakravarty-student.**

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE PROVIDING FOR DE FACTO TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE TERRITORY OF FRENCH ESTABLISHMENTS IN INDIA

New Delhi, 21 October 1954

Article I

With effect from November 1, 1954, the Government of India shall take over the administration of the territory of the French Establishments in India. These Establishments will keep the benefit of the special administrative status which was in force prior to the de facto transfer. Any constitutional changes in this status which may be made subsequently shall be made after ascertaining the wishes of the people.

Article II

The municipal regime in the communes of the Establishments and the regime relating to the Representative Assembly shall be maintained in their present form.

Article III

The Government of India shall succeed to the rights and obligations resulting from such acts of the French Administration as are binding on these Establishments.

Article IV T

Questions pertaining to citizenship shall be determined before de jure transfer takes place. Both the Governments agree that free choice of nationality shall be allowed.

Article V

With effect from the date of the de facto transfer the Government of India shall take in their service all the civil servants and employees of the Establishments, other than those belonging to the metropolitan cadre or to the General cadre of the France d'Outre-Mer Ministry. These civil servants and employees, including the members of the public forces, shall be entitled to receive from the Government of India the same rights as respects disciplinary matter or the tenure of their posts, or similar rights as changed circumstances may permit, as they were entitled to immediately before the date of the de facto transfer. They shall not be dismissed or their prospects shall not be damaged on account of any action done in the course of duty prior to the date of the de facto transfer. French civil servants, magistrates and military personnel born in the Establishments or keeping their family links shall be permitted to return freely to the Establishments on leave or on retirement.

Article VI

The Government of France shall assume responsibility for payment of such pensions as are supported by the Metropolitan budget. The Government of India shall assume responsibility for the payment of pensions, allowances and grants supported by the local budget. The system of pensions acccording to the rules of the various local Retirement Funds shall continue to be in force.

Article VII

Nationals of France and the French Union born in or domiciled in the Establishments on the date of the de facto transfer and at present practising their professions therein shall be permitted to carry on their professions in these Establishments without being required to secure additional qualifications, diplomas or permits, or to comply with any new formalities.

Article VIII

The administration's charitable institutions and loan offices shall continue to operate under their present status, and shall not be modified in the future without ascertaining the wishes of the people. The present facilities granted to the private charitable institutions shall be maintained.

Article IX

Properties pertaining to worship or in use for cultural purposes shall be in the ownership of the missions or of the institutions entrusted by the French regulations at present in force with the management of those properties. The Government of India agree to recognise as legal corporate bodies, with all due rights attached to such a qualification, the "Conseils de fabrique"and the administration boards of the Missions.

Article X

Judicial proceedings instituted prior to the de facto transfer shall be continued, until a final decision has been reached, in conformity with the laws and regulations in force at the time of institution of such proceedings. To this end and up to the final settlement of such proceedings the existing courts in the Establishments shall continue to function. Officers of the Courts shall be law graduates, habitually domiciled in the Establishments, honourably known, and selected after consultation with the Consul-General of India before the date of the de facto transfer, in accordance with the French regulations governing the designation of temporary judicial officers. The interested parties shall be entitled, if so they decide by common agreement, to transfer to the competent Indian Courts, the said proceedings as well as proceedings which, though already open, are not yet entered with the Registrars of the French Courts, and also proceedings which constitute an ordinary or extraordinary appeal. Judgments, decrees and orders passed by the French Courts, prior to the de facto transfer, which are final or may become so by expiration of the delays of appeal, shall be executed by the competent Indian authorities. Judgments, decrees and orders passed after the date of the de facto transfer in conformity with the first paragraph of the present article shall be executed by the competent Indian authorities, irrespective of the Court which exercised the jurisdiction. Acts or deeds constitutive of rights established prior to the date of the de facto transter in conformity with French law shall retain the value and validity conferred at that time by the same law. The records of the French Courts shall be preserved in their entirety during a period of twenty years and communication of their contents shall be given to the duly accredited representatives of the French Government whenever they apply for such communication.

Article XI

The records of the Registrars' offices shall be preserved and copies or extracts of the proceedings shall be issued to the parties or the authorities concerned. The third copies of each of the Registrars' offices books of every commune shall be handed over to the French representative on the date of the de facto transfer. As regards records of the year 1954, copies shall be forwarded at the end of the year to the Ministry of French Overseas Territories (Service de PEtat Civil et des Archives). The personal judicial records of the Courts' Registries shall be preserved and copies or extracts of these records shall be issued to the French authorities upon their application.

Article XII

The provision of Article X of this agreement shall apply to proceedings which the "Conseil de Contentieux Administratif " is competent to deal with. Temporary magistrates and local civil servants selected in accordance with the principles of the said Articles shall compose this body.

Article XIII

Nationals of France and the French Union belonging by birth to the Establishments or domiciled therein on the date of the de facto transfer shall, subject to the laws and regulations in force, enjoy in these Establishments the same freedom of establishment, movement and trade as the other inhabitants of the Establishments.

Article XIV

In respect of taxes and duties, other than customs duties and excises, Nationals of France and the French Union belonging by birth to the Establishments or domiciled therein on the date of de facto transfer shall, up to the date of the dejure transfer, be subjected in regard to their persons, properties and enterprises to the same laws and regulations as are at present in force.

Article XV

All persons or corporate bodies who leave or have already left the Establishments permanently shall be permitted freely to repatriate their capital and properties over a period of ten years from the date of transfer.

Article XVI

With effect from the date of the de facto transfer goods exported from a port of the Establishments to France or the French Union or imported through the same ports from France or the French Union, shall be accorded most favoured nation treatment in respect of customs duties and other formalities.

Article XVII

All orders placed outside. the Establishments and finalised through the grant of a licence by competent authorities, in accordance with the laws and regulations in force, prior to the date of the de facto transfer, shall be fulfilled and the necessary foreign currency granted, provided that the goods are imported within the period of validity of the relevant licence. The goods shall, however, be liable to customs duty and other taxes normally leviable at Indian ports. The same rule will apply to goods destined for export for which a licence has been granted, and which will be in stock in the Establishments on the date of de facto transfer. Their export shall be permitted without restriction; but they shall become subject to the normal excise or export duty.

