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FRANCE AND ZANZIBAR,  
1844 TO THE 1860s

*Norman Robert Bennett*

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The new French consul, Ladislas Cochet, arrived in Zanzibar in February 1856.<sup>77</sup> He soon had the opportunity to play an important role in the island's politics. Said bin Sultan's long rule ended with his death in November 1856. In Zanzibar the rule passed to one of his sons, Majid, while in Muscat another son, Thuwayni, held power.<sup>78</sup> Although succession disputes among the Arabs of Oman were the rule, the initial transfer occurred very quietly in Zanzibar. A French man-of-war was in port at the time of Majid's accession to power, and although Hamerton made no reference to any positive action by the French, Cochet and the vessel's captain claimed that the man-of-war's presence was an important factor in assuring Majid's acceptance by the inhabitants of Zanzibar. Whether or not the presence of the French vessel made any appreciable difference, Cochet was justified in believing that France now possessed an opportunity to increase its authority in Zanzibar. Majid quite rightly feared for the security of his position as ruler, since Thuwayni, a formidable rival, rejected the idea of a separation of the wealthy East African dominions from the hitherto united Arab polity. Majid expressed his apprehensions to Cochet, closely questioning the French consul about possible support from France in case of a threat from Muscat. Cochet had decided that it was of importance to his country that Majid remain in office. He felt that the Arab ruler could be more easily influenced to favor French interests than Thuwayni, who

<sup>77</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 12 March 1856, C.C.Z., 2. Full titles to these and all following abbreviated references are listed in the notes to the first part of this article, in the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, VI, 4 (1973).

<sup>78</sup> Khalid bin Said had died in 1854. Bennett and Brooks, *New England Merchants*, 197.

was likely to be guided entirely by the British. But since he possessed no instructions authorizing positive support for Majid, Cochet parried his queries with vague assurances, at the same time writing to Paris for a decision on his future course of policy. In addition, he recommended the dispatching of a French war vessel to strengthen his position.<sup>79</sup>

The death of Hamerton, who had supported Majid's right to rule in Zanzibar, in July 1857<sup>80</sup> radically changed the political balance of power on the island, since his successor as British consul did not arrive until July 1858. Consequently, Majid, increasingly in need of outside support, began to intensify the pressure on Cochet for active assistance while anxiously awaiting the French government's reply to the consul's earlier request for instructions.<sup>81</sup>

During this troubled period, the question of the French search for laborers once more became important. In June 1856 the French government had informed Cochet that the Réunion authorities had turned to Moçambique as their labor source, since Britain's views on the slave trade had influenced France to end recruiting in Zanzibar. Cochet was ordered not to allow any recruiting unless specific instructions authorized a renewal of the former practice. The consul was satisfied with the new situation, particularly since a French vessel had arrived in December and had been unable to entice any free laborers from Zanzibar despite what Cochet considered very generous terms of hire.<sup>82</sup>

But in July 1857 the French vessel *L'Estafette* arrived from Mayotte on a laborer-seeking mission. The governor of Réunion backed the venture with a specific request for Cochet's support. Soon the first French vessel was joined by *La Genie*, commanded by Commander Méguet and charged by the Ministry of the Navy and the Colonies with a similar mission. When Méguet explained his instructions to Cochet, the consul concluded that the commander's proposed method of recruiting was forbidden by his instructions of June from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus Majid, who had no desire to offend the French government, ruled against allowing any freeing of slaves as a preliminary step to French recruitment. Cochet consequently informed Méguet that he had no chance of success in his mission without the use of force. The French officer, unhappy at

<sup>79</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 27 Nov. 1856, Vérand to M.M.C., 8 Dec. 1856, Mas. 1; Gov. of Mayotte to M.M.C., 8 Dec. 1856, O. I. 15<sup>65</sup>, A.O.M.

<sup>80</sup> Majid bin Said to Clarendon, 25 July 1857, F. O. 54/17, P.R.O.

<sup>81</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 29 July 1857, Mas. 1.

<sup>82</sup> M.A.E. to Cochet, 10 June 1856, Cochet to M.A.E., 27 Dec. 1856, Mas. 1; Gov. of Mayotte to M.M.C., 8 Dec. 1856, O. I. 15<sup>65</sup>, A.O.M.

Cochet's stance, went directly to Majid, but the sultan merely expressed surprise at the visit despite his previous decision. He refused to budge before Méguet's arguments. At the same time, to protect himself Majid had Cochet send full explanations of the proceedings to Paris to insure that no harm to his relations with France ensued from the disagreement among Frenchmen.<sup>83</sup> The arrival of the British man-of-war *Hermes* increased Majid's unease further, since he feared an unfavorable British interpretation of the French visit. Cochet suggested reasonably to the Arab ruler that he tell the truth to the visiting British captain.<sup>84</sup>

Meantime, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had decided upon the policy to follow toward Majid, instructing Cochet to give the sultan moral support for his claims to rule in Zanzibar while avoiding any commitment of French military aid. Zanzibar and Muscat had separated, the ministry officials reasoned, they accepted the decision and saw no need to intervene on either side. In addition, they upheld Cochet's decision not to support the Méguet mission, although they informed him that the French government no longer upheld the strictures against recruiting sent him in an earlier dispatch. Cochet was free, they said, to allow recruiting by emancipation if the transfer was well-regulated according to local conditions.<sup>85</sup>

During this period French commerce with Zanzibar was not as profitable as had originally been hoped. There had been a significant increase in the cowrie trade, a trade between Zanzibar and West Africa initiated by German firms, with a high point occurring for the French in 1855. But the commerce in cowries then went into decline due to the increased rivalry between the competing French and German firms.<sup>86</sup> Other important trade commodities for French merchants were sesamum, copra, and cloves. The lack of local demand for their merchandise proved a principal hindrance to the French position, leading Cochet to assert wryly in 1857: "The simplicity, and I will say, the originality, of this [Zanzibari] taste, will be for a long time an obstacle to the introduction into this country of French products."<sup>87</sup> Reacting to their lack of success, the agents of the resident French firms — Vidal, Régis, and Rabaud — continually

<sup>83</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 29 July 1857, Mas., 1. It had been decided in France that the recruiting of newly freed slaves was henceforth allowable. The continuing labor shortage in the French colonies prompted the decision. See Kieran, "Origins," 151-152.

<sup>84</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 31 Aug. 1857, Mas. 1.

<sup>85</sup> M.A.E. to Cochet, 8 Oct. 1857, Mas. 1.

<sup>86</sup> See fn. 65; Ernst Hieke, "Aus der Frühzeit des Deutschen Afrikahandels: Das hamburgische Handelshaus Wm. O'Swald & Co., 1831-1870" (typescript in the Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek, Hamburg), 68 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 15 Jan. 1857, C.C.Z., 2.

bickered among themselves. They drew Cochet into their quarrels, subsequently expressing their dissatisfaction with him to the Paris authorities. Cochet was accused of a lack of zeal in supporting French commercial interests and even of working against the French agents in Zanzibar. The consul rigorously defended himself, explaining that the pressure of his important diplomatic tasks had necessitated some delays on commercial questions. Responding to specific charges, such as a complaint by the Vidal agent against mistreatment by the sultan's officials at Lamu, Cochet affirmed that he had pressed Majid for satisfaction and had received a promise of redress. But the Arab ruler really had so little power that any positive action on his part was unlikely, said Cochet. In general the harassed consul presented an effective answer, making his position stronger by arranging a local agreement to limit competition between the agents of Rabaud and Vidal. Régis followed their example by agreeing with the Hamburg firms to limit the export of cowries to West Africa. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed satisfaction with Cochet's explanations.<sup>88</sup>

The minor squabble was followed by another. In June 1858 the brig *Fulton*, commanded by Captain Greer, was preparing to sail from Zanzibar to the Comoro Islands, where it hoped to secure laborers for Réunion. Majid, reasserting the long-standing, vague claims of the rulers of Zanzibar to those islands, announced that his treaties with the British prohibited such recruiting within his dominions. The sultan complained to Cochet that the *Fulton's* captain had bought slaves in Zanzibar for a visiting Roman Catholic priest, the Savoyard Léon des Avanchers; he requested the consul to rectify this illegal act. Cochet immediately ordered the *Fulton* to remain in port. On investigating Majid's charges, he determined that Greer had not purchased slaves in Zanzibar, although he had made inquiries about doing so to B. Ventura Mas, a Spanish national serving as agent for the French firm of Vidal Frères. Mas also had acted as agent for Avanchers, who, Cochet learned, possessed a slave girl. The problem was complicated by Avanchers's baptism of the African child, the priest claiming that the ceremony made her a French national and thus not subject to return to her owners. Despite Avancher's strong opposition, Cochet intervened to allow Majid to send the girl to the care of Catholics in Réunion, thus upholding both her alleged Christianity and the laws of Zanzibar. As for the visit of the *Fulton* to the Comoro Islands, Cochet did not intervene, not considering this an issue to concern the French repre-

