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# Some Comments on Stereotypes of the Anglo-Indians. (Part II)

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*This is the second part of Megan Mills article dealing with Anglo-Indian Stereotypes. Ms. Mills is a highly perceptive student of Anglo-Indian history and provides a particularly well written analysis of the Anglo-Indian situation.*

## V. LACKEYS OF THE BRITISH

Colonial Studies place the Anglo-Indians within the anti-nationalist European camp in keeping with what Ahmad has described as a descent into 'indigenism'. (1991) The juxtaposition of Europeans against Indians encourages an assumption of unanimous Anglo-Indian identification with British aims. Treatments of Indian nationalism have been criticized as a sort of hagiography of the Indian elite, arranged around a Gandhian monolith in which there is little room for the experience of less prominent groups. (Guha:1982) As Broomfield explained it, it is strange that social scientists engaging in history should have forgotten the experience of ordinary people and the shades of grey existent within any politically bifurcated situation. (1971) As is easily shown, the Anglo-Indians were often placed in an impossible situation amid the intensification of political life and were compelled by practical considerations to "support" British tactics in India.

Britain's declaration of war on Germany in 1914, brought immediate mobilization in India and by 1915, the British war drain produced hundreds of officer vacancies in the regular army which became accessible to Anglo-Indians for the first time since the East India Company's ban of 1791. Conscription was enforced systematically

among the Anglo-Indians at odds with the experience of other Indian communities treated more leniently. (Abel:1988) By 1916, perhaps 8,000 Anglo- Indians had joined British units as in the case of the many "India-born" recruits accepted by the Dorset Regiment. Jhansi's Anglo-Indian Battery attached to the 77th Royal Field Artillery, had the largest concentration of Anglo-Indian conscripts and volunteers and earned a distinguished record in the Mesopotamian conflict. In total, 50-75% of the adult Anglo-Indian population saw active service although non-emergency enlistment in the British Army remained closed to them. (Dover:1937) Most were immediately sent abroad while others were employed by the sudden munitions and supply boom, for instance, at Kanpur where the army's leather processing centre had been located since after the Mutiny. (Thomas:1982)

High Anglo-Indian involvement owed largely to the presence of thousands of impoverished Anglo-Indians, on account of inadequate income and rising living costs in India's cities, notably in Calcutta. (MacRae:1913) At this time, the community was also trying to gain Anglo- Indian admissions to the colonial military, led by Herbert A. Stark and J.H. Abbott. For instance, a proposed Anglo-Indian regiment plus a corps of nurses were offered but both were declined by the British authorities. It was eventually noted that the Anglo- Indian officers taken to date had proven as reliable as their British counterparts in a day when non-British personnel were always assumed to be of questionable calibre. (Martin:1995)

The Great War's aftermath brought deepening Anglo- Indian poverty with the employment glut of de- mobilization plus the effects of the Montague Chelmsford reforms of 1919 which narrowed reservations in the colonial administration. Many ex-servicemen endured the straits described by Gidney, roaming the streets of Indian cities in pursuit of food. (1934) The rise of nationalist agitation in the 1920s brought a highly visible role to the community as participants in the Auxiliary Force, a reserve organization created after the Mutiny and known widely as the Volunteer Corps. A full 75% were Anglo-Indian, an unsurprising figure in view of the Anglo-Indians often having provided the backbone of the different provincial police forces. In most areas, the AFI represented only handfuls of men but in India's larger commercial and railway towns they were an obvious, relied upon presence. (Craddock:1929) By 1947, the AFI had expanded to almost 30,000 as it was deployed to contain the

Gandhian movement as well as communal disturbances. It has been easy for nationalist historians to assume that its members were pro-British. However, as the Bangalore educator C.N. Weston explained, the Anglo- Indians by the 1930s, contended with a particular predicament with regard to the Force:

> encouraged and in many cases, compelled to join ... On the railways they cannot get posts unless they agree beforehand to join ... where no military are stationed, the Auxiliary Force is called out and often has to fire and kill... This naturally tends to cause hatred on the part of the Indian towards the Anglo-Indian. (1938:116)

Later on, the AFI would be commended by Congress leaders. Partition involved many an heroic deed on the part of Anglo-Indians amid an overall effort in Bengal and the Punjab still remembered for its complete communal impartiality, often in the face of extreme danger. (Royle:1989) Nehru saw fit to thank the community expressly while countless other Indians recall the spirit of service exemplified by the Anglo- Indians who ran North India's refugee camps. All of this "pro-British" activity transpired amid Anglo- Indian political uncertainty to do with the legal position of the community with regard to its eventual citizenship. Between 1920 and 1947, the Anglo-Indian case received varying degree of support in London. The Simon Commission investigating minority group concerns had drawn the interest of a bloc of Whigs and Tories in London, but the guarantees for simple protection which Gidney demanded were slow to arrive. (Bridge:1986)

In Bengal, Anglo-Indian cooperation with the interests of British box-wallahs tended to pit them against the nationalist contingent, (Ray:1984) and everywhere, leaders were compelled to argue questions of their official status. As late as 1925, the under-Secretary of State for India announced that the Anglo-Indians for purposes of employment were statutory natives of India; for purposes of education, internal or external security however, their status "approximated" that of British subjects. The intensifying politics of Divide & Quit rendered the Anglo-Indians more and more, an abandoned group with the hour fast approaching in which their usefulness to the British would be irrelevant.