Article XVIII

The Government of India, with a view to ensure normal operation of the textile mills of Pondicherry, agree to facilitate the allotment of quotas from Indian sources corresponding to the normal supply requirements of the mills. They will also supply the necessary amount of foreign currency required by the mills to carry out orders passed under previous regulations. The French Government on their part agree to maintain to the benefit of these mills, for a period of six months with allocation of foreign currency, and under the same conditions as existed prior to the de facto transfer, entry into the French Union of the goods produced by the said mills.

Article XIX

On the date of the de facto transfer local public accounts shall be closed in the Establishments Treasurer and Paymaster's books.

Article XX

The Government of India shall take the place of the French Government in respect of all credits, debts and deficits of the various accounts in the care of the local administration. The Government of India shall reimburse to the French Government the amount of Treasury loans and various funds placed by the latter at the disposal of the Establishments with the exception of sums remitted as grants.

Article XXI

Stocks built up by the local authorities and paid for out of the Metropolitan budget or Treasury -in order to ensure normal supplies to the population will be re-purchased by the Government of India.

Article XXII

The French Government will place a power station at the disposal of the Government of India. The conditions of the purchase shall be examined by the competent authorities.

Article XXIII

The Government of France shall reimburse to the Government of India within a period of one year from the date of the de facto transfer the equivalent value at par in E sterling or in Indian rupees of the currency withdrawn from circulation. from the Establishments after the de facto transfer.

Article XXIV

The Indian Government agree to the continuation of the existing French institutions of a scientific or cultural character and, by agreement between the two Governments, to the granting of facilities for the opening of establishments of the same character.

Article XXV

The "College Francias de Pondicherry" shall be maintained in its present premises as a French educational establishment of the second degree with full rights. The French Government shall assume the charge of its functionment as well in respect of the selection and salaries of the staff necessary for management, teaching and discipline as in respect of the organisation of studies, syllabi, and examinations and the charge of its maintenance. The premises shall be the property of the French Government. Article aW Private education institutions at present in existence in the French Establishments shall be allowed to continue and shall preserve the possibility of imparting French education. They shall continue to receive from the local authorities subsidies and other facilities at least equal to those which have been granted up to date.

Article XXVII

French diplomas and degrees awarded to persons belonging to the French Establishment, viz., "baccalaureat", "brevet elementaire", "brevet d'etudes du premier cycle", shall be examined by a joint education committee set up by the two Governments with a view to establishing their equivalence with diplomas and degrees awarded by Indian universities. Degrees in law and medicine awarded in French Establishments shall be examined similarly.

Article XXVIII

The French Government or French-recognised Private Organisation shall be allowed to maintain and to create by agreement between the two Governments in the former French Establishments in India, establishments or institutions devoted either to higher studies leading to diplomas of French language, culture and civilisation, or to scientific research or to the spreading of French language, culture and civilisation, or to the spreading of French culture in the Science, Arts or Fine Arts. The Indian Government shall grant facilities in accordance with their laws and regulations for entry into and residence in India to French scholars officially sent by the French Government for a period of study in India. Article Studies leading to the local diploma of "Licence en Droit" shall be continued in Pondicherry until the examinations sessions of 1955. Scholarships for the completion of their studies in France shall be granted on request to the students of the Law College in order to prepare their "Licence en Droit". Law studies shall be directed by men of law residing in Pondicherry and nominated to the post of Dean and to each Chair by an administrative decision prior to the de facto transfer. Degrees of a purely local character shall be recognised under usual conditions.

Article XXX

Medical students at present engaged in the course of their studies shall have the possibility either of obtaining a scholarship for studies n France for the completion of the course of studies leading- to the French M.D. Degree, or to be admitted into Indian Medical Colleges after being given due credits for their previous medical studies. This luestion shall be considered by the Joint Educational Committee to be set up under Article XXVII, the students concerned being given in any case A possibility of option for either of the above-mentioned solutions. The possibility of establishing a Medical College in Pondicherry shall also be examined by the Joint Educational Committee. The Government of India shall maintain the General Hospital, Pondicherry, as well as the pharmaceutical department attached to it. The Government of India shall request the French Government to place at their disposal such experts as required for these institutions.

Article XXXI

A French representative shall be established in Pondicherry. The payment of the pensions which are the responsibility of the Metropolitan Budget and the financial operations of the Military Bureau in respect of allowances to the families of military personnel shall be dealt with by the representative.

Article XXXII

The French Government shall transfer to the Indian Government all property owned by the local administration of the Establishments with the exception of such property as, by agreement between the two Governments, is retained by the Government of France for the accommodation of the French Consulate, the College Francais and the Institute to be set up in the future. Properties which are at present in the possession of the religious authorities shall be retained by them and the Government of India agree, whenever necessary, to convey the titles to them.

Article XXXIII

The French Government shall keep in their custody the records having an historical interest, they shall leave in the hands of the Indian Government the records required for the administration of the Territory.

Article XXXIV

The French language shall remain the official language of the Establishments so long as the elected representatives of the people shall not dispose otherwise.

Article XXXV

The questions pending at the time of de facto transfer shall be considered and settled by a French-Indian Commission composed of three representatives of the French Government and three representatives of the Government of India. All difficulties which might arise as regards the rights and obligations to which the Government of India succeed according to Article III shall be settled by the said Commission.

DONE at New Delhi this Twenty-first day of October, 1954.

S. OSTROROG, R.K. NEHRU,

Ambassador Extraordinary Foreign Secretary,

and Plenipotentiary of France for Jawaharlal Nehru, Minister of External Affairs.