<sup>88</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 30 Oct. 1856 (with enclosures), M.A.E. to Cochet, 14 Nov. 1857, Cochet to M.A.E., 18 March 1858 (with enclosures), 30 March 1858, C.C.Z., 2.

sentative in Zanzibar. This minor diplomatic hassle became joined to a similarly minor difference between Cochet and Majid. During May, Cochet had been aroused by an irregularity of form when he paid an official visit to the Arab ruler. Nothing had come of the somewhat ludicrous affair when the angry Avanchers informed a Zanzibari official that the consul had appealed to a newly-arrived man-of-war, *L'Estafette*, to arrange redress for the "insult" through the threat of bombardment of Zanzibar. Cochet reassured Majid that this was untrue, allowing the affair to pass. Avanchers stuck fast to his story, but the hostility his acts had aroused in both Majid and Cochet forced him to leave the island.<sup>89</sup>

These confused maneuverings were pushed aside as the quarrel between Majid and Thuwayni moved steadily to a crisis point. Majid still sought French support, in January 1858 even initiating discussions with Cochet about his securing aid in attaining possession of Muscat. The consul quickly dismissed the suggestion by asserting that France had no interest in the plan.<sup>90</sup> But Cochet realized that serious difficulties were in the making. He was aware that Majid's half-brother, Barghash bin Said, was hostile to the sultan and was gathering support for his opposition from other dissident Arab elements in Zanzibar. And Cochet suspected that Barghash and Thuwayni were conspiring together against Majid.<sup>91</sup> During this delicate period, French relations with the British, still not represented in Zanzibar, took a turn for the worse. The British revived the old quarrel over the boarding of French vessels by Royal Navy vessels in search of slaves. The *Marie et Céline*, owned by Régis of Marseille, was stopped and boarded by the H.M.S. *Lyra* during May 1858 in the Moçambique Channel. According to the French, their vessel was sailing to Zanzibar to load cowries. Both the captain of the *Marie et Céline* and Cochet protested vigorously against the British visit.<sup>92</sup>

The friction between French and British was compounded by the arrival of Hamerton's successor as British consul, Christopher P. Rigby, on

<sup>89</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 25 July 1858 (with enclosures), C.C.Z., 2; Avanchers to M.A.E., 8 Aug. 1858, Mas. 1; J. A. Kieran, "A Route to the Galla," *Hadith*, 3 (1971), 28-51. For Avanchers also see Alphonso Anthony Castagno, Jr., "The Development of the Expansionist Concepts in Italy (1861 to 1896)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1956), 30.

<sup>90</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 22 Jan. 1858, Mas. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 23 April 1858, Mas. 1. R. Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa, 1856-1890* (London, 1939), 14 ff., presents the British view of the dynastic quarrel.

<sup>92</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 3 June 1858 (enclosing an indignant letter from the *Marie et Céline's* master), Mas. 1.

July 27, 1858. An officer of the Indian army and a talented linguist, Rigby was a forceful man bearing extreme negative views on the slave trade and the French.<sup>93</sup> Both views were clouded by Rigby's inability to judge the finer nuances of any complicated issue and by his pronounced tendency to exaggerate the seriousness of any issue connected with his intrinsic dislikes. Nevertheless, Rigby was a hard-working official who soon put himself into Majid's good graces. The Arab ruler skillfully presented his version of the political unrest current in Zanzibar, convincing Rigby that Barghash's opposition was motivated by anti-British tendencies. Barghash did not help his own cause when he refused to visit Rigby, leaving the consul to declare that the Arab was "spoken of as a morose discontented man, [who was] inimical to Europeans." With information stemming entirely from Majid and his advocates, Rigby had no trouble concluding that Barghash lacked an appreciable following while Majid drew support from all classes of Zanzibari society. Rigby also was convinced that there was a related increase in the slave trade because of French policy.<sup>94</sup>

And in the midst of these highly charged political dealings, Rigby was required to react to troubles Cochet encountered from his own nationals over the recruiting of laborers. In August 1858 two French vessels, *L'Eglée* and *La Genie*, anchored off Zanzibar. Their arrival troubled Cochet, since after the previous visit of *La Genie* Majid had confided to him that its captain, Méguet, had been acting according to orders received from Governor Darrican of Réunion. At Méguet's return Majid immediately presented his worries about possible slave trading to Cochet, stressing to the consul the lack of wisdom in a policy antagonistic to British aims just when he needed all possible outside support for the continuance of his regime. Cochet's problems increased when Méguet delivered a dispatch from Darrican in which the governor requested the opportunity to recruit free workers for the French Indian Ocean colonies. To Cochet's great astonishment, Darrican offered Majid French protection in return for the permission. Majid countered by replying that before he considered accepting the offer he required a detailed written statement of the new French policy, stressing that he needed full clarity because of Britain's certain interest in such a move. In strictest confidence, Majid informed Cochet that he judged it very dangerous to make any concessions to France; the

<sup>93</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 1 Aug. 1858, Mas. 1; James Augustus Grant, *A Walk Across Africa* (London and Edinburgh, 1864), 9; Mrs. Charles E. R. Russell, ed., *General Rigby, Zanzibar and the Slave Trade* (London, 1935).

<sup>94</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 15 Aug. 1858, 24 Aug. 1858, E.S.L.R.B., 135.

step might lead the British to throw their support behind Thuwayni. When Cochet queried Méguet about his discussions with Majid, he was informed simply that Darrican assumed full responsibility for the offer of protection.<sup>95</sup>

Majid clearly took full advantage of the potential difficulties between Britain and France due to the arrival of the French vessels. While he talked to Cochet he simultaneously insured that Rogby had the opportunity to observe how loyal he was to his father's treaties with Britain. Through a subordinate official, Majid informed Rigby of the past course of the trouble over laborer recruiting in Zanzibar, asking for the consul's advice in the current situation. Rigby quickly advised the sultan to inform the French that there were no free workers available in Zanzibar and that treaties forbade the recruiting of slaves. Majid's messenger then alluded to the supposedly suspicious conduct of several French vessels recently visiting Zanzibar; he pointed to a large one then in the harbor, affirming that it had been anchored there a considerable time without opening communication with the shore. The agent said that everyone knew it contained many Africans purchased at Anjouan in the Comoro Islands, and that during its stay in Zanzibar it was secretly embarking slaves at night. During a later conversation Rigby was given copies of the correspondence from Darrican to Majid. Not surprisingly, Rigby decided that the French were a serious threat to Zanzibar's independence and to British policy against the slave trade.<sup>96</sup>

It seems certain that Majid was pursuing a very adroit policy designed to win British backing for his tenuous position in Zanzibar. The sultan knew that cooperation with the British against the slave trade was a sure way to gain their support; moreover, the French decision to offer him only moral aid made any other course impossible in view of the political realities of his position in Zanzibar. Thus Majid continued his diplomatic wooing of Rigby, making certain that the consul received copies of all correspondence with Frenchmen who sought laborers from Zanzibar.<sup>97</sup>

Cochet consequently found himself in an unenviable situation; he had to resolve the differences between his instructions from Paris and the apparent violation of them stemming from the government of Réunion. He decided to refuse to aid Méguet's mission, thus insuring its failure. When

<sup>95</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 26 Aug. 1858 (enclosing Darrican to Majid, 29 June 1858, and Méguet to Cochet, 19 Aug. 1858), Mas. 1; Kieran, "Origins," 152-154, for this and subsequent events.

<sup>96</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 15 Aug. 1858, 20 Aug. 1858 (with enclosures), E.S.L.R.B., 135.

<sup>97</sup> See Rigby to Anderson, 21 Sept. 1858 (with enclosures), E.S.L.R.B., 136.

he learned of the outcome Darrican became exceedingly angry, basing his displeasure on a claim that the ministry then responsible for colonial affairs, the Ministry for Algeria and the Colonies, had authorized his actions. The governor characterized Cochet's decision as "incomprehensible," demanding the immediate recall of the consul on the grounds that he was not serving the interests of France. Darrican further informed Cochet that meantime, despite the consul's opposition, he planned to dispatch a vessel, the *Pallas*, with instructions to visit the East African coast in search of workers, a step which he claimed had the approval of his ministry. Furthermore, the governor added, a man-of-war was on the way to a station between Zanzibar and Kilwa to oversee the recruiting.<sup>98</sup> Cochet's position was made no easier by the arrival in nearby waters of the H.M.S. *Lynx*. The man-of-war began seizing Arab vessels carrying slaves, many of which the British claimed might have been sold to Frenchmen. Many Arabs and Indians of Zanzibar protested to Majid over the seizures, and the Arab ruler's refusal to react — in reality he was powerless to do so — increased his standing with Rigby further. Then the *Pallas*, which had loaded about two hundred Africans secretly, left Zanzibar harbor during the night. Cochet had no part in the evasion of local laws — he proved this by his talks with Majid — but this was not apparent to Rigby.<sup>99</sup>

When the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who had not been informed of the instructions sent to Réunion by the Ministry for Algeria and the Colonies, learned of the policies advocated by Darrican, they quickly and forcefully reacted to uphold their consul. They informed the colonial ministry that French policy in Zanzibar was motivated by the principle of nonintervention in its political affairs, since the position of Majid was considered extremely tenuous. To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was all too evident that any possible advantages following from an intervention were not balanced adequately by the difficulties from the British which such a policy ensured. The colonial ministry bureaucrats vigorously protested against this ruling, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs persisted in upholding Cochet's decisions.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Darrican to Cochet, 19 Oct. 1858, in Cochet to M.A.E., 1 Nov. 1858, Mas. 1; Darrican to M. Alg. C., 27 Oct. 1858 (enclosing Méguet to Darrican, 10 Oct. 1858), O. I. 14<sup>55</sup>, A.O.M.