In short, the period in which Anglo-Indians have been regularly associated with anti-nationalist sympathies was one of overlooked complexity, another chapter in an ethnic history which Gaikwad summarized as an:

> almost unending sequence of frustration's born out of insecurity and uncertainty. For generation after generation, they have had to suffer social prejudice, cultural isolation, and economic exploitation. (1967:253)

However, it would be false to presume that they had ever been mute sufferers of misfortunes dictated by colonial policy. The community has negotiated each crisis by the strong sense of communal reliance which has resurfaced time and again. (Grimshaw:1959)

To refer to a "pro-British" people is to misinterpret the resourcefulness demanded by policy- derived adversity and at any rate, over-shadows contributions made over time in education, medicine and in military life, far beyond the time of British influence in an ongoing contribution to India which is out of all proportion to the community's size. (Dutt:1990b) It is probably true that the community was perceived by the British to be a mimetic and manipulable one, after all the members of dominant groups are less inclined to know what subordinate groups think of them. (Lieberson:1985) The field of how Eurasians were regarded by Europeans has been well ploughed but much more needs to be known involving Anglo-Indian perceptions of the British. An attitude of resistance at different times is found in both textual accounts of the past and the oral testimony collected in the present. Moreover, the 'sambo effect' noted in other colonial environments has not been explored as a feature of Anglo-Indian interaction with Britons although it is known that in colonial Ireland, for example. that it was wiser to present oneself to officialdom within a somewhat degrading lackadaisical stereotype of what an official expected than it was to reveal one's intelligence. It was useful to play upon the Englishman's engrained sense of authority. (Kenny:1985) This kind of behaviour must have been common in British India on the part of members of every Indian community since expressing honest sentiment was not feasible, particularly in working situations. As a member of a respected Calcutta Anglo-Indian family described the city during World War II as a kind of Allied dumping grounds. The British war drain was apparent in the arrival of less prepared colonial servants and as this woman put it:

> if only you could have seen some of the Brits sent our way then ... real barrel- scrapings. (JB. Calcutta. 1994)

Similarly, an Anglo-Indian now living in Canada described his 1940s amazement at "God's Gift" of a barely literate English supervisor in the ordnance godown in which he worked, an environment dictating careful attention to record-keeping.

Those who would stereotype the AIs as "lackeys" have failed to take into account the fact that although most would never see the West, that they nonetheless obtained the advantages of British-styled education and were equipped to discern between different kinds of Britons. The ceilings which prevented their rise above specified levels in the colonial services, prompted a good deal of banter to do with the obviously modest social origins of some of those sent out 'to rule over' them. As social scientists often fail to notice, "class" often has little do with finance or background and can be quickly determined by the observer.

The stereotype of Britain's lackeys grows more disturbing in view of the contribution to the World War II mobilization in India. In brief, some 4,000 fought in the Royal Air Force and thousands of others were despatched with the land effort to North Africa or were given war-time vacancy posts in India. The Indian Nursing Corps was led and dominated by Anglo-Indian women. Among the great many Anglo-Indians to be decorated for services performed through the course of the War, mention is usually made of those who survived the Japanese occupation of Burma. When the order arrived in 1942 for the British to withdraw it was expected that the Anglo-Indians stationed there would carry on which they did under tremendous hardship; their eventual march into India involved loss of life plus the challenges of resettlement.

Lastly, all assumptions to do with the Anglo- Indians as British 'collaborators' have to be placed beside the involvements of other Indians. One does not encounter references to Sikhs or Gurkhas of the same kind. Moreover, popular ascription's do not take into account the often impossible situations into which many Anglo-Indians were thrust under conditions of Emergency in India.

As this section emphasizes, the community's sentiment with regard to the British requires examination over time by the History contingent for anti-British feeling was not something which surfaced only after Independence. There are hints that John Company's early exclusion of the community was not accepted smoothly and not only as the contributions of Derozio, Kydd or Ricketts would suggest. In 1795, the Anglo-Indians had been removed from the military except for those required as fifers, drummers, bandsmen and farriers among other lowly occupations. However, as Sleeman complained some decades later,

> there is hardly a native regiment in the Bengal Army in which the twenty drummers who are Christians, and have their families with the regiment, do not cause more trouble to the officers than the whole eight hundred sepoys. (1844:632)

Returning to the 20th century, Eric Stracey who was to become a post-Independence commissioner of the Tamil Nadu police, learned that his brother had gone over to Bose's Indian National Army in reaction to the behaviour of British officers leading Indian conscripts. Also, the naval mutiny at Bombay reflected the sentiment of Anglo-Indian naval staff: Masani reports that Anglo-Indians hitherto supportive of the British were much altered by the experience of a monsoon gale in which quarters were made available to English officers only; it was expected that all others would sleep outdoors despite the threat of illness. (1987)

Everywhere that the Anglo-Indians served, it seems that the World War II helped to crystallize dissent and by 1947, few members of the community appear to have been terribly surprised by the precarious position in which the British had left this most reliable of communities.

