

**GRADUATE RESEARCH ESSAY**

**IDENTIFYING DOMICILED EUROPEANS  
IN COLONIAL INDIA:  
POOR WHITES OR PRIVILEGED COMMUNITY?**

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Current historiography acknowledges the existence of Domiciled Europeans in colonial India, often referring to them as “poor whites”,<sup>1</sup> but the community has not been the focus of any specific research. Domiciled Europeans were those born in India of parents who were of British and/or European descent who had settled permanently in India.<sup>2</sup> They considered themselves part of the British community, who were originally known as Anglo-Indians, as opposed to the racially mixed European and Indian community who were called Eurasians. However, in order to avoid the derogatory stigma associated with Eurasians or “half castes”, those from mixed unions with fair skins began to call themselves Anglo-Indians.<sup>3</sup> By the turn of the century, the term “Anglo-Indian” ceased to apply to the British and those with no Indian blood and, instead, applied to the those from mixed British and Indian unions and their descendants.

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<sup>1</sup> Coralie Younger *Anglo-Indians: Neglected Children of the Raj* (Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1983), p. 40, David Arnold, “European Orphans and Vagrants in India in the Nineteenth Century” in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, (Vol.VII:2, 1979), p.104 and Lionel Caplan “Cupid in Colonial and Post-Colonial South India: Changing ‘Marriage’ Practices among Anglo-Indians in Madras” in *South Asia* (Vol. XXI, No.2, 1998), pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Arden Wood “Proceedings of East India Association: The Problem of the Domiciled Community in India” *Asiatic Review* (July 1928), p. 417.

<sup>3</sup> The problems associated with half castes are referred to by Christopher Hawes *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India 1773-1833* (Surrey, Curzon Press, 1996), pp.81-90, Frank Anthony *Britain’s Betrayal in India* (New Delhi, 1969) pp. 4-6, and Caplan, pp. 6-8.

In 1911 the Census of India extended the usage of the term “Anglo-Indian” to encompass those of either racially unmixed **or** mixed heritage.<sup>4</sup> This interpretation is set out in the umbrella definition of the Government of India Act 1935, Article 366(2) as follows:

An ‘Anglo-Indian’ means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, so long as paternal descent was European, irrespective of whether the mother was Indian or European, a person born and domiciled in India was deemed to be Anglo-Indian. The British officers who merely spent their working lives in India were excluded from the definition, while Europeans born and habitually resident in India were formally categorised with the Anglo-Indians rather than the elite British.

In much early historiography there was little distinction between the British and Domiciled Europeans. The latter were often included in descriptions of the British, such as Spear’s *The Nabobs* and Kincaid’s *British Life in India 1608-1937*.<sup>6</sup> For administrative convenience the Domiciled European community, that is those with white skins with no Indian blood, and Anglo-Indians, those from racially mixed unions, were linked together. However, the two communities perceived themselves as distinct on the basis of race although both shared a cultural affinity with the British.<sup>7</sup> The confusion caused by the blurred identity of the Domiciled European community, initially categorised with the British and subsequently with the racially mixed blood Anglo-Indians, has resulted in historians, such as Coralie Younger, designating it a status commensurate with Anglo-Indians described as “neglected children of the Raj”.<sup>8</sup>

Younger states that “Domiciled Europeans were ‘poor whites’ who held inferior jobs on the railways and in commercial firms.”<sup>9</sup> David Arnold also suggests a lowly status for Domiciled Europeans when he points to a sharp dichotomy between “the imperialist ideal of an ethnically discrete ruling class and the presence of large numbers of poor whites”.<sup>10</sup> He indicates that from a total population of about 150,000 Europeans, by 1900 nearly 6,000 were institutionalised as orphans or vagrants.<sup>11</sup> He suggests that about half the total European population (that is about 75,000) could be called “poor

<sup>4</sup> See Arden Wood, p. 417; and W. T. Roy “Hostages to Fortune: A Socio-Political study of the Anglo-Indian remnant in India” in *Plural Societies* (Vol. 5, No. 2, 1974), p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Roy, pp. 55-6 and Anthony, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Percival Spear *The Nabobs* (London, Oxford University Press, 1963); Dennis Kincaid *British Social Life in India 1608-1937* (London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1938).

<sup>7</sup> Alfred D.F. (George) Gabb *1600-1947 Anglo-Indian Legacy* 2nd Edition, (Overton, York, 2000), pp. 4-6. This fits Gabb’s description of himself as a Domiciled European.