<sup>99</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 15 Dec. 1858, Mas. 1.

<sup>100</sup> M.A.E. to M. M., 29 Oct. 1858, Prince Napoleon to M.A.E., 17 Dec. 1858 (enclosing Darrican to Napoleon, 27 Oct. 1858, and Méguet to Darrican, 10 Oct. 1858), M.A.E. to Napoleon, 30 Dec. 1858, M.A.E. to Cochet, 9 Nov. 1858, Mas. 1; M.A.E. to M. Alg. C., 30 Oct. 1858 (enclosing M.A.E. to M.M.C., 27 Oct. 1858), O. I. 14<sup>55</sup>, A.O.M.

The ministry's commendation did not immediately ease Cochet's uneasy position in Zanzibar. In early December the ship *Alexandré* from Réunion arrived with a cargo of Africans apparently bought along the African coast to the south of Zanzibar. The *Lynx* was in port but the British had no right to board the French vessel. Instead Rigby rowed around the *Alexandré* in a small boat, ascertaining to his satisfaction that it bore Africans of the same ethnic groups usually brought to Zanzibar from the south for sale in the slave market. By this period Cochet was endeavoring to make his antislave trade stance clear to Rigby, showing the British consul the correspondence which had passed during the visit of *La Genie*. Before he managed to act in this case, however, the slaves from the *Alexandré* were transferred to a French-owned vessel, the *Ghaneuse*, which possessed a Zanzibari registry. Nonetheless, Rigby appreciated Cochet's intention, and after the transfer succeeded in convincing Majid to forbid the *Ghaneuse* to leave port.<sup>101</sup>

Cochet's attempts at cooperating to end the abuses inherent in the recruiting of Africans for French territories had not changed Rigby's basic anti-French opinions when the dynastic quarrels among Said bin Sultan's sons reached a crisis. Thuwayni dispatched an expedition from Muscat to drive Majid from Zanzibar. The news caused Majid to prepare for battle by calling to the island most of his coastal garrisons; also present were "African tribes from the interior of the opposite mainland — wild men who had never before approached the sea — [who] flocked here armed with bows and arrows." But there was no invasion. The British Indian government intervened to prevent Thuwayni's forces from reaching Zanzibar. The ruler of Muscat was no more able to openly challenge the British than was Majid; his expedition returned to Muscat. One reason the British in India advanced for their intervention was a reaction to news received which alleged that the French had stimulated Thuwayni to strike since Majid was not cooperating with them in the securing of slaves. "It is not necessary to suppose that this is the case," ruled the British Indian officials; nevertheless, they felt it best to check Thuwayni. Then, in doubt as to the exact policy to follow, the British decided to begin an official investigation of the succession dispute.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 13 Dec. 1858, 24 Dec. 1858, E.S.L.R.B., 139 and 140 respectively. The case of the *Alexandré* was brought to the special notice of the French government by the British ambassador in Paris. Note verbale from Cowley, July 1859, Mas. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 14 April 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140; Anderson to Sec. Gov. India, 3 Feb. 1859, Elphinstone to Thuwayni, 11 Feb. 1859, Thuwayni to Elphinstone *et al.*, 3 Feb. 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 139; Anderson to Sec. Gov. India, 28 Feb. 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 138; Elphinstone *et al.* to Secret Committee, 8 Feb. 1859, S.L.R.B., first series, 33.

In Zanzibar, Cochet's analysis of these events, in which he took no part according to his instructions, was that by intervening in the succession dispute the British had brought the family quarrel of Said bin Sultan's sons to a new crisis point. Majid had asked Cochet for protection when he learned of Thuwayni's plan to invade Zanzibar. The French consul declined furnishing any military support, but he did offer to work for a peaceful settlement; he also informed Majid that if all failed the Arab ruler was assured of "an inviolable shelter" with the French. According to the French, Majid then went to Rigby to inform him that he was ready to place his territory under British protection. Following this offer, Majid returned to Cochet, asking France's response to any attempt on his part to seek protection under the British flag. The French consul expressed extreme displeasure at the possibility, threatening to recognize Thuwayni as the sole ruler of Muscat and Zanzibar.

When Majid agreed to accept British mediation following the blocking of Thuwayni's expedition, an opposition party in Zanzibar, which included Barghash and members of the powerful Arab al Harthi clan, began to grow in both strength and daring. Members of this opposition naturally sought out Cochet to attempt the securing of French support against Majid. Cochet remained loyal to his instructions of neutrality, but he began to think that circumstances were making a change in French policy necessary. He feared that continued inaction was leading inevitably to Britain's absolute dominance in Zanzibar affairs. The arrival in March 1859 of the men-of-war *L'Estafette* and *Cordelière* bearing the high-ranking naval officer Vicomte Fleuriot de Langle strengthened the French consul's position. Langle was ready to join with Cochet in advancing a more active French policy. In conversations with Majid the two Frenchmen asserted their country's opposition to any cession of his territory to Britain — there were rumors that Rigby desired compensation for British aid through a cession of territory somewhere between Cape Delgado and Lindi — unless France received an equal share, basing their reaction on an interpretation of the Treaty of 1844.

Cochet and Langle decided to act even more forcefully to convince Majid that France was not going to allow the British to act as they pleased in Zanzibar. During a meeting on March 30 the French officials offered the sultan their mediation in the differences with Barghash, explaining that if French vessels had been present earlier they would have acted as the British to block Thuwayni's expedition. The Frenchmen informed Majid that France refused to accept any outside intervention in Zanzibar because of their treaty with its rulers; if intervention really was necessary,

both Britain and France should act in unity with him. Continuing, Cochet and Langle protested that they desired only that Zanzibar remain independent, and consequently they offered to attempt reconciling Barghash with Majid. According to the Frenchmen, who brought Barghash to one of Majid's regular public audiences, the meeting between the two Arabs was a success; Barghash had submitted to his brother's authority. Vi-compte de Langle at first optimistically concluded that affairs in Zanzibar then quieted, but soon he was complaining that Rigby was most unhappy to see that his plans to dominate Majid had been checked. His pressure on Majid increased when in early April the British men-of-war *Clive* and *Persian* arrived to join the already present *Assaye* in Zanzibar harbor. During a dinner at which Majid, the French, British, and American consuls, and the several naval officers were present, discussions between Rigby and the Frenchmen continued. Langle reported that he indicated to Rigby France's desire to guarantee Zanzibar's independence, explaining to the British consul's question that the proposal was meant only as a protection against invaders. The French naval officer concluded that Rigby was satisfied, agreeing to send away the newly-arrived British vessels since they were no longer needed.<sup>103</sup>

Rigby, however, interpreted the actions of Cochet and Langle in a very different manner. He agreed with the Frenchmen that a large group of Zanzibar's Arab population, especially the al Harthi, wished to expell Majid, partly because of his alliance with Britain to counter the slave trade. And Barghash was their "willing tool," Rigby decided. The British consul apparently believed all that Majid had told him concerning Barghash; he therefore made no attempt to understand the latter's conduct. When Majid decided to exile Barghash and some of his al Harthi supporters — Cochet knew of this — Rigby added, "I have strongly advised his doing so." He had concluded that it was impossible for Majid to rest stcure while Barghash and his more important followers remained in Zanzibar. But then the French vessels carrying Langle arrived, preventing Rigby from exercising a free hand in the politics of Zanzibar. And Majid quickly took advantage of the British-French rivalry.