## VI. THE ABUSED AND CONFUSED

Ideas of a people beset by cultural or social confusion have provided ample fodder for social scientists intent upon testing theories of identity and marginality. The myth of the Anglo-Indian as a person pulled by contradictory Indian and "British" allegiances persists despite rather illogical underpinning's; it has been assumed that since the Anglo-Indians are a hybrid people that they possess no roots in India despite their presence over more than four centuries. Their uniquely bridging culture may prove of greater significance to contemporary social scientists but one is hard

pressed indeed, to locate a volume which includes Anglo-Indian culture beyond a surface-skimming, thumbnail sketch.

As it stands, social scientific writings since the 1930s have promoted some very curious hypotheses whose collective legacy is found in more recent contributions which point to their authors' discomfort with an Anglo-Indian reality which veers markedly towards neither East or West. For example, Peacock's 1970s and 1980s research in Rajasthan refers to a, "diffused sense of identity", among younger Anglo-Indians when asked to list the heroes of their community. That subjects produced a constellation including Akbar, Sir Henry Gidney, Gandhi and Nehru, the Keelor brothers, a sprinkling of Dickens and Shakespeare plus Subhash Chandra Bose and Indira Gandhi is presented as somehow aberrant. (1991) It is perhaps amusing that this writer thought that the profusion of figures listed by Peacock's informants spoke for the success of the Anglo-Indian schools in their post-1947 conversion to a more Indian curriculum! At any rate, the young peoples' "diffused identity" was mentioned as a factor somehow synonymous with low levels of communal identity or Political development.

All social scientific roads lead back to Cressey's work of the 1930s, which referred to a disorganized "marginal" group. (1935) A particularly deep imprint seems to have been made by Stonequist's The Marginal Man which conceptualized a personality beset by anxiety, divided loyalties, self-contempt and a marked tendency to identify with a dominant group; the kind of person who suffers frustration when this identification with the dominant group is not respected. (1935,1937) Ideas of Marginality persisted long after the theory lost momentum in the West, refuted by North American ethnic studies which rejected the Marginal Man model as a stereotype, not a substitute for research into "marginal" cultures.

The placement of the Anglo-Indians in a cultural no-man's land has been influenced too, by factors innocently incorporated. There is an exaggerated, tragic and romantic story to be accessed in the Eurasian who is ostensibly torn between cultural addresses. It seems to have been irresistible within current vogue for consideration of persons psychically stateless. (Bose:1979, Gupta:1982, Morrisby:1983) The longterm effect has been one of channelling all interest in the contemporary

community in India towards the Anglo-Indian underclass which at any rate, remains more accessible than the community's more successfully adapted members.

It is not noticed by many writers that all notions of marginality and its bed-fellows are comparatively luxurious in the Indian environment. An Anglo-Indian experiencing difficulty in finding employment knows that he or she is most definitely set apart from the Hindu majority, that he or she is without the commercial reputation or connections of other minority group members, for example, of the Parsi community. Such an individual is aware of being English-speaking and Christian and at a time when Christians are frowned upon in India; there is also awareness that opportunities exist in the West but that the West is unreachable. Moreover, an Anglo-Indian knows that his or her culture is not "British" as so many would presume. In short, there exists an Anglo-Indian identity as there always has been, a reality which is distinctive.

Within the motif of the 'abused and confused' much tends to be missed related to Indian attachment. For instance, the experimental Anglo-Indian colonies of McCluskieganj, Whitefield or Mogra have been regarded as 'utopian' or 'escapist' solutions to Hindu nationalism. (Bobb & Ahmed:l991, Dutt:1990b) It is less noted that these schemes were inherently Indian and that the same devotion was not applied to securing Anglo-Indian emigration programmes. If McCluskieganj was naively utopian it was also instigated on Indian soil. Similarly, the interest demonstrated in the 1930s in securing an Eurasian statelet in the Andaman Islands clearly projected a sense of Asian belonging not attached to the British presence. The migration of the middle class was one response to Independence, but many more Anglo-Indians were compelled to find new ways of life within South Asia.