<sup>8</sup> This forms the title of a work by Coralie Younger *Anglo-Indians: Neglected Children of the Raj*.

<sup>9</sup> Younger, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Arnold, p.104.

<sup>11</sup> Arnold, pp.104 and122.

whites".<sup>12</sup> However, Evelyn Abel indicates that, in 1902, the total number of European and Anglo-Indian children in schools was 31,122 and that an estimated 7,000 "receiv[ed] no education at all".<sup>13</sup> Despite the lack of data as to the percentage of children in Arnold's figures and the level of education achieved, Abel's estimates suggest that more than three out of four children received an education, that is irrespective of whether they were "poor whites" or not.

That education was widely utilized by the communities is supported by the Simon Report which concludes that "nearly every" European and Anglo-Indian child was receiving some sort of education, and that "a much larger proportion of European pupils are reading in the middle and high stages".<sup>14</sup> However, the Simon Report also states that in 1878 the Indian Telegraph Department was entirely staffed by Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, but fifty years later, the percentage of these employees had fallen by sixty percent due to the requirement of higher education and eligibility of Indians to compete for these positions.<sup>15</sup> Both Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians have been criticised by Younger and Abel for not availing themselves of higher education to maintain their eligibility for public service positions in the railways, telegraph and post office following the Indianisation Reforms of 1919 allowing Indians to apply for positions previously exclusively held by Europeans and Anglo-Indians.<sup>16</sup>

The leader of the Anglo-Indian community, Frank Anthony, also criticised the wider Anglo-Indian community for not taking advantage of higher education, and established schools for them. Yet at the same time he confirmed that "Although [his community were] largely practical by aptitude, a relatively high percentage [took] to higher education."<sup>17</sup> Anthony names and describes the achievements of individuals who gained high status through education to become leaders in the military, airforce, legal and medical professions.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, a paradoxical situation is apparent when Anthony describes his difficulties to establish schools and scholarships to improve the education of the poorer sections of the community. These differing situations point to social gradations within the community, and demonstrate that many individuals availed themselves of educational opportunities to improve their status. This research will show that rather than descending the social ladder, many Domiciled Europeans utilized education, not to retain employment in the public service after the Indianisation reforms, but to raise their status to that of middle class professionals.

Most recently, Lionel Caplan has perpetuated the notion of low status by suggesting that historiography had noted the "social and economic deterioration" of "colonialism's 'intermediate' populations" leading to a

<sup>12</sup> Arnold, p.104.

<sup>13</sup> See Evelyn Abel *The Anglo-Indian Community: Survival in India* (Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1988), p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission* Vol. I, Simon Report (1930), p. 401.

<sup>15</sup> Simon Report, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> Younger, p. 59-60 sees lack of education as the cause of their poor status, as does Abel, p. 76. Caplan in "Cupid" p. 8 suggests that it was not until the end of colonial rule that higher education was easily available to Anglo-Indian women.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony, p. ix.

<sup>18</sup> Anthony, pp. 6, 13-16, 379 and 382.

“trajectory of decline” down to their present level.<sup>19</sup> Although this projection may be true for contemporary Anglo-Indian communities in India, the testimonies of Domiciled Europeans interviewed in this research indicate that this description is not appropriate for Domiciled Europeans who, prior to independence, had utilized higher education to improve their status. The projection does not appear to be appropriate for some Anglo-Indians either, but the issue is beyond the scope of this paper.

By means of oral histories conducted with Domiciled Europeans, this research identifies their lifestyle and status which disputes the typicality of the dismissive description “poor whites” attributed to the community by Younger, Abel and Arnold.<sup>20</sup> In particular, the testimonies indicate a marked difference in status between Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, especially with the poorer remnant communities such as those interviewed by Caplan in Madras and Younger in Bangalore.<sup>21</sup>

## Background of Community

The formation of the early mixed Indian/European community has been the subject of much scholarly work, the most recent being *Poor Relations* by Christopher Hawes.<sup>22</sup> This racially mixed population came to evoke feelings of ambivalence or, at worst, odium from both the British and Indians giving rise to prejudices in colonial society. This ambivalence affected the self perception of Domiciled Europeans who in turn distanced themselves, as a white community, distinct from the coloured racially mixed population. These discriminatory attitudes stemmed from the cultural mores of Hindus, Muslims and the British. Indian Muslims sought to maintain strict endogamy, as did high caste Hindus who considered marriage outside one’s own caste polluting, and marriage to foreigners was no exception.<sup>23</sup> British ideas of superiority to Indians were engendered by nineteenth century Victorian ideals.<sup>24</sup> The establishment of a British ruling elite gave rise to a segregated society divided by racial, cultural and caste differences.