TREATY BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE AND INDIA ESTABLISHING CESSION BY THE FRENCH REPUBLIC TO THE INDIAN UNION OF THE FRENCH ESTABLISHMENTS IN INDIA

New Delhi, 28 May 1956

Preamble

The President of the French Republic and the President of the Indian Union

CONSIDERING that their Governments, faithful to the common declaration made in 1947 and desirous of strengthening the bonds of friendship, established since then between France and India, have manifested their intention of settling amicably the problem of the French Establishments in India;

CONSIDERING that after the wish of these populations had been expressed by their representatives an agreement was concluded on October 21, 1954, transferring the powers of the Government of the French Republic to the Government of Indian Union;

HAVE DECIDED to conclude a. treaty establishing the cession by the French Republic to the Indian Union of the French Establishments of Pondicherry, Karikal, Mahe and Yanam and to settle the problems stemming therefrom and have designated thereto as their plenipotentiaries

THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

H.E. Mr. STANISLAS OSTROROG,

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France in India.

THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA:

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, Minister for External Affairs

who, after exchanging their credentials, which having been found in legal form have agreed as follows:

Article I

France cedes to India in full sovereignty the territory of the Establishments of Pondicherry, Karikal, Mahe and Yanam.

Article II

The Establishments will keep the benefit of the special administrative status which was in force prior to 1 November, 1954. Any constitutional changes in this status which may be made subsequently shall be made after ascertaining the wishes of the people.

Article III

The Government of India shall succeed to the rights and obligations resulting from such acts of the French administrations as are binding on these Establishments.

Article IV

French Nationals born in the territory of the Establishments and domiciled therein at the date of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession shall become nationals and citizens of the Indian Union, with the exceptions enumerated under Article V hereafter.

Article V

The persons referred to in the previous article may, by means of a written declaration drawn up within six months of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession, choose to retain their nationality. Persons availing themselves of this right shall be deemed never to have acquired Indian nationality. The declaration of the father or, if the latter be deceased, of the mother, and in the event of the decease of both parents, of. the legal guardian shall determine the nationality of unmarried children of under 18 years of age. Such children shall be mentioned in the aforesaid declaration. But married male children of over 16 years of age shall be entitled to make this choice themselves. Persons having retained French nationality by reason of a decision of their parents, as indicated in the previous paragraph, may make a personal choice with the object of acquiring Indian nationality by means of a declaration signed in the presence of the competent Indian authorities, within six months of attaining their eighteenth birthday. The said choice shall come into force as from the date of signature of the declaration.

The choice of a husband shall not affect th e nationality of the spouse. The declarations referred to in the first and second paragraphs of this Article shall be drawn up in two copies, the one in French, the other in English, which shall be transmitted to the competent French authorities. The latter shall immediately transmit to the competent Indian authorities the English copy of the aforesaid declaration.

Article VI

French nationals born in the territory of the Establishments and domiciled in the territory of the Indian Union on the date of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession shall become nationals and citizens of the Indian Union. Notwithstanding they and their children shall be entitled to choose as indicated in Article V above. They shall make this choice under the conditions and in the manner prescribed in the aforesaid Article.

Article VII

French nationals born in the territory of the Establishments and domiciled in a country other than the territory of the Indian Union or the territory of the said Establishments on the date of entry into force of the Treaty of Cession shall retain their French nationality, with the exceptions enumerated in Article VIII hereafter.

Article VIII

The persons referred to in the previous Article may, by means of a written declaration signed in the presence of the competent Indian authorities within six months of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession, choose to acquire Indian nationality. Persons availing themselves of this right shall be deemed to have lost French nationality as from the date of the entry into force of the Treaty of Cession. The declaration of the father, or if the latter be deceased, of the mother, and in the event of the decease of both parents, of the legal guardian shall determine the nationality of unmarried children of under 18 years of age. Such children shall be mentioned in the aforesaid declaration. But married male children of over 16 years of .age shall be entitled to make this choice themselves. Persons having acquired Indian nationality by reason of a decision of their parents, as indicated in the previous paragraph, may make a personal choice with the object of recovering French nationality by means of a declaration signed in the presence of the competent French authorities within six months of attaining their eighteenth birthday. The said choice shall come into force as from the date of signature of the declaration. The choice of a

husband shall not affect the nationality of the spouse. The declarations referred to in the first and second paragraphs of this Article shall be drawn up in two copies, the one in French, the other in English and shall be signed in the presence of the competent Indian authorities who shall immediately transmit to the competent French authorities the French copy of the aforesaid declaration.

Article IX

With effect from I November, 1954, Government of India shall take in their service all the civil servants and employees of the Establishments, other than those belonging to the metropolitan cadre or to the general cadre of the France d'Outre-Ministry. These civil servants and employees including the members of the public forces shall be entitled to receive from the Government of India the same conditions of services, as respects remuneration, leave, and pension and the same right as respects disciplinary matter or the tenure of their posts, or similar rights as changed circumstances may permit, as they were entitled to immediately before 1 November, 1954. They shall not be dismissed or their prospects shall not be damaged on account of any action done in the course of duty prior to 1 November, 1954. French civil servants, magistrates and military personnel born in the Establishments or keeping there family links shall be permitted to return freely to the Establishments on leave or on retirement.

Article X

The Government of France shall assume responsibility for payment of such pensions as are supported by the Metropolitan Budget, even if the beneficiaries have acquired Indian nationality under Article IV to VII above. The Government of India shall assume responsibility for the payment of pensions, allowances and grants supported by the local budget. The system of pension of the various local Retirement Funds shall continue to be in force.

Article XI

The Government of India shall take the necessary steps to ensure that persons domiciled in the Establishments on 1 November, 1954 and at present practising a learned profession therein shall be permitted to carry on their profession in these Establishments without being required to secure additional qualification, diplomas or permits or to comply with any new formalities.

Article XII

The administration's charitable institutions and loans offices shall continue to operate under their present status, and shall not be modified in the future without ascertaining the wishes of the people. The present facilities granted to the private charitable institutions shall be maintained and shall be modified only after ascertaining the wishes of the people.

Article XIII

Properties pertaining to worship or in use for cultural purposes shall be in the ownership of the missions or of the institutions entrusted by the French regulations at present in force with the management of those properties. The Government of India agree to recognise as legal corporate bodies, with all due rights attached to such a qualification, the "Counseils de fabrique" and the administration boards of the missions.