Lastly, ideas of marginality, or of cultural and identity confusion, do not hold water very well in an extremely heterogeneous Indian society in which one community is inevitably marginal to another. The predictable contrasts and adjustments are not equal to the psychological afflictions "identified" by Stonequist et al. When the AIs are examined closely, marginality is questionable indeed as a social marker and the less emphasized about an allegedly pro-European identification the better, for in the 1990s, the community remains intrinsically Indian.

## VII. THE FRANK ANTHONY PHENOMENON

The apparent disunity of the community is often raised as a factor detrimental to Anglo-Indian prospects in India. Again, Cressey is usually cited in works referring to Anglo-Indian apathy or inadequate political development, refusing to create a uniformity said to be in the community's best interests. (Abel: 1988, Younger: 1987, Varma:1979) Assessments of fragmentation generally put forward a too streamlined account of the All-India Anglo-Indian Association, established in 1876. In these accounts, Frank Anthony (1909-1993), the leader of the AIAIA from 1942, is presented practically as an Eurasian mahatma. His brilliance as a criminal lawyer and as a skilled broker of Anglo-Indian and Congress(I) interests over decades, is unquestionable and his friendships with Nehru and later, Indira Gandhi, promoted the profile of the Anglo-Indian community at large. He was routinely nominated to the Lok Sabha except for the period of Morarji Desai's Janata Party and held an all-India reputation as a superb orator, perennially taking his seat among the Opposition. His career was marked by a consistent safeguarding of the constitutional rights of his minuscule ethnic constituency, However, he was also undeterred by the presence of Anglo-Indian dissent.

Rather laudatory presentations of Anthony's political career proclaim their authors' research foundations. It is plain which writers have availed themselves of the AIAIA as a vehicle of access to the community and an AIAIA interpretation of Anglo-Indian developments. Abel's political history for example, stresses the idea of the AIAIA as the guarantor of a continuing communal presence in India. (1988) Survival in India is connected too, to the educational institutions of AIAIA affiliation and the organization's strong leadership style. The view is encouraged of schools and politics which are dependent upon a continuation of the political performances laid forth by Gidney and Anthony in an analysis which tends to ignore the work of the many, plus the existence of often competing Anglo-Indian organizations. Relatively little is mentioned of other groups and the volume's only photographic illustration consists of an image of The Frank Anthony Public School in New Delhi, the largest Anglo-Indian school in contemporary India.

Younger refers to a late-1980s AIAIA roster of 50,000 members or possibly, one-third of the adult community. (1987) Among Younger's informants was Major-General Williams, born to a railway family in Lahore one of the early Anglo-Indian graduates of the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun and a longtime honorary treasurer of the AIAIA. He is currently in the public eye as the successor to Frank Anthony and also, A.E.T. Barrow in New Delhi. Typical of the AIAIA's efforts to downplay the resentment of Anglo- Indians concerning their abandonment by Britain, Williams is presented as claiming to never have experienced discrimination on the part of the British or for that matter, other Indians, over the course of his long military career. The attitude implied is noble and expedient with regard to cultivating better relations with Indian groups but it is possibly annoying to Anglo-Indians tired of being passed over for housing or employment or having difficulty in convincing members of other communities of their heartfelt Indian-ness.

Research to date has unearthed some resentment of the AIAIA in Bengal and more predictably, in South India. Many AIs are proud of Anthony's role as Indira Gandhi's chosen counsel before the Shah Commission which investigated her activities during the 1970s Emergency. In South India, informants spoke of the same episode differently: Anthony's contribution was considered almost an embarrassment. The close connection with the Congress(I) is not particularly favoured and it would be incorrect to surmise that non- AIAIA membership was the result of apathy rather than opposition to the AIAIA's approach to ethnic political life. As countless referrals to "Anthony Bashing" in Anglo-Indian periodicals attest, Anthony was a man that many loved to dislike. He was respected for his acumen, for his linguistic ability, as a lively critic of government and as a fearless debater. He will also be remembered as one who failed to groom younger successors from the community, who tended to view those expressing interest as threats to his hegemony. His imprint upon the AIAIA was one of middle-class orientation, not tackling the realities of the many in urban enclaves of chronic unemployment. Despite Anthony's establishment of four new Anglo-Indian schools and the furtherance of scholarships, the AIAIA's assistance to families unable to afford basic education has been inadequate. (Dutt:1990b) d'Souza's study of Anglo-Indian schools pointed out earlier that by 1960 there were already a few of these misfortunates, the first generation to demonstrate illiteracy in the modern history of the community. (1976) The Anglo- Indian Education Society is

said to have fallen short of its goals although AIAIA spokesmen still stress the maintenance of English as the mainstay of Anglo-Indian survival in India. the AIAIA has done little to extend its sway among poorer Anglo-Indians: scholarships or fee waivers do not preclude the aspects of poverty which sometimes prevent education. That children must contribute early in life to family finances does not seem to be understood by leaders generally hailing from comparatively privileged backgrounds.