It is self-evident that any elite based on racial or caste “purity” would discourage inter-marriage between races or castes, because these liaisons blurred distinctions. Under such conditions, British rulers found it expedient to maintain a Victorian code of conduct, albeit often a façade, and this idea of

<sup>19</sup> Caplan “Cupid” p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Abel p. 6, Younger p. 40 and Arnold p.104.

<sup>21</sup> Caplan “Cupid” p. 7, and Younger p.190.

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Hawes *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India 1773-1833* (Surrey, Curzon Press, 1996). Other works are Noel P. Gist and R. W. Wright *Marginality and Identity: Anglo-Indians as a racially-mixed minority in India* (Leiden, 1973); Dorris Goodrich “The Making of an Ethnic Group: The Eurasian Community in India, 1784-1833” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 1952); and S. J. Malelu “The Anglo- Indians: A Problem in Marginality” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ohio State University, 1964.)

<sup>23</sup> *Laws of Manu* (London, Penguin Books, 1991) Chapter 3, especially pp. 43-44.

Hawes recognised the problem of caste within the early hybrid population, Hawes p. 75.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret McMillan “Anglo-Indians and the Civilizing Mission 1880-1914” in *Contributions to South Asian Studies* (India 1982: 2) pp. 73-101.

correct decorum permeated the class hierarchy, symbolised in the term *pukka sahib* for a gentleman. Segregation gave rise to a process described by Caplan as one “whereby the dominant group conserves its privileges and its pre-eminent place in community by refusing affinity with those whom it designates as inferior”.<sup>25</sup> In order to maintain a higher status, Domiciled Europeans followed the precedent of their rulers, mixing mainly with their own race and class. Conveniently segregation protected the hegemonic interests of the rulers but engendered racial and colour prejudices in colonial Indian society.

Occasional discrimination and repression by the British rulers contributed to low public esteem of Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans.<sup>26</sup> In fact it was for these reasons that Anthony named his book *Britain's Betrayal in India*. Irrespective of British hegemonic tactics to curb the possible rival influence of Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, both the communities rallied to support them whenever the British required extra manpower to counter local opposition, for instance during the Maratha wars, rebellions of 1857, and later in the World Wars.<sup>27</sup> From 1885 right until 1947 voluntary assistance was provided, as required, by Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians in what was known as the “auxiliary force”, although for those employed with the Government, service was mandatory.<sup>28</sup>

The loyal military responses of Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans affirmed their close links with their European cultural heritage, and indicate a recognition that their personal security and status were dependent upon British rule and its enforcement of “law and order”. A symbiotic relationship is evident, whereby the communities relied upon the British to provide employment in the public services. In return their loyal services created an important buffer zone between the British and the Indians which contributed towards the appearance of an efficient but aloof British Government.

What is clear is that “poor white” Domiciled Europeans certainly had the potential to fulfill what Arnold postulated must have been “an important part [in] the colonial regime”.<sup>29</sup> Identification of their lifestyles points to this important role and demonstrates that the blanket use of the term Anglo-Indian has served to overshadow the marked social gradations amongst Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

## Interviewees

This research is restricted to a sample of four formal oral histories lodged at University of Canterbury Library. Although the sample is small, these testimonies are supported and corroborated by numerous interviews conducted by the writer with other Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians

<sup>25</sup> Lionel Caplan *Class and Culture in Urban India: Fundamentalism in a Christian Community* (Oxford, 1987) p. 248.

<sup>26</sup> For examples of this see Hawes pp. 53-72.

<sup>27</sup> See Anthony pp. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> Abel p. 39 and also see Roy p. 57.

<sup>29</sup> Arnold p. 124.

who resided in colonial India.<sup>30</sup> It is recognised that further research is necessary to substantiate the claim that the testimonies of the four interviewees are representative of the lifestyles of the majority of the Domiciled European community. Nevertheless, the fact that four interviewees constantly moved to different towns and cities, but socialised almost entirely with people of their own community and social status, attributes to the typicality of, at least, a wide section of the Domiciled European community. The testimonies add information to current historiography on “poor whites” and provides important evidence of social gradations within the community.