Article XIV

Legal proceedings instituted prior to 1 November, 1954 shall be judged in conformity with the basic legislation and procedure in force at that time in the Establishments. To this end, and up to final settlement of such proceedings, the existing courts in the Establishments shall continue to function. Officers of the court shall be law graduates, habitually domiciled in the Establishments, honourably known and selected in

accordance with the French regulations governing the designation of temporary judicial officers. The interested parties shall be entitled, if they so decide by common agreement, to transfer to the competent Indian Courts, the said proceedings as well as proceedings which, though already open, are not yet entered with the Registrars of the French Courts, and also proceedings which constitute an ordinary or extraordinary appeal. Judgements, decrees and orders passed by the French Courts, prior to 1 November, 1954, which are final or may become so by expiration of the delays of appeal, shall be executed by the competent Indian authorities. Judgements, decrees and orders passed after

1 November, 1954 in conformity with the first paragraph of the present Article shall be executed by the competent Indian authorities, irrespective of the courts which exercised the jurisdiction. Acts or deeds constitutive of rights established prior to the 1 November, 1954 in conformity with French Law, shall retain the value and validity conferred at that time by the same law. The records of the French Courts shall be preserved in accordance with the rules applicable to them on the date of cession, and communication of their contents shall be given to the duly accredited representatives of the French Government whenever they apply for such communication.

Article XV

The records of the Registrars offices up to the date of cession, shall be preserved in accordance with the rules applicable to them on that date and copies or extracts of the preceedings shall be issued to the parties or the authorities concerned. The personal judicial records of the Courts Registries up to the date of cession, shall be preserved in accordance with the rules applicable to them on that date and copies or extracts of these records shall be issued on request to the French authorities and likewise to the persons concerned in accordance with the legislation in force prior to 1 November, 1954. The said requests on the part of the French authorities and likewise the copies addressed to them shall be drawn up in the French language and shall entail no reimbursement of costs. The French and Indian authorities shall mutually inform each other of penal sentences involving registration in the record of convictions of their own territory and pronounced either by French judicatures or by judicatures sitting in territories ceded to India concerning nationals of the other country born in the aforesaid territories.

Such information shall be sent free of charge through diplomatic channels, either in French or together with a translation into French.

Article XVI

The provisions of Article XIV of this treaty shall apply to proceedings which the "Counseil du Contentieux Administratif " is competent to deal with. Temporary magistrates and local civil servants selected in accordance with the principles of the second paragraph of the said Article XIV shall compose this body.

Article XVII

Nationals of France and of the French Union, domiciled in the French Establishments on 1 November, 1954, shall, subject to the laws and regulations in force for the time being in the Establishments, enjoy in these Establishments the same freedom of residence, movement and trade as the other inhabitants of the Establishments.

Article XVIII

All persons of French nationality acquired under Article IV to VIII or in any other manner and all French corporate bodies shall be permitted to repatriate freely their capital and properties over a period of ten years from 1 November, 1954.

Article XIX

The Government of India takes the place of the territory, with effect from 1 November, 1954, in respect of all credits, debts and deficits in the care of the local administration. Therefore, the Government of India shall immediately reimburse to the French Government the amount of Treasury loans and various funds placed by the latter at the disposal of the territory, as well as advances made by the "Caisse Central de La France d' Outre-Mer", with the exception of sums remitted as grants. In addition the Government of India shall pay the indemnity agreed upon by the two Governments for the purchase of the Pondicherry power station. Simultaneously, the French Government shall reimburse to the Indian Government the equivalent value at par in pound Sterling or in Indian Rupees of the currency withdrawn from circulation from the Establishments before 1 November, 1955.

Article XX

The Indian Government agree to the continuation of the French institutions of a scientific or cultural character in existence on 1 November, 1954 and by agreement between the two Governments to the granting of facilities for the opening of establishments of the same character.

Article XXI

The "College Francais de Pondicherry" shall be maintained in its present premises as a French educational establishment of the second degree with full rights. The French Government should assume the charge of its functionment as well in respect of the selection and salaries of the staff necessary for management, teaching and discipline as in respect of the organisation of studies, syllabi, and examinations and the charge of its maintenance. The premises shall be the property of the French Government.

Article XXII

Private educational institutions in existence on 1 November, 1954 in French Establishments shall be allowed to continue and shall be permitted to preserve the possibility of imparting French education. They shall continue to receive from the local authorities subsidies and other facilities at least equal to those which were being granted on 1 November, 1954. They will be permitted to receive without obstruction the aid which the French Government in agreement with the-Government of India may desire to give them.

Article XXIII

The French Government or French recognised private organisations shall be allowed to maintain and to create by agreement between the two Governments in the former French Establishments in India establishments or institutions devoted either to higher studies leading to diplomas of French language, culture and civilisation or to scientific research or to the spreading of French culture in the Sciences, Arts or Fine Arts. The Indian Government shall grant every possible facility, subject to their laws and regulations in force, for entry into and residence in India to members of French Universities sent by the French Government for a study visit or a teaching mission to India.

Article XXIV

The French Institute of Pondicherry, set up by an understanding reached between the two Governments since 21 October, 1954 Agreement and inaugurated on 21 March, 1955 shall be maintained as a research and advanced educational establishment. The Indian Government shall provide such suitable facilities to further the development of the activities of the said institute, as agreed upon between the two Governments from time to time.

Article XXV

Equivalences of French diplomas and degrees awarded to persons belonging to the French Establishments, namely "Baccalaureat", "brevet elementaire", "brevet d'etudes du premier cycle" with diplomas and degrees awarded by Indian Universities will be accepted by the Indian Government for admission to higher studies and administrative careers. These equivalences will be fixed according to the recommendations of the Joint Educational Committee, nominated by the two Governments in accordance with the agreement of 21 October, 1954. This shall apply equally to degrees in law and medicine awarded in the Establishments. Degrees of a purely local character shall be recognised under usual conditions.