The day after the French officer's arrival Majid told Rigby that he had learned that Langle had come to Zanzibar to make new advances for laborers, including the permission for allowing a permanent French dele-

<sup>103</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 13 April 1859, enclosing Langle to M. M., 13 April 1859, Mas. 1.

gate to reside at Kilwa where he could issue the necessary documents of freedom for Africans "recruited" for the French islands. Rigby urged the sultan to resist the reported French demands. As soon as Cochet and Langle had finished their initial discussions with Majid, the Arab ruler informed Rigby that the French had used very strong language in advancing their viewpoints — "it is unbecoming of me to repeat all they say," he advanced, "I cannot do so, they were much excited and talked very loud, and appeared angry"—including a threat of French interference if he did not meet their wishes concerning a pardon for Barghash and his supporters. On April 2 Majid visited the H.M.S. *Assaye*, where he again presented his interpretation to Rigby of the evolving talks with Cochet and Langle. The sultan said that he had asked the Frenchmen why they were intervening in the difficulties between him and Barghash. They answered, continued Majid, that they planned to bring Barghash to him because the affair had to be settled. When Majid inquired as to what might happen if he did not follow their advice, the French officials responded that they were not prepared to allow Barghash's exile, or if they finally had to agree to it, they planned to carry him safely to Muscat on a French vessel. Langle continued that he would also settle affairs at Muscat, and Majid became very angry. At this, reported the sultan, Langle dramatically pointed to the town of Zanzibar, asserting that "we are happy to see the Arab Flag [still flying] there" and that he did not plan to permit any other to replace it. In recounting his version of the deliberations, Majid did not neglect to inform Rigby that the French had made many insulting remarks about the British. They had told him, for example, that Langle's "ship has come direct from the Emperor of the French, the English steamer only belongs to a Company [the British government in India]." Majid later supplied Rigby with an account of his reception of Barghash: the French had compelled him to shake his hated rival half-brother's hand. Majid added that the previous evening the Frenchmen and Barghash had spent many hours together, and subsequent to their departure Barghash had had a secret meeting with his most important Arab supporters. This conversation perhaps was connected with a scheme which Majid reported whereby Barghash and certain al Harthi leaders were to be embarked for Muscat. Majid added that Thuwayni had sent \$40,000 to Barghash for use in his opposition. And in Rigby's opinion the presence of French vessels had given new hopes of success to Barghash.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 4 April 1859, 9 April 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140.

Furthermore, according to Rigby, in discussions occurring during a dinner at the French consulate attended by all the concerned Europeans, events took a different course than that reported by Langle. The British consul contended that during the function Cochet had spoken of Majid "in the most abusive and contemptuous terms," claiming that the sultan could not touch Barghash, now under French protection. By openly speaking in such terms, protested Rigby, Cochet had lowered the Arab ruler's prestige and authority. Rigby reasoned that only the presence of the British vessels in port prevented a more active French interference, which "would probably have stirred up a revolution here which would have been fatal to the power of His Highness Said Majid, and very injurious to British interests."<sup>105</sup>

Rigby subsequently reported on another dinner meeting held on board the *Cordelière* at which both Langle and Cochet were present. He informed his superiors that affairs in Zanzibar daily became more complicated because of the French promise to protect Barghash, since what he described as a hostile faction in Zanzibar drew "moral support" from the hope that France might join in the dynastic struggle. Rigby therefore drew Langle aside to ask him for a frank explanation of French conduct, while commenting that both their governments had identical interests in Zanzibar for the maintenance of peace and the development of commerce. The British consul especially noted that his country opposed any possible hostilities since British Indian subjects dominated Zanzibar's economic life. He added that Langle had to be aware that Cochet's attitude toward Majid in the declaration regarding Barghash was dangerous and that therefore British vessels had to remain at Zanzibar. The French naval officer, whom Rigby described as "a most amiable kind-hearted man, whose frank straightforward manner at once commands confidence and respect," answered that the previous discussions had provided a good opportunity for achieving peace and that Cochet, whom he characterized as a young man acting in the best way he knew to reconcile all elements in Zanzibar, was following a proper course. Vicompte de Langle then called Cochet and other members of the group to join the conversation, informing them that the French government was acting only to achieve peace, attempting to secure this goal by getting Barghash and the al Harthi to accept Majid's rule. He contended that Barghash had asked for protection because he feared Majid planned to kill him; thus if he had to kill his brother it was in self-defense. The al Harthi, the naval officer continued, had also requested that he offer mediation in the dispute.

<sup>105</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 11 April 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140.

Rigby reacted immediately by informing Langle that he was "entirely misinformed" concerning Barghash's position, that Majid had an "amiable, kind disposition," and that consequently Barghash had no grounds for apprehension. He added that the factions poised against Majid were "utterly contemptible unless supported by foreign influence." When Cochet interjected that Barghash was under French protection, Rigby at once questioned the right of the French to offer that protection to the subject of an independent state, continuing that he was confident of his government's not allowing this action and that he planned to issue a strong protest if France continued in that course. Cochet simply replied that he was prepared for Rigby's protest. Rigby reacted with the statement that the British Indian government was preparing to arbitrate the dispute between Majid and Thuwayni, with Cochet replying that France refused to abide by this type of settlement unless it was a consenting party, because the treaty between France and Zanzibar gave the former the right to interject its opinions. Thus concluded Rigby, Majid's assertions of French intervention were correct.

The British consul continued that the American consul had supported him in all his statements and openly had added that the best way to achieve peace was to get Barghash out of Zanzibar. Consequently, Langle, according to Rigby, was "gradually convinced" of the validity of deporting Barghash, eventually turning to Cochet to express the opinion that the Arab prince should go, but in a fashion which befitted his high rank. When the American consul then asked if the Frenchmen planned any forceful interference Rigby claimed that Cochet, realizing Langle's opposition to an intervention, answered that he shared Rigby's views. Cochet went on to express his pleasure that all the misunderstanding between the consuls was ended, promising "that he would not interfere in any way in the internal affairs of this State if no one else did." Langle summed up the meeting, Rigby ended, by noting that all parties were in agreement against outsiders interfering in the affairs of Zanzibar, thus making it possible for him to allow all but one of the British vessels to leave.<sup>106</sup> There is much disagreement in detail in the reports of Rigby and the Frenchmen concerning their deliberations. Nonetheless, all appeared ready to accept a solution, the exile of Barghash, which promised to bring peace to Zanzibar.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Rigby to Anderson, 12 April 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140.

<sup>107</sup> Daniel F. Mansfield, the American consul, left a brief record of his impressions of the meeting on board the *Cordelière*. Whatever his opinion of the merits of the British and French cases, his overriding interest was in a settlement bringing to the island.

The Indian government was extremely pleased with Rigby's reports explaining how he apparently had achieved a solution to the difficulties in Zanzibar that was favorable to British interests. His superiors expressed the hope that Rigby's work had secured for Majid "an immunity in the future from all interference of a foreign Power within the administration of his Govt." The officials continued that their government planned to settle the succession dispute, self-satisfyingly agreeing with Rigby that any interference by France "would be a violation of the comity of nations, especially as no more appropriate tribunal could be selected for the arrangement of such a dispute, as that of the Representative of a Sovereign which has long been in alliance with the Sovereigns of Muscat and Zanzibar."<sup>108</sup>

But in Zanzibar affairs did not run smoothly. Cochet considered that, despite the previous meetings of the consuls and naval officers, Rigby continued his undue interference in the dynastic question, particularly by preparing plans for the deportation of Barghash and five leaders of the al Harthi. Barghash's faction consequently prepared to resist Rigby's schemes. Nonetheless, when Cochet reflected upon the evolution of events he apparently was not worried unduly about any immediate difficulty, since he did not oppose the departure of the *L'Estafette* from Zanzibar. Cochet remained convinced, however, that Rigby was working avidly to destroy the French position in Zanzibar by attempting to convince Majid that the French were of little importance as a naval power, being unable to provide the sultan any useful assistance. Moreover, Cochet reported, Rigby threateningly explained to Majid that the acceptance of French aid certainly would lead to his downfall.<sup>109</sup>

Then the difficulties which Cochet feared happened. On September 6, 1859 the *Assaye* returned to Zanzibar and Rigby shortly afterward insisted upon the deportation of Barghash, a threat which caused many Arabs to rally openly to the Arab prince's defense. However, Barghash agreed to leave his island to spare it the ravages of a civil war, requesting that he be given a month to prepare his departure. The request was granted. But Cochet reported that six days later Rigby ordered the Arab prince to leave at once, the decision causing Barghash to flee into the interior of the island. From his refuge Barghash wrote to the three foreign

Mansfield to Cass, 18 April 1859, in Bennett and Brooks, *New England Merchants*, 504-506.

<sup>108</sup> Resolution of the Hon. Board, 14 May 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140.