The oral history interviewees are Esmee Cloy (néé Scott), Betty Doyle (néé José), Joan Flack (néé Ahlborn) and Jack Frost, all of whom were born in India and identify themselves as being of only British or European descent, with no Indian ancestry. Cloy was born in Allahabad in 1915 and now lives in Brisbane, Australia. Doyle was born in Lahore in 1915 and now resides in Christchurch, New Zealand. Flack was born in Calcutta in 1919 and recently died in Christchurch. Frost was born in Lucknow in 1912 and died recently in Auckland. Their ancestors arrived in India around the early to mid-nineteenth century, except in the case of Cloy who was second generation born in India.<sup>31</sup> The interviewees grew up and were educated in India and emigrated around the time of the departure of the British in 1947, except for Frost who completed secondary school and his medical training as a surgeon in England.<sup>32</sup> Doyle stayed on until 1963 with her husband and family in the Pakistani Punjab.<sup>33</sup>



Esmee Cloy & Betty Doyle

Joan Flack’s father was a “roving” Swede who worked as an engineer on tea plantations but died whilst she was a baby.<sup>34</sup> Her mother’s family, de Penning, had established a Patent Office in Calcutta in the nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> Flack’s mother’s schooling is unknown although Flack says that her mother competently managed a large property for her relatives.<sup>36</sup> Flack completed her schooling in Darjeeling to the Senior Cambridge Level<sup>37</sup> after

<sup>30</sup> Twenty-five interviews were conducted with Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, the majority being over the age of 75 years currently living in England, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, although detailed oral histories were not recorded by the writer. A detailed list of these interviewees is appended to the oral history tapes and transcripts held at University of Canterbury Library.

<sup>31</sup> Cloy p.1, Frost p.3; Flack Tape 1: p.1; Doyle Tape 1: p. 1-5 Tape 2: p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Cloy p. 6-8; Frost p. 10-11; Flack Tape 2: p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 30 and 33.

<sup>34</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Flack Tape 1: pp. 18-19.

<sup>37</sup> This was the School Leaving Certificate taken at about seventeen years of age.

which she undertook a teachers' training course in Kurseong.<sup>38</sup> Flack's personal status is reflected in her claim that her qualification as a teacher permitted her to join the best clubs in her own right, in contrast to her hairdresser friend who was barred from them because she had only a trade rather than a professional occupation.<sup>39</sup>

Betty Doyle and Esmee Cloy attended separate schools in Mussoorie attaining the Senior Cambridge certificates, and then completed nursing and midwifery courses in Calcutta Medical College, where they met.<sup>40</sup> Cloy's father was a travelling ticket inspector on the Railway, whilst Doyle's father was employed as an auditor with the Railway.<sup>41</sup> Cloy spent part of her childhood in Lucknow in what was called the "Cantonment" where the accommodation of the predominantly British civilian communities was located. Doyle's family resided mainly in Lahore in subsidised accommodation for railway employees.<sup>42</sup>



Joan Flack

The qualifications of the three female interviewees demonstrate that they fulfilled high educational ambitions in line with gender perspectives of the day. Additionally, their subsequent marriages raised their original family social status. Flack married a British magistrate in the Indian Civil Service (ICS). Cloy married an Indian Medical Department (IMD) doctor who was a Domiciled European, and Doyle married an Anglo-Indian IMD doctor.<sup>43</sup> Flack's marriage promoted her to what was commonly referred to as the "heaven born"<sup>44</sup> ranks of the ICS, whilst Doyle and Cloy led professional middle class lives.

Jack Frost attended Philander Smith school in Naini Tal, then went to Dulwich College, London.<sup>45</sup> It is notable that Frost's father, who was born and trained as a doctor in India with the IMD, sent his son Jack to qualify as a surgeon in England. This entitled Frost to join the Indian Medical Service (IMS) which was considered superior to the IMD to which the Indian trained

<sup>38</sup> Flack: Tape 1: pp. 8 and 16.

<sup>39</sup> Flack: Tape 1: p. 3

<sup>40</sup> Cloy p.10 and Doyle Tape 1: pp. 7 and 11.

<sup>41</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Cloy, p. 5 and Doyle Tape 1: p. 5.