Article XXIV

The French Government ceder, to the Government of India all properties owned by the local administration of the Establishments with the exception of such property as enumerated in Article VIII of the Annexed Protocol. Properties which are at present in possession of all religious authorities shall be retained by them and the Government of India agree, whenever necessary, to convey the titles to them.

Article XXVII

The French Government shall keep in their custody the records having an historical interest; the Government of India shall keep in their custody the records required for the administration of the territory. Each Government shall place at the disposal of the other lists of records in its possession and copies of such records as are of interest to the other.

Article XXVIII

The French language shall remain the official language of the Establishments so long as the elected representatives of the people shall not decide otherwise. Article All questions pending at the time of the ratification of the Treaty of Cession shall be examined and settled by a French Indian Commission composed of three representatives of the French Government and three representatives of the Indian Government.

Article XXX

Any disagreement in respect of the application or interpretation of the present treaty which cannot be resolved through diplomatic negotiation or arbitration shall be placed before the International Court of Justice at the request of one or other of the High Contracting Parties.

Article XXXI

The French and English texts of the present treaty shall be equally authentic. The present treaty shall be entered into force on the day of its ratification' by the two Governments concerned. The exchange of instruments of ratification shall take place at New Delhi.

The present treaty shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of India, which shall transmit an attested copy to the Government of the French Republic.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Prime Minister and Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister for External Affairs.

S. OSTROROG

Plenipotentiary of France in India.

PROTOCOL

Article I

As regards the communes of Nettapacom and Tirubuvane which are part of the Establishments of Pondicherry and as regards the Establishments of Yanam and Mahe the French Government shall not be responsible, particularly in respect of Articles III, IX and XIX of the treaty, for any acts done in these communes and Establishments with effect from the date shown against each : - for Nettapacom on 31st March 1954. - for Trubuvane on 6th April, 1954. - for Yanam on 13th June 1954. - for Mahe on 16th July, 1954.

Article II

The sets of courses of studies at present in force shall be maintained during the appropriate transitional period in a sufficient number Of educational institutions so as to ensure to the people concerned a possibility of option for the future. Transitory periods shall be provided for in every course of studies.

Article III

All pupils and students now engaged in a course of studies are given the assurance that they will be enabled to complete their studies in French according to the curricula and methods in force on 1 November, 1954. They shall continue to enjoy the facilities which they enjoyed on that date, especially regarding free education and scholarships granted by local authorities, whether these scholarships be valid in the Establishments or in France.

Article IV

Regarding the organisation of the examinations of College Francais and the French Institute, facilities shall be given to the representatives of the French Government concerning visas and sojourn as well as practical dispositions to be taken for holding the examinations. The French Government retains the authority to select and appoint examination boards.

Article V

Scholarships for the completion of studies leading to the "Licence en Droit" and "Doctore en Medicine" when begun before 1 November, 1954, shall be granted on request to the students of the former Law College and of the former Medical College. If they so prefer, medical students shall have the possibility to be admitted into Indian medical colleges for completion of their studies, after being given due credits for their previous medical studies.

Article VI

The Government of India will reimburse to the personnel of education and cultural establishments whose salaries are paid by the French Government, an amount equal to the Indian income-tax paid by them unless it is covered by Double Income Tax Avoidance Agreement between India and France.

Article VII

If French books, publications and periodicals as well as educational and teaching equipment and other cultural material intended for use in French Institute and College Francais, are subject to import duty or other taxes, an amount equivalent to the sum so paid shall be reimbursed by the Government of India to the institutions concerned.

Article VIII

The Government of India recognise as being in the ownership of the French Government the following properties : (1) Property located in rue de la Marine (for the installation of the French Consulate); (2) Properties located on the rue Victor Simonel which are occupied by the "College Francais de Pondicherry"; (3) the War Memorial; (4) Property No. 13 located at Karikal so called "Maison Lazare" (for the installation of a branch of the French Consulate); (5) Property located on the rue Saint-Louis (for the Institute).

Article IX

No one shall be prosecuted on account of political offences committed prior to 1 November 1954 and against whom no prosecution has been instituted on the said date.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE CONCERNING THE FORMER FRENCH TERRITORIES

New Delhi, 16 March 1963

A delegation representing the Government of France led by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Paul Garnier, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of France in India, discussed in New Delhi from the 13th of November, 1962 to the 15th of March, 1963 with a delegation representing the Government of India, led by Mr. Rajeshwar Dayal, Special Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, various matters concerning certain provisions of the Treaty of Cession of the French Establishments of Pondicherry, Karikal, Mahe and Yanam concluded on the 28th of May, 1956 in New Delhi between the French Republic and the Republic of India.

The two delegations reached the following conclusions:

I ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

1. Situation of persons domiciled in the former French Establishments in India on the 1st of November, 1954.

2. Establishment and exercise of their activities - The Indian delegation stated that the Government of India had taken steps to ensure that the provisions of Articles 11 and 17 were observed. If new laws or regulations were promulgated, it would be ensured that the provisions of Articles I I and 17 were not infringed.

In the special case of Article 17, the existing laws and regulations are, according to the Indian delegation, adequate for the purpose, except in the case of certain requirements such as registration and residential permits which apply to all foreign nationals. The Government of India shall exempt French nationals domiciled in the former French Establishments from these requirements.

3. Future of the judicial professions and maintenance of the acquired rights of its members.

The Indian delegation stated that the Government of India did not contemplate any sudden reform of the judicial organization in Pondicherry. Changes which would be necessary to bring the system in Pondicherry in harmony with that prevailing in the rest of India, will be introduced gradually allowing a reasonable period of transition.

II. JUDICIAL QUESTIONS

Proceedings pending on August the 16th, 1962, before local courts and before the "Conseil du Contentieux Administratif" in the Establishments will be continued and completed till their final settlement, in accordance with the substantive laws in force in the Establishments on the above-mentioned date.

Cases in the "Cour de Cassation", the "Conseil d'Etat" and the "Cour Superieure dArbitrage" pending on August the 16th, 1962, will be transferred to the competent Indian Courts.