<sup>109</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 18 June 1859, 4 Sept. 1859, Mas. 1.

consuls explaining that he still desired peace, but that he had fled to avoid Rigby's pressure. When no reversal of Rigby's ultimatum followed, a large force from the British vessel landed on October 15. The consequent military action did not lead to Barghash's capture, but he later was arrested in the town of Zanzibar. To Cochet the entire affair had been precipitated by Rigby's high-handed conduct and not by any desire of Barghash. Nonetheless, the French consul remained passive since he had no orders justifying his participation in the struggle, even if he had any desire to act.<sup>110</sup>

The frustrated Cochet saw the *Cordelière* return to Zanzibar in October when it was too late for any effective amelioration of the local situation. Suliman bin Hamid told Cochet that Majid wished French cooperation in settling his problems with Muscat, and Cochet suggested that the offer be put into writing. But, said Cochet, Rigby's influence checked any further progress on the request. The disappointed Cochet sorrowfully concluded that Majid's continuance in power in Zanzibar was problematical; he thought that the British planned to supplant him with Thuwayni in the near future.<sup>111</sup>

In Cochet's opinion, Rigby then began to utilize the advantage he had gained through supporting Majid to work increasingly to destroy the French position in Zanzibar. The French consul believed his rival ready to stop at nothing to win Britain complete dominance. The specific incident which confirmed this opinion revolved around the presence of the Spanish vessel, *Caridad*, which arrived in Zanzibar in November 1859. Since Spain did not have diplomatic relations with Zanzibar, the *Caridad* received French protection. Therefore the vessel's agent, Mas, deposited its papers with Cochet; he also made a formal declaration that it was not involved in the slave trade. Cochet's investigations gave him no reason for doubting Mas's sworn assurances. When Majid sought information about the *Caridad*, he expressed satisfaction with Cochet's promises of immediate action if any violations of the laws of Zanzibar occurred. A few days later Mas contracted to load hides at Lamu; on the assurance that this was the only commerce planned, the *Caridad* was given permis-

<sup>110</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 23 Oct. 1859, Mas. 1. In this dispatch Cochet enclosed an undated letter to him from Barghash in which the Arab explained that he did not desire war but that he was prepared to resist any plan of Majid to deliver him to the British. For Rigby's view, which asserted that the French had stimulated Barghash's resistance because of their support of the slave trade, see Rigby to Gray, 20 Oct. 1859 (with enclosures), F. O. 54/17, P.R.O.

<sup>111</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 3 Nov. 1859, Mas. 1.

sion to sail. Then Majid sent to Cochet for the vessel's papers to allow him to reassure the British concerning the Lamu voyage. Cochet refused what he regarded as an intrusion upon the rights of a foreign consul — the vessels of other nations were not required to undergo such scrutiny. He asserted that he earlier had given satisfactory guarantees for another Spanish vessel visiting Lamu without meeting any questioning from the sultan. In any case, said Cochet, Majid was free to forbid the *Caridad's* trading at Lamu if he was suspicious of its future conduct. Additional requests from Majid were met with a similar answer.

The *Caridad* sailed for Lamu on November 19, followed a few hours later by a Zanzibari vessel. Three days later Rigby entered the affair by posting a placard at the Custom House which said that Mas was participating in the slave trade and that British subjects therefore were forbidden to transact any business with him. Since the Indians dominated the local market, this meant an end to Mas's commercial career in Zanzibar. Cochet protested immediately to the sultan, causing the removal of the offending notice, and to Rigby. He was puzzled by Rigby's conduct, wondering why the British official had not come directly to him to protest against Mas instead of acting in a manner he held directly harmful to French interests. Cochet particularly noted that Rigby advanced no proof of Mas's involvement in the slave trade. The aroused French diplomat informed Rigby that he held him responsible for all consequent losses to French commerce. Events were smoothed temporarily, however, when the *Caridad* returned from Lamu to Zanzibar without incident. Cochet concluded the report of this incident to his superiors with the plaint that he had received no dispatches from Paris for some time and that he wanted instructions upon what policies were to be followed in the future in Zanzibar.<sup>112</sup> The French consul's insecurity increased further in December when he received information that Rigby was insisting upon a territorial cession in the region south of Kilwa and that Rigby and the captain of the *Brisk* had talked the matter over with Majid without reaching a decision. Whether the information was true or false, Cochet once again felt it necessary to plead for a clarification of his instructions to allow him to react in a proper manner to any British move.<sup>113</sup>

Rigby's evaluation of the Mas affair stemmed from his certainty that

<sup>112</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 30 Nov. 1859, Mas. 1; Rigby to Wood, 25 Nov. 1859 (enclosing Cochet to Rigby, 23 Nov. 1859, and Rigby to Cochet, 24 Nov. 1859), S.L.R.V., 37. In Rigby to Anderson, 29 Nov. 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 142, Rigby admitted that he "could obtain no positive proofs" of Mas's involvement.

<sup>113</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 24 Dec. 1859, Mas. 1.

the Spaniard was "a notorious Slave Agent." He based his opinion upon recent information implicating Mas in the trade coming from the Mozambique port of Ibo and from what he knew of the Spaniard's earlier activities in East Africa. When the *Caridad* arrived in Zanzibar Rigby said it was clear "to every nautical person" that the vessel was equipped for the slave trade. Thus he explained that Majid had refused Mas permission to trade at any of his mainland ports until the *Caridad's* documents were proved legal. But, said the British consul, Majid's endeavors to see the documents were met with "very abusive and threatening language"—this report he claimed came to him via the sultan's private secretary. Then when the *Caridad* sailed without the problem being resolved, Majid sent a vessel along to observe its dealings. According to Rigby, Cochet was implicated directly in the affair since the French official protected Mas despite his knowledge of the Spaniard's past career.<sup>114</sup> The aroused Rigby soon learned from the customs master that some months previously Mas had sent an agent to purchase slaves at Kilwa which were later sold in Lamu. Rigby also asserted that a French resident merchant, S. Berard, had been Mas's partner in the venture. Even more heinous, lamented Rigby, was the fact that the French consul had known of this slaving transaction without taking any steps to halt it.<sup>115</sup>

Rigby determinedly pursued his case against Mas, gaining additional information from Berard, the quondam partner of the Spanish trader. The French merchant claimed that Mas had misled him and that he had repudiated his part of their agreement as soon as he learned slaves were involved. The Frenchman moreover explained that he had not complained of the affair to Cochet because he believed that the consul had "an undue partiality" for Mas. Rigby reported that he believed all that Berard said since he considered him an honorable man — he probably did not know of Berard's earlier quarrels with Cochet which might have influenced the merchant. Rigby went on to say that he had uncovered even more proof of Mas's participation in the slave trade. In February Mas had shipped about six hundred slaves in the *Pallas*; they had been loaded from a location on the coast of Zanzibar. Finally, wrote Rigby, Mas was employed by the Marseilles firm of Régis, "a great slave supplying house," which had recently concluded a contract to supply large numbers of Africans

<sup>114</sup> Rigby to Wood, 19 Nov. 1859, S.L.R.V., 37.

<sup>115</sup> Rigby to Wood, 21 Nov. 1859, 25 Nov. 1859, S.L.R.V., 37. In the latter dispatch Rigby went over the past conduct of Cochet, in the *Alexandré* and other incidents, to prove the French official's connection with the slave trade.

for service in the French colonies.<sup>116</sup> The Indian government as usual backed Rigby's proceedings. Since Cochet had hindered rather than aided Rigby in the Mas affair, they concluded that the posting of the circular was justified.<sup>117</sup>

The various disputes in Zanzibar continued on into 1860. In January Suliman bin Hamid went to Cochet to report that the Bombay government had instructed Rigby to cease insisting upon a territorial cession and to end his importunities for a complete cessation of the slave trade between Zanzibar and the African coast. The Arab official attributed the change to Majid's strong opposition to the loss of any of his claimed dominions. Cochet was unsure of the validity of this information, thinking that it was perhaps a ruse to turn French attention elsewhere. He reported that relations between him and Majid were very constrained because of Rigby's complete ascendancy over the sultan; as a result the Arab ruler showed little concern for French interests.<sup>118</sup> The French government at this point again became active in Zanzibar. It was time to transfer Cochet to a new post in Singapore, and the new consul, A. Derché, was instructed to do all possible to achieve satisfactory relations with Britain in Zanzibar, the ministry officials mentioning the recent visit of Vicompte de Langle to Bombay from where he had reported a similar British interest. They also informed Derché of French displeasure at Rigby's actions against the *Caridad*, and instructed him to be on the alert for any similar moves by the British official.<sup>119</sup>

Cochet had served in Zanzibar for four difficult years, a time of major stress in the local political system resulting from the changes in political leadership following the death of Said bin Sultan. Because of the decision of his government not to intervene in the succession dispute between Majid and Thuwayni, Cochet had had to uphold the French presence, which he justly believed threatened by Rigby's actions, from a position of weakness. Nevertheless, by utilizing the several visits of Vicompte de Langle and his vessels Cochet protected French interests as much as was

<sup>116</sup> Rigby to Wood, 28 Nov. 1859, S.L.R.V., 37. Berard's difficulties with Cochet are mentioned in Cochet to M.A.E., 18 March 1858, C.C.Z., 2. For the firm of Régis Frères, see Kieran, "Origins," 151-152.