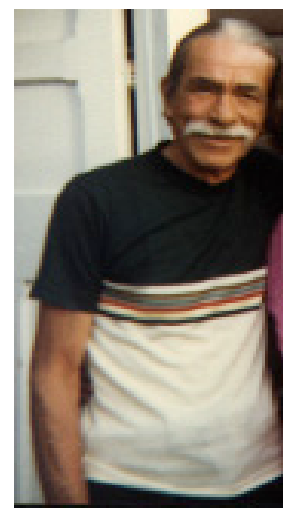
<sup>43</sup> Cloy, p. 13, Doyle Tape 1: p. 13 and Flack Tape 2: p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Gabb, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Frost, pp. 8 and 13.

doctors belonged; trainees qualified in India were usually ineligible to serve as doctors with the IMS.<sup>46</sup> This move on the part of Frost's parents demonstrates their ambition to obtain higher qualifications and prospects for their son. IMD doctors did not share the same prestige, prospects of promotion or remuneration as doctors with the IMS.<sup>47</sup> Doyle maintained that an IMD doctor entered the army at the rank of Warrant Officer but could not rise beyond the rank of Captain, whereas promotion was not limited for the IMS doctors.<sup>48</sup> Frost left the army in 1947 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.<sup>49</sup>

Cloy and Doyle both married doctors whom they met whilst undergoing their nursing and medical training in Calcutta.<sup>50</sup> Their husbands had won military scholarships for their medical training, which tied them to the army for a period after qualifying.<sup>51</sup> Whilst at medical college Doyle's husband and his group of trainees elected to personally pay to sit the annual MB degree end-of-year exams, rather than sit the usual annual exams for the MMF Licentiate qualification.<sup>52</sup> Cloy's husband qualified earlier than Doyle and did not have the opportunity to elect to obtain an MB degree; he found himself in the unfortunate position of being unable to practise overseas without an additional three years' training.<sup>53</sup>



Jack Frost

The educational and employment aspirations of the interviewees demonstrate that they did not conform with the criticism that they lacked ambition to achieve qualifications. The different value of British and Indian qualifications was recognised and overcome when possible by Frost's and Doyle's husbands. The senior Frost ensured that his son joined the superior IMS rather than his own IMD, and Doyle gained an MB rather than the licentiate qualification. It is evident that education was a means available and utilised to raise their social status.

## Lifestyles and Attitudes

To differentiate the lifestyle of Domiciled Europeans from the poorer communities of Anglo-Indians researched by Caplan, Younger and Abel, descriptions follow of the interviewees' family homes and lifestyle.

<sup>46</sup> Frost p. 9; Doyle Tape 2: p. 16.

<sup>47</sup> Doyle Tape 2: p. 16 and Frost pp. 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> Frost p. 9. This is confirmed by Hawes pp. 46-47.

<sup>49</sup> Frost p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> Cloy p. 13 and Doyle Tape 1: pp. 14-15.

<sup>51</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 20 and Cloy p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Doyle Tape 1: pp. 15-20 and 23.

<sup>53</sup> Cloy p. 13.

During their childhood, Cloy and Doyle's homes changed as their fathers moved in the course of their employment. They moved either from one set of Railway Colony accommodation to another, or from one military Cantonment area to another.<sup>54</sup> They said the types of homes at different postings were similar. These homes were brick houses, having separate living and dining rooms with polished marble floors, three or four large bedrooms, adjoining bathrooms, verandas and a kitchen. Flush toilets were installed and clean running cold and hot water provided on the premises; these facilities were not generally available in average homes in British India. Good hygiene was an important differentiating factor in the homes of the interviews.

The houses were situated in a compound comprising a garden around the house with servants' quarters located at the rear.<sup>55</sup> The servants' accommodation usually consisted of a row of rooms, one for each servant and his or her family, irrespective of family size. Briefly, before departing for England in 1945, Cloy's mother was sufficiently well off to own a house in Dehra Dun, where most houses were of a smaller wooden style.<sup>56</sup> After the war, when their husbands left the army, Doyle and Cloy had equally good homes provided by an oil company for which their doctor husbands worked at different times, providing free medical care to company employees. Houses were rent free, subsidised petrol was available to employees, and the company paid for at least three servants.<sup>57</sup>