The French delegation proposed that Judgements, decrees and orders passed by local courts as well as by French Supreme Jurisdiction should be executed by the Indian Authorities.

The Indian delegation agreed to this proposal stating that they had been informed that no execution was necessary on their part in respect of any decision rendered during the last two and a half years or so by any court in France in any case in which the respondent had no opportunity to appear.

Acts and deeds constitutive of rights established in conformity with French law will accordingly retain the value and validity conferred on them by the same law.

III. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

1. Fiscal Regulations

The conclusion of a convention in order to avoid double taxation is under discussion between the Governments of India and France. The fiscal system applicable to French nationals will be determined by the entry into force of the said convention.

2. Repatriation of capital and of properties

The Indian delegation agreed that the provisions of Article 18 of the Treaty will be extended by a further period of three years so as to enable repatriation of capital and of properties up to the 31st of October, 1967,

IV CULTURAL QUESTIONS

1. Equivalence of diplomas

The Indian delegation will recommend to appropriate authorities to recognize the following equivalencies:

(a) Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle and Brevet Elementaire to be equivalent to Matriculation;

(b) first part of Baccalaureat to be equivalent to Pre-University Certificate;

(c) holders of the Second part of Baccalaureat to be eligible for admission to the Second Year of B.A./B.Sc.,

(d) in individual cases, holders of French Baccalaureat to be admitted in classes higher than the 2nd year of B.A./B.Sc. after special examination.

2. Medical Diplomas

The Indian delegation explained that the Diploma granted by the Medical School in Pondicherry was already officially recognized. The holders of this Diploma are eligible for registration as medical practitioners all over India on the same terms as the holders of similar diplomas granted by other Medical Institutes in India.
In regard to higher education, the Diploma of the Medical School in Pondicherry is equated to medical qualifications such as the "Licenciate of the Medical Faculty" of West Bengal, the "Licenciate of the Medical Faculty" of Punjab, "Membership of College of Physicians and Surgeons" (M.C.P.S.) of Bombay, "Membership of the State Medical Faculty" (M.M.F.) of West Bengal and similar diplomas. If the holders of the said French Diploma wish to acquire the M.B.B.S degree, they can do so after taking a condensed two years course for which facilities are available at five places in India.

3. Teaching of French

The Indian delegation confirmed that teaching of French be maintained and encouraged in the educational institutions of Pondicherry and Chandernagore.

4. Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Cluny

The Indian delegation stated that all possible facilities for grant of visas will by extended to Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Cluny wishing to come to India for teaching at the school of Saint-Joseph de Cluny in Pondicherry, till progressive Indianisation of the religious communities permits the replacement of French by Indian Sisters.

V. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

(1) The French delegation pressed forward a request for extension of the powers of the Commission provided for in Article 29 of the Treaty in order that it could deal with, effectively and without delay, minor difficulties, particularly of a private character, which might arise in the future concerning the implementation of the Treaty.

The Indian delegation pointed out that Article 29 of the Treaty provided for the establishment of the proposed Commission to deal only with questions pending at the time of ratification of the Treaty. Other questions were therefore beyond the competence of this Commission. The Indian delegation appreciated, however, that it should not be necessary to take up at the diplomatic level all minor difficulties relating to the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and that a suitable local machinery might be useful for the purpose.

It was agreed that such a machinery will be provided in Pondicherry by entrusting the Chief Secretary of the Administration on the Indian side and the Consul General on the French side with the task of dealing with complaints and difficulties of a minor nature. This will not preclude recourse to normal diplomatic channels, when necessary, either initially or afterwards. It was hoped that the above machinery in Pondicherry would be able to settle the issues referred to it without recourse to higher authorities.

(2) The Indian delegation agreed that the Government of India will continue to lease to the Associations of War Veterans, the building located in No. 10, rue de Lauriston, on payment ai e rujux at the building of a nominal rent as hitherto. They hoped this will also be used for other activities of Indo-French cultural co-operation.

(3) ***The French delegation asked that in case the Indian Authorities wished to remove the statue of Dupleix from its present site the latter should agree to a request of the French Government to have the statue back in France or transferred to one of the premises in Pondicherry belonging to the French Government. The Indian delegation agreed and added that the Indian Authorities had at present no intention of removing the statue from its present site.***

(4) The Indian delegation agreed that necessary steps will be taken to ensure that French tombs in the former Establishment are maintained in proper condition.

SIGNED in New Delhi on the Sixteenth of March, 1963.

On behalf of the Government of India

Sdl-

RAJESHWAR DAYAL,

Special Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs.

On behalf of the Government of the French Republic

Sdl-

JEAN-PAUL GARNIER

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France in India.

APPENDIX 2

Interviews (used directly in the text)

A Franco-Pondicherrian in *Pondicherry*, June 2003
A Research Scholar of Ecole Française d'Extreme Orient, *Pondicherry*, June 2003
Mr. Albert Rollin, *Pondicherry*, June 2003
Mr. Alain Thomas, *Pondicherry*, June 2003
Mr. Claude Marius, *Pondicherry*, June 2003
Mr. Lourdes Rassa, *Pondicherry*, July 9, 2003
Mr. Stivane, *Karaikal*, July 12, 2003
Mr. Rajen de Sama, *Karaikal*, July 14, 2003
Professor Krishnamurthy, *Pondicherry*, July 14, 2003
Mr. Rafiuddin Mohammed, *Yanam*, July 16, 2003
Mr. Chanta Subba Rao, *Yanam*, July 16, 2003
Mr. Madhyam Shetty Ventana, *Yanam*, July 16, 2003
Mr. Makar, Assistant Curator of the Museum, *Chandernagore*, July 18, 2003
Visit to evening French class, *Chandernagore*, July 18, 2003
Dr. Basant Kumar Das, *Chandernagore*, July 19, 2003
Mr. Nilmuni Kumar, *Chandernagore*, July 19, 2003
Mr. Deva Datta Ray, *Chandernagore*, July 19, 2003
Mr. Mukundan, *New Delhi*, August 2003
Mr. Jean-François Chenin, *New Delhi*, August 2003
Mr. Bichat, a Franco-Pondicherrian, a *retraité militaire*, *Pondicherry*, July 2005
Marius, a retired civilian Franco-Pondicherrian, *Pondicherry*, July 2005
Ange, a *Creole Franco-Pondicherrian*, *Pondicherry*, July 2005
Mr. Pierre Eluard, owner of *Satsanga Restaurant*, *Pondicherry*, July 2005
Mr. Claude Marius, *Pondicherry*, July, 2005
Mr. Michel Lemaire, *Pondicherry*, July 2005
Dr. Sourindhrin, *Pondicherry*, July 20, 2005
Jean-Baptiste Pinai, a *retraité militaire, Pondicherry*, July-August 2005
Mr. El Faij, a *retraité militaire, Pondicherry*, July-August 2005
Mr. Amaradesh, a *retraité militaire, Pondicherry*, July-August 2005
A Muslim Franco-Pondicherrian, a *retraité militaire, Pondicherry*, July-August 2005
Mr.Srinivasan, *Pondicherry*, August, 2005
Mme Yves Huttin, *Pondicherry*, August 2005