On the other hand, Anthony's role in upholding the Anglo-Indian concessions codified in Articles 331 and 333 of the Constitution of India (1950) is rarely forgotten. His courageous handling of the Bombay Schools Crisis of 1954 and the Kerala crisis of 1957, will always be credited to his political contribution. Intervention into minority schools as the Anglo-Indian schools are,-was summarily over-ruled by the Supreme Court's decision that the states are obliged to uphold the Constitution's educational provisos. Similarly, Anthony took up the challenge in 1962 when the Gujarat University considered converting to a vernacular institution. Anthony argued that without English- medium universities there would be no demand for English-medium schools without which the Anglo-Indian community would not survive. Perhaps his most dramatic success lay in his attack on Hindification, an undertaking which won him many non-Anglo-Indian supporters by the late 1950s. During 1965's anti-Hindi demonstrations in South India, Bengal and Punjab, Anthony spoke at great length in the Lok Sabha on the utility of English and the limitations of Hindi -- in Hindi, a language which he himself spoke flawlessly. This ability could not be ascribed to many of the North Indian politicians most ardently behind Hindification, many of them westernized "Hind-glish" speakers only. Anthony argued that English had long ceased to be foreign language in India and that it had been a unifying official language since the Charter of 1833 which replaced Persian. As Anthony pointed out, Hindi's root language was Sanskrit, once an 'alien' language in India also, with Urdu the fused product of the Muslim conquest. English would rightfully remain a language of the subcontinent and certainly, it would remain the mother tongue of the Anglo-Indian community.

Anthony also promoted a staunchly Indian identity for his people. He berated the 25,000 who left India on the Eve of Independence, criticized the Andaman Islands scheme of the 1930s and early 1940s as too isolationist, and never departed from

his insistence that the only hope for the community lay in committed participation in the new India. His 1969 book, Britain's Betrayal, although biased in a way to be predicted of political authors, does provide a sound introduction to the origins and nature of the community. Its detailed chapters are imperative reading for those attached to stereotypes of a down-trodden, poor and oh yes,.uneducated community. Alas, the Frank Anthony phenomenon seems to have given way to something of a Frank Anthony vacuum at present, a state of affairs to be remedied according to the community's historical record of producing leaders of ability when faced by political difficulty. The lively interaction and disagreement of assorted regional Anglo-Indian organizations is a testament to the political viability of the community at large; in Madras, several different Anglo-Indian groups have been operative at different intervals of strong prognoses. (Brennan:1979) In Calcutta, the Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society continues its uplift activities as a breakaway ginger group from the more formal AIAIA.

VIII INEVITABLE EXTINCTION

Since 1947, India has presented challenges to the middle and lower-middle class Anglo-Indians having elected to remain in India and of course, the Anglo- Indian poor. However, the notion of a vanishing species as promoted by some more romantic writers is not well conceptualized. Younger for instance, states that communal disintegration has continued due to emigration, economic deprivation and intermarriage with non-Anglo-Indians. It is stated that many predict their own extinction as a community and with regret, others with relief, (1987) in almost a complete duplication of what was assumed in the 1940s and what is so regularly presented in journalistic treatments of the Anglo-Indians as a sort of imperial dinosaur bound for oblivion.

In reality, the Anglo-Indians have experienced decline but also an impressive regeneration in the last two decades. Perhaps as many as 50% of the pre-Independence community departed from India after 1947, mainly those belonging better-placed families. (Gist:1967) It is this loss of what were often leading families that tends to be remembered with sadness. It should be mentioned too, that informants express regret at the loss of some British and many Indian families having left India at different times for points abroad. In the l990s however, emigration

is significant more for the change is has wrought in Anglo-Indian ways of living than for the drier facts of reduced numbers or removed assets. Emigration is a less permanent step than it once was and everywhere in India, mention is made of relations in Australia or perhaps the United Kingdom. One is eternally meeting individuals bound for Australia or having returned to India for vacation. British and Australian Anglo-Indians are regular visitors in Calcutta and India's reformed residency laws are finally making it possible for retirees abroad to consider living in India anew. Moreover, it is now common for young people to spend a few years abroad with a relation in Australia perhaps, en route to settling down in India with capital which cannot be amassed at Present within India.

For the early migrants to Britain, adjustment was often problematic. Onward migration to Commonwealth countries was frequent through the 1960s and 1970s as Britain proved an inhospitable place for former colonial peoples in general. Through the 1960s, the exodus from India was offset by a high Anglo-Indian birthrate. (Gist & Wright:1973) By this time, ascertaining Anglo-Indian numbers in India had been rendered more debatable than before due to the Census of India's decision to omit an Anglo-Indian category. All estimates since 1961 have had to be calculated from the numbers of those claiming English as the mother tongue in relation to the numbers professing the Christian religion. When estimates incline towards the 200,000 mark it is assumed that some Indian Christians, Armenians and Goans are included.