Isobel Abbott, the English daughter-in-law of the President of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Federation in Jhansi from 1913, corroborates in her autobiography the view that cantonment areas contained "spacious, gracious" homes.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, her descriptions of a typical home for Europeans, with large rooms surrounded by verandas on a large block of land, closely resemble those of the interviewees.<sup>59</sup> Anthony also provides descriptions of typical Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European homes in Jubbulpore and Bangalore as being "the very finest types of bungalows" with "separate well-kept gardens and ranging from 8 to 15 rooms...[and] expensive furnishings, the cut-glass and silver-ware, the battalion of servants were part of the pattern in the better homes."<sup>60</sup>

Frost's final appointment in India was Assistant Medical Officer in Quetta where he was provided with what he called "a lovely home".<sup>61</sup> Apart from this home, he states that in general his Army barrack accommodation was not very good. Thus, although he enjoyed a position and status higher than that of Doyle and Cloy, his living conditions were not correspondingly superior. Flack's description of her mother's homes and attendant lifestyle was not markedly different from those of Doyle and Cloy. However, the de Penning home in Darjeeling, which Flack's mother had renovated into eight

<sup>54</sup> Doyle Tape 2: pp. 4-6; Cloy p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 8 and 2: p. 4-6; Cloy pp. 8-9.

<sup>56</sup> Cloy p. 9 and Flack Tape 2: p. 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 8 and Cloy p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Babbot (pseudonym of Isobel Abbott) *Indian Interval* (London, Hammond & Company, 1960). p. 165

<sup>59</sup> Babbot p. 15.

<sup>60</sup> Anthony p. 361.

<sup>61</sup> Frost p. 14.

flats and managed for her relations, was noticeably grander.<sup>62</sup> As the wife of an ICS officer, Flack had at least twice as many servants as either Doyle or Cloy.

The eating habits of the interviewees demonstrate their affiliation to European habits and culture. Furthermore, these clearly display what Caplan calls “visible messages of consumption” whereby the lower classes emulate to various degrees the behaviour of the higher classes.<sup>63</sup> Breakfast was porridge followed by eggs, bacon and toast, or equivalent.<sup>64</sup> Doyle said that before partition, fresh ham or bacon and fresh bread were delivered to the house in baskets.<sup>65</sup> The families’ main daily meal, lunch, consisted of at least three to six courses, with additional courses on special occasions. Lunch was usually soup, followed by a side dish (entree), a main (sometimes curry and rice but more often European meals), a pudding, and fruit.<sup>66</sup> Evening dinners did not usually include curry and rice but were on the same scale as lunch, followed by cheese and biscuits and often port. Anthony gives an equivalent description of meals. An English breakfast was followed by a typical Anglo-Indian lunch of several courses.<sup>67</sup> Social dinners were frequently grand occasions, with several household cooks getting together to produce banquets.<sup>68</sup>

It is appropriate to remember that most British and their dependant communities considered British rule was to be to India’s advantage, and it was not until the after World Wars that their confidence in this belief was shaken.<sup>69</sup> Lingering Victorian values, implicit in the lives of the British and the Domiciled Europeans, deemed it necessary to set an example of fine behaviour, demonstrating their superiority to the “backward” Indians.<sup>70</sup> This notion of behaviour linked to moral rectitude set a code of conduct from the top of the class hierarchy, the Raj ICS officers, down through the classes. In line with these cultural norms, Domiciled Europeans considered it essential to maintain a strict code of etiquette in their everyday family lives.

On a daily basis the table settings were immaculate, the “bearer” having been specially trained to lay the cutlery for each course.<sup>71</sup> There was frequently an epergne of flowers with nuts and pickles on the table, and Flack remembers butter moulded in the shape of a chicken.<sup>72</sup> The memoirs of Isobel Abbott depict similar eating habits. She recalls her delight when, as a new English bride at a formal business dinner, she noticed the cook had produced each pudding served in the shape of an animal.<sup>73</sup> However, she was dismayed with her Muslim guest’s response when she innocently pointed out his pig-shaped pudding. One can only speculate on the motives of the cook or

<sup>62</sup> Flack Tape 1: pp. 18-19 part of long description of the home.

<sup>63</sup> Caplan *Class and Culture in Urban India*, pp. 95-99.

<sup>64</sup> Cloy p. 10, Doyle Tape 2: p.8, Flack Tape 2: p.4, Frost p.15.