Additional Interviews not quoted directly in the text

Professor Marudanayagam, Director Institute of Linguistics and culture, *Pondicherry*, June 2003.
Jean Claude Bonnan-Head of Social Sciences Section- French Institute of *Pondicherry,* June 2003.
Dr. Nallam -President, Historical Society of Pondicherry and Alliance Française and an eminent surgeon- *Pondicherry*, Summers of 2003, 2004, 2005.

Mr. Thomas Hughes-Secretary of the "Société Mutuelle des Créoles"- *Pondicherry*, Summers of 2003 and 2004.
Mr. Michel Seguy -Consul General of France- *Pondicherry*, June 2003.
Sister Thérèse of St. Joseph's of CLUNY, *Pondicherry*, June 2003.
Dr. R. Padmanabhan-Chief Secretary, Government of Pondicherry- *Pondicherry*, July, 2003.
Mr. Moustapha -Pondicherry Representative to Conseil Superieur des Français à L'Etranger-*Pondicherry*, July, 2003.
Mr. Nagarajan-Director, Tourism, Government of Pondicherry, *Pondicherry*, July, 2003.
Mr. J.P. Spielman-Educational Counselor- Lyçée Français, *Pondicherry*, July 2003.
Dr. David Anousamy, Retired Judge, *Pondicherry*, July 2003, 2005.
Mr. André Viozzat, French entrepreneur, *Pondicherry*, July 2003.
Professor Paneer Silvam, Professor of French, Pondicherry University, *Pondicherry*, July, 2003.
Sister Priscilla-Principal of the convent of CLUNY- *Karaikal*, July, 2003.
Ms. Aparajita Bhattacharya, School teacher, *Chandernagore*, July 2003.
Mr. André Béteille, Retired Professor of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, *New Delhi*, August, 2003.
Mr. Jean-Marie Lafont, Professor, Delhi University, *New Delhi*, July, 2003.
General M.M. Lakhera, **Lieutenant Governor** of Pondicherry, *Pondicherry*, July 15, 21, 2005.

APPENDIX 3

Chronology of outstanding events[470]

The events of special interest have been highlighted

1617	Exploration of Pondicherry by Jean Pépin, of the Company of Saint Malo.
1664	Foundation of the Royal Company of France in India.
1672 25 September	De La Haye seizes San Thomé. Chir Khan concedes to him a site in Pondicherry.
1673 4 February	Bellanger de Lespinay arrives in Pondicherry.
1674	San Thomé is seized by the Dutch. François Martin arrives in Pondicherry with 60 men. The French establish a lodge in Pondicherry
1677	Chir-khan lodi is defeated by Shivaji at Thiruvadigai François Martin receives a written order on the order of Shivaji.
1688	François Martin obtains authorization to trade in Karikal.
1690	The enclave of Chandernagore is founded.
1693 7 September	Surrender of Pondicherry to the Dutch.
1699 21 September	The Dutch return Pondicherry.
1701 5 September	Creation of a sovereign council in Pondicherry.
1706 25 August	Inauguration of the Fort Saint Louis in Pondicherry
1719	Gourouvappa goes to France to appeal to the justice of the king against the condemnation of his father by Hébert.
1720 30 April	The East India Company is reunited to that of the West.
1721 2 April	Obtaining of some land at the mouth of the river in Mahé.
1730	A Jesuit college is opened in Pondicherry.
1731 30 July	Installation at Yanam.
1738 17 July	Treaty between Dumas and the king of Tanjore for the cession of Karikal.
1740	The Mahrattas sweep through the region. The families of Sufder Ali and of Chanda Sahib take asylum in Pondicherry.
1746 21 September	Madras is taken by La Bourdonnais.
1748 14 October	Dupleix forces the English to leave Pondicherry after 54 days of open trench warfare.
1749 1 September	Madras is returned to the English
1750 15 December	Mouzaferjung with support from the French triumphs over his uncle Nazerjung at Vellimédou-pettai, not very far from Gingy. He is proclaimed soubab of the Deccan.
1753	Defeat of the French forces before Trichinapoly.
1757 23 March	The English take hold of Chandernagore and destroy it.
1758 2 June	Capture and complete destruction of the Fort Saint David of Cuddalore by Lally Tollendal.
1761 15 January	Capture of Pondicherry by the English who completely destroy