At odds with the romantic idea of a people "trapped" in India, many Anglo-Indians interviewed stressed that their residency in India was by choice. As one Calcuttan put it, "everything is okay, providing one has a job." (FL, Calcutta, 1994) This person was typical of some living quite modestly. He and his wife knew of the trials of life in the West and had elected to "tough it out" in India. As western social scientists are sometimes slow to understand, life in India in not hell, for there are irreplaceable joys in a simpler way of life in the company of long-affiliated families or the availability of excellent parochial schools for their children. With regard to the Calcutta Anglo-Indians in particular, it must be remembered that they are as old a presence as the city itself. The city continues to offer its long established neighbourhoods and churches, schools, colleges, nursing homes and clubs. It is probably a difficult Anglo-

Indian enclave to leave permanently. Family conversations still abound with references to different teachers or religious among Protestants and Roman Catholics alike, parish life remains a strong central focus. The Anglo-Indian poor are assisted by organizations including the Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society and the educational uplift work carried out at present by the much loved Sister Marisa. (Dutt:1990, Sen:1988,1983)

Ideas of extinction also tend to ignore the fact that extreme minority status is nothing new to the Anglo-Indians. One of the more fascinating elements of Anglo-Indian history has been the repeated ability to survive sometimes very anti-Eurasian shoals en route to new integrations. Their scattered numbers throughout India tend to detract attention from the important fact of a genuinely all-India community, at home anywhere in the subcontinent. After the pattern established through colonial service postings from one area to the next, the Anglo-Indians continue to be able to adapt, joining new Anglo-Indian enclaves wherever these might be located. The collective experience of many, many families of relocation is one not usually mentioned in depictions of a people alienated, marooned or somehow, "lost". However, adaptability has been a recurring necessity and minority status a continual 'given' wherever Anglo-Indians might find themselves.

Much has been made of the increasing marriage of Anglo-Indian women beyond the Anglo-Indian fold. (Gist & Wright:1973, Peacock:1991, Sen:1988) There is far greater intermarriage between Anglo-Indians, Goans and Indo-Portuguese families than previously; marriages to Muslims and Sikhs have continued apace and increasingly, marriages with Hindus. With regard to "inevitable" extinction via out-marriage, there is probably more concern to do with marriages between Anglo-Indians and westerners abroad as a practice through which the Anglo-Indian identity may be lost.

All discussions of the Anglo-Indian future however, must consider studies conducted elsewhere among ethnic minorities. As Reitz's study of North American ethnicity concluded, if a group has survived for a century or two, it may be regarded as a permanent fact of life, as permanent at least as most other variables of social structure. In North America, cross-ethnic marriages generally result in the offspring

continuing to adhere to one or both of their parents' cultures. While inter-marriage promotes assimilation it does not remove ethnic identification. (1980) As a rule, anthropologists have been most attuned to ethnicity's tenacity over time, perceiving of ethnicity as something which is not neatly replaced by distinctions of class. (Comaroffs:1992) Danda is among Indian sociologists who argue that identities and communal boundaries are always altering in India according to period and situation. (1991) The boundaries and the culture may be changing but the Anglo-Indian community seems destined to prevail. Also, attention must be paid to the dynamics of Ethnic Revival as described by Smith. (1981) The increased business done by genealogists in India is a hearty testament to the younger generation's desire to know more of their parents' backgrounds, to get the family story "straight". In summary, Anglo-Indian ethnicity has less to do with numbers of people but is a deeply seated component of identity over which individuals rarely have control. Emotive factors are of greater importance than tidier models of group processes, socialization or class formation would suggest. As regards the Anglo-Indians of Canada and the United States, Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom, there is probably far more Anglo-Indian cultural and philanthropic activity in progress at the time of writing than at any other time in the community's history in India. Within the multicultural policies of Australia and Canada, the Anglo-Indians have been provided with a new incentive to keep their culture and identity alive and those who would relegate the Anglo- Indians to "dinosaur" status would be wise to notice the reality of thousands of Anglo-Indians appearing at the last years' international reunions in Australia and Britain. At the time of writing, another enormous reunion was planned for an Indian meeting point.

## IX. BHOWANI LAND – WHAT OF THE RAILWAY PEOPLE?

Little has been mentioned of the people of India's railway colonies, populated by the descendants of those who dominated the building and operation of India's railways. So pervasive is the railway motif as a stereotype that non-South Asianists have often responded to conversational outlines of this research with an immediate comment of, "oh yes, they ran the railways".