<sup>117</sup> Elphinstone *et al.* to Secret Committee, 12 March 1860, S.L.R.B., first series, 35.

<sup>118</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 9 Jan. 1860, P.Z., 2.

<sup>119</sup> M.A.E. to Derché, 9 Feb. 1860, P.Z., 2; Vice Con. Bombay to M.A.E., 30 Dec. 1859, Mas. 1. Discussions about Rigby's conduct were conducted in Paris between British and French officials. See note verbale to Cowley, 8 Feb. 1860, and Cowley to Thouvenel, 5 March 1860, P.Z., 2.

possible under the circumstances. In affairs related to the recruitment of laborers Cochet had been caught between the desire for workers by officials of the French Indian Ocean islands and the conflicting responses to these needs by the French government. In general, the French consul again did a creditable job, although his decisions were compromised, as Cochet's replacement soon discovered, by an undue reliance on the friendship of the Spaniard, Mas.

The *Caridad* affair continued to complicate relations between France and Britain in Zanzibar. A new crisis occurred when the *Cordelière* once again returned to the island in March 1860. Cochet was still in residence at the time. On the night of April 5 Majid informed Rigby that he had received a French threat to commence hostilities unless certain demands submitted by them were settled satisfactorily during the next day. The demands included a statement of regret about the treatment of Mas and an order forbidding foreign consuls to display notices in the public market. Rigby was indignant over the demands, which he described as "insulting and humiliating" and as a threat to Zanzibar's independence. But with no British vessels in port to counter the French, the British consul found it necessary to advise Majid to bow to French pressure. He did so only after a futile attempt to reverse the demand concerning public notices. Rigby could do no more, as he said to Langle, because there were about five thousand British Indians holding considerable property in unprotected Zanzibar.

There was some misunderstanding involved in the unusual French threat of a bombardment — which certainly lacked the approval of the French government — since the demands apparently were not made in written form. Nonetheless, Langle advanced them firmly in the end. With a certain pleasure he told Rigby that if Lord Palmerston was able to uphold the rights of British-protected persons — he specifically referred to the famous statement of *civis romanus sum* — French officials could do no less. He noted that Mas, after all, was under French protection and there had been no proof of guilt. Rigby attempted to deflect the course of the determined naval officer whom he had earlier praised by endeavoring to convince him that Cochet had uniformly acted in an unfriendly manner toward Majid, "openly speak[ing of him] . . . in the terms of the foulest abuse and insult." But Langle of course knew Cochet as well or better than Rigby and paid no heed to his protestations. The British official naturally opposed this reasoning. He described the entire affair to his superiors as Cochet's reaction against the loss of influence in Zanzibar which the French had suffered when the British had blocked the various plots

centering around Thuwayni and Barghash.<sup>120</sup>

The conflicting explanations by the participants in this affair were left to their home governments for resolution. In Paris, Lord Cowley passed on Rigby's reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs without making a major issue of Cochet's alleged conduct, since he had been replaced by Derché. When the French authorities studied the available documents they concluded that too much attention had been given to too minor an affront to their interests. They cautioned Derché to refrain from similar conduct unless he had the prior consent of his government and to follow his original instructions. As for the question of the involvement of the *Caridad* in the slave trade, said the ministry officials, they could not reach an adequate judgment because of the conflicting reports available in Paris. They merely instructed Derché not to give any support to the continuation of the East African slave trade.<sup>121</sup>

Derché, arriving in Zanzibar in April 1860, diligently undertook to carry out his instructions, and immediately interviewed Mas, who not surprisingly denied Rigby's various charges.<sup>122</sup> The British consul was not satisfied with the course of events, and following Langle's departure he again posted notices forbidding British Indians to transact business with Europeans involved in the slave trade. Derché, joined by the commander of a French man-of-war then in port, *La Somme*, vainly attempted to counter Rigby's unilateral action. They consequently threatened to break relations with Majid, causing the sultan, after a brief delay, to withdraw his backing from Rigby. It took longer to convince Rigby, with Derché protesting that the British consul had undertaken a step which his own government did not support. The Frenchman also had the customs master and other Indians request that Rigby remove the notices. They came down, but the angry Rigby had them up again on July 12. According to Derché, this last step caused a meeting of the Indian community of Zanzibar at which they resolved to close their shops. The decision about trading with Europeans — where Rigby alone decided involvement in the slave trade — was ruinous to their business. In addition, the Indians planned to carry the keys of their closed establishments to the British consul. The influential customs master, Ludha Damji, managed to block

<sup>120</sup> Cochet to M.A.E., 4 Feb. 1860 (enclosing Rigby to Cochet, 11 Jan. 1860, 8 April 1860), P.Z., 2; Rigby to Wood, 16 April 1860 (enclosing Langle to Rigby, two letters of 6 April 1860, 7 April 1860, Cochet to Majid, 6 April 1860, Rigby to Langle, two letters of 6 April 1860, 7 April 1860), S.L.R.V., 37.

<sup>121</sup> Cowley to M.A.E., 14 June 1860, C.C.Z., 2; M.A.E. to Derché, 9 July 1860, P.Z., 2.

<sup>122</sup> Derché to M.A.E., 15 May 1860 (enclosing Mas to Derché, 14 May 1860), P.Z., 2.

this public expression of dissent, however.<sup>123</sup>

Meanwhile, the Mas affair was finally resolved. The Spaniard had remained at the forefront of events; he had been implicated in another case of slave dealing through Arab agents without adequate proof advanced to prove him guilty. Then in June a new Spanish vessel, the *Formosa Estrella*, belonging to the French firm of Vidal, arrived from Havana. It requested French protection, and Derché investigated the vessel. He found equipment used in the trade in slaves, banishing all doubts of Mas's complicity. Incriminating letters from Mas also were intercepted, first by Derché and later by Majid. When Derché confronted Mas the Spaniard denied all guilt, challenging the French official to prove that the letter in question was really his. But Derché quickly answered that the case was closed; he at once removed Mas's French protection. The Spaniard protested, saying he planned to plead his case in France, but when the British intercepted another slaving vessel consigned to him Mas bowed to the inevitable. He left Zanzibar on August 8.<sup>124</sup>

The conclusion of the Mas affair, which proved that Cochet had made unfortunate errors of judgment, passed with little notice in Paris. Cowley provided copies of Rigby's correspondence to the French government; they expressed general approval of the action taken. Derché once again was told not to grant protection to anyone involved in the slave trade. But the British authorities by this time had become somewhat concerned over the harsh statements Rigby had made against the French; Cowley noted while handing over the documents that Britain was well aware of "a certain lack of harmony" between the two nations concerning Zanzibar. Even the Indian government, while commending Rigby for his conduct, considered it necessary to add that although his actions were "characterized . . . by grtat judgment and resolution," it appeared that his communications to the French consul were "not made in that courteous and conciliatory language which it is desirable to employ towards the representatives of a friendly power."<sup>125</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Derché to Thouvenel, 17 July 1860 (enclosing Rigby's notices), P. Z., 2. Derché claimed that Rigby was spreading rumors that he was involved in the slave trade.

<sup>124</sup> Derché to M.A.E., 14 Aug. 1860, P. Z., 2; Rigby to Wood, 28 Aug. 1860, S.L.R.V., 37.

<sup>125</sup> Cowley note of 29 Oct. 1860, M.A.E. to Derché, 8 Dec. 1860, P. Z., 2; extract, secret letter from Bombay to the Sec. of State for India, 22 May 1860, E.S.L.R.B., 142; Baring to Rigby, 27 Nov. 1860, Secret Letters to India, Madras, Bombay . . . & Zanzibar, 1, India Office Archives, London.

Rigby never wavered in his opinion of French involvement. When the French government's views of his attitude reached Zanzibar, he at once replied that it had been clear to all that for several years Mas had been participating extensively in the slave trade "with the support and connivance of the French Consul [Cochet]," who profited from the arrangement. And in a heated outburst Rigby declared that Cochet had acted in an immoral manner by living openly with an Ethiopian woman. Moreover, lamented the British official, following the death of his consort he erected a large tomb where he prayed publicly "nearly every day to the scandal of the Christian character."<sup>126</sup>

Throughout these unedifying squabbles about personal life, the political uncertainty marking Majid's regime continued. When the British brig *Brisk* arrived in port, Majid complained to Derché about an alleged request for a cession of territory for a coaling station near Kilwa. The sultan informed Derché that he would cede territory only if forced to; he had not forgotten, he said, that Aden had lost its freedom following a similar cession.<sup>127</sup> Derché requested that his government dispatch a man-of-war to Zanzibar and he asked for new instructions since he thought the British now actually were threatening Zanzibar's independence. But his superiors were not impressed. He again was informed to be prudent in all conduct while continuing to maintain existing French rights.<sup>128</sup> Derché nevertheless remained uneasy. He thought that Zanzibar was on the eve of important changes, that Britain's cession desire was common knowledge, and that Rigby had bribed the sultan's secretary to get the offer accepted. Derché felt that Majid necessarily had to turn to France for support; he asked again for instructions to allow him to act effectively to keep Zanzibar independent. The French consul had some support for his conclusions from Majid's talks with Langle. That French naval officer, revisiting Zanzibar in December, had again offered to aid Majid in reaching a settlement with Thuwayni. The Arab ruler did not accept the offer during the conversation, but he informed Derché after Langle's departure that France could try to mediate the affair. The consul's superiors judged that any French role in the negotiations between Muscat and Zanzibar was open to more risks than the return was worth, although they noted that if the mediation was undertaken successfully they would approve the

<sup>126</sup> Rigby to Russell, 1 July 1861, in Rigby to Wood, 1 July 1861, S.L.R.V., 38. Cochet had freed the woman after purchasing her in 1859. Rigby to Anderson, 1 April 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140.