[470] David Annoussamy, L'Intermède français en Inde, pp. 391-396

	the white town.
1763	Treaty of Paris, the French possessions are reduced to the five enclaves.
1765 11 April	Return of Pondicherry to the French.
1771 27 July	Suppression of the Company. Declaration of Free Trade in Pondicherry.
1773	Opening of a seminary in Pondicherry.
1776 28 February	The king takes on direct Administration of the enclaves. Surrender of the place of Pondicherry to the English.
1784 10 March	Return of Pondicherry by virtue of the preliminaries of the treaty of Paris of 1782.
1785	New Company for trade in all the seas of India.
1787 26 July	Departure of the ambassadors of Tippu Sultan to Louis XVI.
1790 22 February	Arrival of the news about the Revolution.
1 March	General Assembly of citizens.
11 March	Dispatch of the notebook of complaints of the French and the Malabars.
1791 6 March	First manifestation of the Indians against the governor.
25 April	Desertion of the Indian soldiers.
22 July	Revolt of the Indians.
3 August	Political grouping of a representative corps of all the French establishments in India.
1792	Virassamy is made Lieutenant Colonel.
14 July	Feast of the Federation.
2 August	The new national pavilion is displayed.
22 August	The National Assembly in Paris decides that India will send it two representatives.
1 October	Ban on trade of slaves by the Assembly of citizens.
1793 3 April	The tree of liberty is planted on the Arms Square. Liberty of trade is proclaimed.
25 July	It is decided that the judges will be elected in time by the citizens.
23 August	Pondicherry is occupied by the British.
1799 February	Search by the British at the house of all the inhabitants upon accusation of wanting to go to Tippu Sultan. Arrest of many including Nidarajappa Ayer.
4 May	Tippu Sultan is killed in Seringapattam.
1803 11 July	Decision to return Pondicherry to France.
1 October	Cancellation of the previous decision.
1814 30 May	Treaty of Paris
1816	Resumption of possession of the enclaves
1817	Pondicherry is declared a free port. Customs barriers raised around Pondicherry.
1819 6 January	Promulgation of French codes
1826 25 November	Establishment of the big bazar

1827 1 February	Creation of a free primary school
12 February	Opening of a boarding school for young girls. Layout of the big canal separating the White town from the Black town.
1828	Creation of a free primary school for pariahs. Creation of the first mechanical mill.
1836 10 May	Inauguration of the lighthouse of Pondicherry.
1838	Beginning of the law school lessons.
1840 23 July	Organic order for the administration of India.
1842 2 July	Decree concerning the judicial organization.
1848 18 March	French India asked to elect a member of Parliament by universal suffrage. A right which is withdrawn immediately.
1849 13 February	Creation of a consultative chamber of commerce.
1851 24 July	Ascent by balloon in Pondicherry of Mr. Manet, a French aeronaut.
1852	Fall of hailstones in Pondicherry in the afternoon, in the hot season.
1856	Engraving of names of streets and numbering of houses.
1857	Bridge on the river Sunambar.
1862 17 November	Inauguration of the French line of India by the Imperial Messageries (Naval Messageries)- Arrival of the source of Water from Mutrapaleam to the fountains of the grand bazaar and of the government place.
1863	Creation of a school of medicine.
1864	Bridge over the river of Ariancoupom.
1871 7 February	Restoration of the right to elect a Member of Parliament by universal suffrage.
1875	Right to elect a senator. Creation of the bank of Indochina in place of the English bank: Oriental Bank.
1877 2 May	Official opening of the Calvé College teaching French, Tamil and English.
1879 26 January	Creation of elective councils in French India. Distribution of seats by lists (Europeans and Indians).
15 December	Inauguration of the railway line in Pondicherry.
1880 12 March	Creation of the Municipalities.
24 April	Reorganization of the civil state.
1881 21 September	Possibility of renunciation of the personal statute.
1885	Establishment of a coal park for replenishing the ships.
1888	Creation of the Alliance Française of Pondicherry.
1898 14 March	Opening of the steel tipped Péralam-Karikal line.
24 May	Decree declaring compulsory education for everyone.
1908	Allocation of water from Mouttrapaléam in the houses.
1909	Setting up of an electricity producing factory.
1923 9 December	Institution of an eliminatory grade in French at the Baccalaureate.
1941 28 January	Customs agreement with the British Government.

1945		An Indian is elected for the first time to sit in Paris.
	23 August	Removal of lists, the members of the different councils to be elected by the citizens as a whole.
1946	25 October	Creation of a representative assembly.
1947	12 August	Creation of a Government Council.
	28 August	Joint declaration of the French and Indian governments concerning the future of the enclaves.
	7 November	Chandernagore is declared a free town.
1948	18 June	Ministerial declaration concerning the self-determination of the Establishments.
	28 June	Agreement on the referendum.
	30 December	Creation of a council of the autonomous administrative dispute.
1949	10 March	General Assembly of the Municipal Councils about the referendum.
	1 April	End of the customs agreement.
	18 October	Second Meeting of the General Assembly of the Municipal Councils concerning the referendum.
1950	3 April	Law for a referendum in the Establishments.
	2 May	*De facto* transfer of Chandernagore.
1952	24 October	India denounces the agreement of 1948 on the referendum.
1954	10 May	Creation of a work tribunal
	24 September	Integration of Chandernagore in the state of West Bengal.
	18 October	The Kijéour Congress approves the *de facto* transfer.
	1 November	*De facto* transfer of the Establishments by France to India
1955		Chandernagore set up as a corporation. Creation of the Institut Français de Pondichéry.
1956	28 May	Signature of the Treaty of Cession.
1962	16 August	*De jure* Cession of the Establishments.
	5 December	Pondicherry (Administration) Act.
1963	9 February	Equivalence of French degrees by the Inter University Board.
	16 March	Supplementary Agreement. Complement to the Treaty.
	10 May	The government of Union Territories Act. The Pondicherry (Laws) Regulation.
1964		Struggle against the propagation of the Hindi language.
1966	21 October	Civil Courts Act
1967		Setting up of Broadcasting in Pondicherry.
1968	2 May	The Pondicherry (Extension of Laws) Act. Creation of Auroville.
1971		New fall of hailstones in Pondicherry in the afternoon during the hot season.
1973	13 August	The Pondicherry Municipalities Act, The Pondicherry

	village and commune panchayats Act.
1979	Demonstration against the merger attempt into the neighboring states.
1984	Installation of a television transmitting set.
1985	Creation of the University of Pondicherry.
1986	The Consumer Protection Act.
1994 20 October	Institution of a complete system of legal aid.
2004 7 January	Law instituting overseas Indian nationality.

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