The portrait of a people attached to the rails must be seen against a backdrop of a people heartily involved in the expansion of India's communications in the post-

Mutiny decades. "Bhowani Land" might be better expanded to include the Indian postal and telegraph services, customs, forests administration, the Survey of India, and assorted other ventures of the uncovenanted colonial services. The record of the community is still averred by Indians recalling an India of less corruption and greater efficiency, when Anglo-Indians still predominated in vital services. In 1947, most responsible posts in the railways administrations were held by Anglo-Indians and with the termination of preferred employment in 1960, an abrupt end came to a long chapter of an ethnohistory marked by strong themes of efficiency and dedication. In these respects, stereotypical representations of the homely history of Eurasians and locomotives do serve the community well: Indians will recall the courage of Anglo-Indian drivers who persevered through the worst Partition violence at great risk to themselves, the general efficiency of important railway roundhouses, plus a spirit of friendly competence among staff. Administrators often oversaw long mileage's of track which were prone to every sort of disorder which the subcontinent might bestow.

In the railway colonies, the associations formed over generations were not quickly dismantled. It is not uncommon to encounter families in countries of resettlement having known one another in India, nor is it uncommon to still find Anglo-Indians families dwelling close to the railway colonies their cohorts once occupied, a factor which renders research less challenging with regard to meeting members of a numerically tiny minority group. In dozens of districts, the origins of a Railway Culture are traceable to the arrival of the first training engineers from Britain in the 1840s. In 1853, the first line between Bombay and Thana was opened and two years later, the East Indian Railway was inaugurated. After the prayers of Bishop Wilson of Calcutta, a train chugged the 57 miles to Bandura in three hours. (Neill:1985) By the early 1900s all of India's main lines were installed constituting some 30,000 miles of track with more than 90 lines of traffic, each belonging to one of ten systems and supervised by one of a total of 33 railway administrations. (Kerr:1995, Sahni:1953) For those who grew up in India's Anglo- Indian railway culture, recollections are clear of a local scene centring on developments along the line, of regular infusions of information that arrived with those returning home, on the organized sports that were often part of community membership, and of course, the social life offered by the inevitable parish hall or the Railway Institute. Before the reforms of 1919, it was

usual for practically every engine driver, station master, permanent way inspector, conductor or guard to be the product of an Anglo-Indian family, probably connected in some way to the railways in the previous generation. The pattern is more impressive when South Asia is considered in its pre-1947 form since this culture was reproduced throughout the entirety of what are now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma. With regard to Burma, some 20,000 AIs could be found there after the mid-19th century. (Koop:1960)

In popular memory, India's larger railway centres are remembered for their shops offering inventories suited to the needs of a people of combined Indian and Western tastes, for their different churches and clergy which were very important in a community where respectability was often derived from staunch Christian membership, a tradition which has prevailed into countries of migration. The railway culture's educational dimension was often parochial and included a sad pattern whereby the children of all who could afford it in more isolated locations were sent away to boarding institutions, sometimes separated for years from their families. The demands of employment involving regular relocations made education something best left to schools often at the other end of the subcontinent. In fact, all of the colonial services in which the Anglo-Indians were found sometimes demanded that fathers be away from their children for periods of up to five years. In the l990s, advertisements continue to appear in Anglo-Indian periodicals referring to school reunions or locating old friends, many of them mentioning Indian towns or junctions of old, for in some railway towns it was usual to spend one's entire working life in the company of fellow Anglo-Indians. In 1912, Lucknow's railway yards alone employed 5,000 persons with many more engaged in light industries related to the railway. (Thomas:1982) Such places as Ratlam or Itarsi in north-central India also displayed the Anglo-Indian reputation for mechanical and technical aptitude. Kharagpur and other important rail centres still show the magnitude of what India's railway administrations carried out: as Morris explains, such places were model training centres, unique within the British empire. There was nothing in the planned industrial towns of Britain which could compare with the centres where Anglo-Indians were sent to apprentice, where every communal need was provided locally in specially constructed facilities. (1986)

Unfortunately, accounts such as Master's Bhowani Junction do not point out the mammoth and variegated involvements dictated by the railways. It is rarely grasped that many families were involved in their actual construction or that a great socioeconomic range of families were engaged in some area of service. Indeed, distinguishing too unyieldingly between the railway families and the loftier sectors of the Anglo-Indian community is done at the risk, once again, of overlooking a culture which was once remarkably uniform but also stratified according to various occupational levels. No doubt, part of Sir Henry Gidney's appeal as the pre-Independence leader of the Anglo-Indians owed to his modest "railway origins". His educational climb was one also made by many others from Episcopal Methodist families. He rose to the top of his profession in the United Kingdom, the youngest candidate ever granted his FRCS designation in the history of the British Empire, and as a pioneer of ocular surgery. (Wallace:1947) A controversial, flamboyant servant of his people, he was perhaps most interesting due to his origins as the son of a Bombay presidency engine-driver.

"Bhowani Land" requires exploration akin to all other emanations of Anglo-Indian culture en route to simply: recording this culture, as much as counter-balancing so much of what has been assumed about the people involved. It is to be hoped that the generation who grew up in India's railway centres will be approached for direction in the study of a way of life now gone from India but which continues to influence the Anglo- Indian imagination. It is emphasized that the same may be said for the Anglo-Indian medical and teaching professions among other sub-divisions. The activities of Anglo-Indians abroad continue to reflect the service-minded and often philanthropic ethos of the past and in this regard it is probably significant that those having never returned to India since the time of their departure are often the most generous of their time and resources. Those who would argue that the emigres have "turned their backs", on India need to examine more closely the dynamics of a minority united by a common, now faraway Past.