<sup>127</sup> Rigby later explained the cession rumors as stemming from the machinations of an Arab visitor to India from Anjouan. Rigby to Forbes, 1 June 1861, E-27, Z. A.

<sup>128</sup> Derché to M.A.E., 25 Aug. 1860, M.A.E. to Derché, 10 Sept. 1860, P. Z., 2.

result "with pleasure" because of the safeguarding of Zanzibar's independence and the cessation of the long intrigues between Said bin Sultan's sons.<sup>129</sup>

But Britain's dominance of the western Indian Ocean regions made the efforts of the concerned Frenchmen irrelevant. The British government finally imposed a settlement of the dispute between Thuwayni and Majid. A special agent, W. M. Coghlan, visited Muscat and Zanzibar during 1860 to gather information upon which to base a decision. Thuwayni denied any intrigues in Zanzibar, although he admitted that the al Harthi had sent to him for aid against Majid. The Arab ruler in fact blamed the unrest in Zanzibar upon the harshness of Rigby's treatment of Barghash and the al Harthi. As for the French, Thuwayni informed Coghlan that he had had no connections with them, that no offer of a territorial cession (as had been rumored) had been made, and that the only communications passing between him and the French were confined to matters of official courtesy. He showed Coghlan the letters. Thuwayni additionally explained that when Langle had arrived with an offer of mediation, he had informed the Frenchman of his prior commitment to a similar British proposal. The ruler of Muscat rested his case in the ongoing dispute on the past precedent of the Muscat rulers, who always left the succession to be worked out by their surviving sons.<sup>130</sup>

Coghlan went on to Zanzibar to continue his investigations, which resulted in the Canning Award of 1861, recognizing the division of Said bin Sultan's former realm into two states based at Muscat and Zanzibar.<sup>131</sup> The outcome of the long quarrel, which established Majid firmly in power in Zanzibar, should somewhat counter the views which many nineteenth-century and subsequent observers have expressed concerning Majid's character and talents. One British consul, for example, described Majid as "amiable and kindhearted to a fault, very anxious to do all he can to oblige everybody, but so ignorant, weak and vacillating as to be hardly

<sup>129</sup> Derché to M.A.E., 28 Dec. 1860, M.A.E. to Derché, 10 April 1860, P. Z., 2. Earlier the Ministry of the Navy had passed on to the Foreign Ministry a Langle request that he approach Thuwayni concerning his problems with Zanzibar. A ministry official curtly noted on the dispatch: "ne pas répondre." M. M. to M.A.E., 29 July 1859, Mas. 1.

<sup>130</sup> Coghlan to Anderson, 4 July 1860 (with enclosures), E.S.L.R.B., 143. During 1859 Rigby had reported secret negotiations between Thuwayni and the French. See Rigby to Anderson, 14 April 1859, 25 April 1859, E.S.L.R.B., 140. In 1858 Thuwayni had requested France to station a consul at Muscat. However, Cochet did not support the request. Cochet to M.A.E., 27 Feb. 1858, C.C.Z., 2.

<sup>131</sup> For the Canning Award, see Coupland, *Exploitation*, 26-31. Majid was unhappy about the award. See Derché to M.A.E., 24 July 1861, P. Z., 2.

fit to govern his country."<sup>132</sup> The Arab ruler had demonstrated considerable diplomatic skill in playing upon the mutual suspicions of the British and French to his own advantage, however, thus gaining from an initial position of considerable weakness the right to rule Zanzibar.

While on his mission Coghlan accepted Rigby's views of France's potential threat to Britain's position in East Africa. The two Britons particularly were worried because of events connected with the development of a French Roman Catholic missionary establishment in Zanzibar. The effort originated from Réunion; the resident Catholics there looked to replace Madagascar, closed to them since 1857, with new places of mission activity. Bishop Maupoint and the Abbé Fava, the two concerned Réunion churchmen, had been in touch with the Savoyard cleric, Léon des Avanchers, whose troublesome encounters with Cochet have been recounted previously. Avanchers had developed a plan to build a missionary establishment in Zanzibar; the Frenchmen took it over on his departure. Baron Darrican, the governor of Réunion, became interested in the scheme as an opportunity to recruit the always scarce African laborers his island needed. Little had been accomplished in the joint mission-government endeavor before Cochet left Zanzibar. But Darrican and the missionaries kept working to gain their ends. When approached, the French government approved the establishment of a mission, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials clearly instructed Derché and the scheme's proponents that no approval was given to the securing of slave labor for Réunion under any guise. By this time Majid had talked with Fava, welcoming a mission establishment which planned the creation of an industrial and agricultural training school as part of its work.

After the discussions, Fava made plans to acquire a large building in Zanzibar for the mission. In an attempt to gain needed financial support, he suggested that the French navy utilize part of it as a storehouse, an idea in which the navy showed little interest. But Rigby and Coghlan were sure that the French takeover of the building was part of a larger scheme backed by the French government. Coghlan passed on Rigby's declaration that the building was similar to "a fortified barrack" capable of housing over fifteen hundred individuals. When the concerned Englishmen brought the matter to Derché's attention, he merely replied that the building was suitable for the uses of the mission and that its purchase was allowed by Article XVII of the Treaty of 1844. Nevertheless, Cogh-

<sup>132</sup> Playfair to Gonne, 19 April 1865, in Playfair to Wood, 19 April 1865, S.L.R.V., 42.

lan and Rigby remained convinced of a possible threat to the British position in Zanzibar.<sup>133</sup>

The French missionaries arrived in Zanzibar in December 1860 on the *Cordelière*. Rigby, incorrectly labeling them "Jesuit Priests," maintained his increasingly unreasonable suspicions by characterizing the mission as "an enterprise of the French Government" which was "the certain prelude to French aggression in Zanzibar." Thus Rigby protested to Majid that he was allowing the French to violate the 1844 treaty and that consequently the British had the right to create a similar establishment. Majid readily gave his permission.<sup>134</sup> Unknown to Rigby, Derché also feared the possibility that the establishment of the mission cloaked some scheme antagonistic to his instructions concerning French policy for Zanzibar. But his government informed Derché that French Indian Ocean recruiting ventures for Africans were coming to an end, thus removing this long-standing cause of difficulties for French consuls on the island.<sup>135</sup>

The British government, which had not connected the establishment of the mission with any scheme for recruiting laborers, nevertheless remained watchful of the French move, instructing Rigby to keep it fully informed of the mission's actions. The British consul needed no urging to maintain his vigilance against the French. He continued to watch carefully for violations of the slave trade treaties, utilizing his commanding position with Majid to interfere with French-protected vessels whenever possible. In Derché's opinion, Rigby clearly was acting to demonstrate to all the weakness of the French presence in Zanzibar.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Rigby to Coghlan, 15 Oct. 1860, F. O. 54/18, P.R.O.; Coghlan to Anderson, 10 Dec. 1860, Rigby to Anderson, 28 Aug. 1860, E.S.L.R.B., 143 and 144 respectively. The story of the French mission establishment is given in full detail in Kieran, "Origins," 155 ff. Fava reported that the designated mission building had room for fifty to sixty residents, although he forwarded Rigby's fanciful estimate to indicate the building's large size to his superiors. "Lettre de M. l'Abbé Fava," *Revue d'Histoire des Missions*, 10 (1933), 110; H. de Maupeou, "Le R. P. Horner et la Fondation de la Mission du Zanguebar," *ibid.*, 9 (1932), 512.

<sup>134</sup> Rigby to Wood, 2 Jan. 1861, S.L.R.V., 38. Majid's agreement prepared the way for the later establishment in Zanzibar of the British Universities' Mission to Central Africa. See Norman Robert Bennett and Marguerite Ylvisaker, eds., *The Central African Journal of Lovell J. Procter, 1860-1864* (Boston, 1971), xvi.