A good deal about this modest but rewarding legacy is summarized by a Canadian Anglo-Indian speaking at a central Canadian symposium who stressed the need to keep up connections with organizations and charities and furthering scholarships for Anglo-Indian students in India. He added the need for Anglo-Indians to pray for those

left behind in India while introducing themselves to the Canadian society at large. (Earle:1994) The Canadian periodical, Anglo-Indians in Touch, edited for many years by Mervyn Gaynor of Toronto, is generally replete with evidence of this philanthropic, historically aware but forward-looking orientation as befits an adaptable and multi-talented community.

## SOME NOTES ON FUTURE RESEARCH

In what has been called Bhowani Land for the explanatory purposes of this paper can be found a great deal never encountered in literature which features the Anglo-Indian according to one or another stereotype. In keeping with so much that has been touched upon. the future is hoped to be one in which Anglo-Indian culture is at last, explored and recorded and in its present manifestations, examined anew.

The approaches of Oral History cannot be over-emphasized as useful methods in the study of the Anglo-Indian community. (Thompson:1978) Much constructive work remains to be done possibly according to examples set in recent years by researchers on other topics within the fields of Social History and Historical Sociology. The focus on family history in coming to terms with ethnic group formation is particularly promising with regard to the Anglo-Indians. (Ruggles:1990, Tilly:1987) With regard to the stereotypes discussed above, it is likely that they will remain intact until such time as more writing emanates from within the community and those who would wish it well with regard to fair, fact-finding research and interpretation. More needs to be known of the Indian groups involved at the time of the community's first appearance and this historical research promises to reveal material at direct odds with the unsavoury origins which have so often been ascribed to the Anglo- Indians. As stated earlier, far more needs to be studied and analyzed concerning Anglo-Indian culture and in relation to the contributing European and Indian cultures which gave rise to it; most survey works include stray details of culture which lead off into the past but fall short of examining the clues which reside within these details. There appears to be a need for connectional histories between India and Scotland and Ireland in particular and when these extend to cultural inclusions it is likely that the oft-noted survival of Celtic-English expressions and customs will be understood. The preference for British surnames over Portuguese, the choice of Anglo-Indian neighbourhoods in India's cities, the peculiarities of cuisine or for that matter diction,

-- all point to definite historical as much as cultural influences upon the community's past.

The dynamics of Cultural Revival as demonstrated by the Anglo-Indians of today promise to reveal a great deal of particular, region-specific material. The establishment of the Anglo-Indian research centre at Melbourne is hoped to provide a great boost to the efforts of curious individuals as much as professional writers. The contributions of Gloria Moore among other Anglo-Indians, stand the future's researchers in good stead. In Mrs. Moore's *The Anglo-Indian Vision* is found a beautifully written depiction of the community's history and achievements and a sobering antidote to melodramatic tales of ethnic woe as produced in the BBC's 1980s production, *This Unhappy Breed*. Inevitably, the lead of Mrs. Moore and others will be taken up by others interested in a range of research directions. A similar service to the community has been provided by Withbert Payne's compilation of a now up-dated Anglo-Indian bibliography, a godsend in a field offering few textual clues. (1995) The future is hoped to include a thoroughgoing military history of the Anglo-Indians after the example of other 'martial' communities in India.

Another direction for research may involve increased biographical work on Anglo-Indians of distinction, including those so regularly presented as 'English' or 'British' in histories of India. Again, family history holds a tremendous reservoir of material from which to draw. Works of Indian and British history need to be examined differently, with a view to pointing out the Eurasians and en route to an understanding of Anglo-Indian life at different times in the past. Stereotyping stands to be offset too, by explorations of the lives of those having overcome the special obstacles with which the community was repeatedly beset. Tremendous amounts of resource material await in the East India Company archives as well as the humbler records of numerous Indian towns and states, as of yet most of it unexamined. Church records similarly offer to reveal much of the community through the last 150 years and before. Investigations of the religious heritage of the Anglo-Indians will promote all sorts of much needed knowledge concerning Anglo-Indian culture. Among the Anglo-Indians as distinct from stereotypical Anglo-Indians, the religious influence is the "ticket" to understanding the important but elusive distinctions of Anglo-Indian values, perhaps the factor distinguishing them most from other Indian and indeed,

other Western communities. Removing the sway of Anglo-Indian stereotypes promises to be very much a business of producing solid research materials which simply describe a different, non-sensationalized reality. It is the stuff of better ethnohistory, apt to prove of use to the people who are its very subject.

A full reference list is available in the first issue of *The International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies* (Volume 1, Number 1, 1996).