<sup>135</sup> Kieran, "Origins," 162-163. Consul Derché nevertheless continued to have difficulties with French vessels seeking workers for the Indian Ocean colonies. See Derché to Thouvenel, 10 Nov. 1860, P. Z., 2; M.A.E. to M. M., 22 March 1861, Chasseloup-Laubat to M.A.E., 16 Aug. 1861, C.C.Z., 2.

<sup>136</sup> Derché to M.A.E., 6 March 1861, P. Z., 2; Derché to Thouvenel, 23 April 1861 (enclosing correspondence from Majid), C.C.Z., 2

Meantime, Rigby continued stressing the supposed danger inherent in the development of the French Catholic mission. His reports led the Foreign Office to instruct its Paris representative to ascertain exactly why the establishment had been created. While doing so he was to stress that Britain supported Zanzibar's independence. The French in return explained that Rigby was exaggerating the importance of the new French mission, adding in an effort to end the continuous rivalry over Zanzibar that they stood ready to conclude an agreement with Britain formally guaranteeing Zanzibar's independence. The British in turn proposed a joint declaration covering the territorial possessions of the ruler of Muscat. The French did not react favorably to this strange reply. They recognized the predominant British position at Muscat, with its importance to India, believing that much of the unrest at Zanzibar was due to a British effort to use that position to advance their East African interests. The British did not argue the point. They agreed to change the guarantee to include both Zanzibar and Muscat, noting that they did not consider it expedient to indicate specific territorial limits in the proposed declaration. They felt no need to offer protection from the indigenous neighbors of each because of the imprecise boundaries of the two states. Instead the British suggested "a declaration pledging themselves mutually to respect the independence of the two Sultans, which would naturally infer a pledge from both governments that they would seek no territorial advantages in the dominions of the sovereigns of Zanzibar and Muscat." Agreement easily followed; it was signed on March 10, 1862.<sup>137</sup>

No formal changes in the policy of either France or Britain followed the accord. But change did occur in Zanzibar. Rigby's ill health had forced his departure from the island in September 1861.<sup>138</sup> Derché had left around the previous July, placing French affairs under the care of his very capable subordinate, M. Jablonski.<sup>139</sup> The new British representative,

<sup>137</sup> Rigby to Russell, 1 July 1861; note verbale from Cowley, 2 Oct. 1861; note verbale to Cowley, 5 Oct. 1861; memorandum of Nov. 1861; Cowley to Thouvenel, 26 Dec. 1862, P. Z., 2; Cowley to Thouvenel, 27 Jan. 1862; Agreement of 10 March 1862, P. Z., 3; Thouvenel to M.M.C., 3 March 1862, O. I., 22<sup>121</sup>, A.O.M.

<sup>138</sup> Rigby to Forbes, 6 Sept. 1861, in Rigby to Wood, 4 Oct. 1861, S.L.R.V. By this time Rigby's overbearing conduct had alienated most sectors of Zanzibari society. Majid, whom Rigby in 1861 described in his diary as a "false, vile scoundrel," gave the consul neither a farewell visit nor the customary ceremonies of departure from the harbor. Russell, *Rigby*, 94-96. See also Bennett and Brooks, *New England Merchants*, 518, for the Indian jubilation at Rigby's departure.

<sup>139</sup> Derché to M.A.E., 24 July 1861, P. Z., 2. Jablonski held a high reputation in Zanzibar both for his personal qualities and for his knowledge of the island and its

Lewis Pelly, an experienced Indian army officer, reached Zanzibar in October.<sup>140</sup> Anglo-French-Zanzibar relations were tense then because British vessels were indiscriminately seizing Arab dhows on the grounds that they were participating in the slave trade. The activities of the men of the Royal Navy naturally caused delays in the landing of legitimate merchandise in Zanzibar, thus causing the French and American consuls to protest to Majid. Rigby had supported his naval compatriots all during his stay in Zanzibar, causing one French naval officer to characterize British actions as "véritable piraterie."<sup>141</sup> Pelly effected an important change in British naval conduct, however. He informed his superiors that there was no danger to British interests from the French mission establishment and he promised the French to attempt curbing the unchecked antislave trade activities of the Royal Navy.<sup>142</sup> The British consul did achieve some success in restraining excesses against Arab vessels before his departure from Zanzibar in late 1862. In a revealing remark, one Foreign Office official later commented on Pelly, "I thought he took an Indian view of the Slave Trade, or in other words that he was of the opinion that we had better leave the suppression of the Slave Trade alone." This was not a fair opinion. Pelly opposed the slave trade, but he did recognize that injustices might accompany its suppression. When Pelly left Zanzibar, he went with the sincere appreciation of Jablonski and, according to the latter, with the marked disapprobation of the men of the Royal Navy.<sup>143</sup>

Apart from similar relatively minor issues, the 1862 agreement between Britain and France largely ended their long political rivalry concerning Zanzibar. The French government increasingly lost interest in the

peoples. See, for example, Otto Kersten, ed., *Baron Carl Claus von der Decken's Reisen in Ost-Afrika in den Jahren 1859 bis 1861* (Leipzig and Heidelberg, 1869), I, 24; Burton, *Zanzibar*, I, 314; Adrien Germain, "Note sur Zanzibar et la Cote Orientale d'Afrique," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, 16 (1868), 530; M. Jablonski, "Notes sur la Géographie de l'Île de Zanzibar," *ibid.*, 12 (1866), 353-370.

<sup>140</sup> Bennett and Brooks, *New England Merchants*, 520.

<sup>141</sup> Derché to Thouvenel, 23 April 1861, C.C.Z., 2; Dupré to Com. in Chief, 5 Oct. 1861, in Chasseloup-Laubat to M.A.E., 29 Nov. 1861, Jablonski to M.A.E., 24 Sept. 1861, 28 Sept. 1861, P.Z., 2. This was a long-continuing problem. See, for example, Said bin Sultan to Aberdeen, 28 Sept. 1864, F.O. 54/10, P.R.O.

<sup>142</sup> Jablonski to M.A.E., 18 Nov. 1861, P.Z., 2; Pelly to Forbes, 10 Jan. 1862, E-31, Z. A.

<sup>143</sup> Wylde note of 10 Oct. 1872, F. O. 84/1836, P.R.O.; Jablonski to Thouvenel, 27 Nov. 1862, C.C.Z., 2; Jablonski to Thouvenel, 26 Jan. 1862, P.Z., 3. The problem continued, however, for much of the remainder of the decade. See, for example, Jablonski to Thouvenel, 31 March 1863, P.Z., 3; Norman R. Bennett, *Studies in East African History* (Boston, 1963), 32-34.

island, turning instead to Madagascar and the Comoro Islands. French commerce similarly did not remain overly important. With the end of Mas's career, the firm of Vidal ceased most of its Zanzibar business; other French firms did not prosper because they remained unable to increase their share of the trade against the other competitors for Zanzibar's merchandise.<sup>144</sup>

The French presence did look substantial to some visiting outsiders. For example, Krapf on an 1862 visit said, "hat swtruck me most was tht great influence which the French have obtained on the island since I saw it the last time." But he referred mostly to the French Catholic mission, which enjoyed a striking development under the successors of its founders from Réunion, the Holy Ghost Fathers.<sup>145</sup> The French consuls understood their position, however. By 1868 Consul E. Buré lamented that France was so powerless in Zanzibar that he considered his position scarcely tenable.<sup>146</sup> A few subsequent French consuls attempted to act significantly in Zanzibar's affairs, but their government's steadfastly expressed desire for nonintervention kept the French in a secondary role on the island, leaving Zanzibar and the adjacent areas on the mainland to fall with only minor French dissent to later British and German colonial rulers.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Jablonski to M.A.E., 2 Feb. 1862, 6 Aug. 1862, 12 Jan. 1863, C.C.Z., 2. Jablonski's subsequent dispatches, contained in this file, portray the course of French commerce. For statistical information, see Alfred Grandidier, *Notice sur l'Île de Zanzibar* (Saint-Denis, Réunion, 1868), 29; Percy Ernst Schramm, *Deutschland und Uebersee* (Berlin, 1950), 334-335; "Extract from the Administrative Report of the Political Agent at Zanzibar for the Two Past Years Ending with the 31st May 1864," *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, 18 (1865), 279.

<sup>145</sup> J. Lewis Krapf, "My Late Mission Tour to the East Coast of Africa," *Christian Work throughout the World*, 1 (1863), 195-196.

<sup>146</sup> Buré to M.A.E., 26 Nov. 1868, C.C.Z., 3.

<sup>147</sup> For aspects of French policy after the 1860s, see Norman R. Bennett, "Charles de Vienne and the Frere Mission to Zanzibar," *Boston University Papers on Africa*, II (1966), 109-121; "Some Notes on French Policy in Buganda and East Africa, 1879-1890," *Makerere Journal*, 6 (1962), 1-17.