<sup>65</sup> Doyle Tape 2: p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 9; Cloy p. 10; Flack Tape 2: p. 4; Frost p. 15.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony pp. 361-2.

<sup>68</sup> Flack Tape 2: p.5

<sup>69</sup> cf. MacMillan pp. 90 and 103.

<sup>70</sup> Macmillan pp.78 and 82.

<sup>71</sup> Frost p. 15.

<sup>72</sup> Flack Tape 2: p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Babbott p. 37.

bearer! In Doyle's home different embroidered or damask table cloths or individual settings were used for each meal, and finger bowls provided.<sup>74</sup> Cloy said good manners and correct use of table napkins were important, and each family gathered together freshly dressed, especially for the evening meal.<sup>75</sup> Frost had to wear a dinner jacket in the Officers Mess.<sup>76</sup> Meals were placed on platters and taken around the table, served by the bearer individually to each person.<sup>77</sup> Attention to such daily detail entrenched the self-perception of Domiciled Europeans' status and their superiority to those who could not afford to keep up such appearances.

A distinctive feature of the homes is seen in the compounds, which had well-stocked and well-kept gardens cared for by the *mali* (gardener). Flower pots were a particular feature of most homes, because it was common for the employers, be it the railways, company or army, to transfer their employees to different areas, and the flower pots enabled the garden lovers to take their treasured plants with them.<sup>78</sup> The fact that housing was provided by the employers, rather than being privately owned, meant that these employees maintained transient and portable lifestyles. The fact the majority of Domiciled Europeans did not own their own homes, meant that they had not established permanent roots in India.

The interviewees spoke nostalgically and held fond memories of their lives in India, associated with hot days and balmy evenings. On an average day, the husbands would be at work, returning home for lunch and an afternoon rest, before returning to work for a few more hours. The women would organise the servants' tasks, check the outgoing and incoming laundry, supervise the cook's shopping lists, organise the flowers in the house, check the gardener's activities and perhaps in the cool of the morning or evening potter in their gardens, or especially with their favourite pot plants on their verandas. The women would play cards, scrabble, bridge or mahjong, or visit other wives socially in the morning.<sup>79</sup> Following an afternoon rest, it was usual to go to the club to play or watch tennis, where the men would join them. After tennis, they would return home, change into evening attire, that is smart dresses and suits, and return to the clubs for some hours.<sup>80</sup>

Apart from being the central meeting points for social conversation and drinks, the clubs offered varying activities which included tennis, billiards, darts, table tennis, swimming, and regular dances. At the larger clubs extra facilities were available, such as golf courses, and roller skating on a sprung floor.<sup>81</sup> The interviewees' evidence of the club activities confirm Stanley Reed's observation that, by the turn of the century, the earlier days of hunting and horse riding were gradually replaced by golf and tennis.<sup>82</sup> All the interviewees' agreed that, in addition to the distinct social hierarchy

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<sup>74</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> Cloy p. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Frost p. 15.

<sup>77</sup> Doyle Tape 2: p.9.

<sup>78</sup> Flack Tape 2: p.2.

<sup>79</sup> Doyle Tape 1: pp. 9-10.

<sup>80</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 9; Cloy p. 18; Flack Tape 2: pp. 25-6; Frost p.23.

<sup>81</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 3; Doyle Tape 1: p.9 and 24; Cloy p. 18; Frost p.23.

<sup>82</sup> Sir Stanley Reed *The India I Knew 1897-1947* (London, Odhams Press, 1952) p. 140. Reed was editor of *The Times of India* 1907-23 and M.P. For Aylesbury 1938-50.

demarcated by employment, club membership signified an appropriate measure of status.<sup>83</sup>

The people who lived in the Railway Colonies, and similarly the Telegraph, Post Office and Police housing areas, had their own clubs and organised their own social activities, which were restricted to people of the same socio-economic position as themselves. Doyle and Cloy, whose families lived in the Railways colonies for many years, were members of the Railways Colony clubs, known as Institutes.<sup>84</sup> It is notable that Flack and Frost who were members of the better *burra* (big) clubs said that they had never entered these communities, or their clubs.<sup>85</sup> People in the public services belonged to the *chota* (small) clubs rather than the more salubrious *burra* clubs.<sup>86</sup> However, after Cloy and Doyle married, their husbands attained positions as senior medical doctors, and they were able to join the *burra* clubs.<sup>87</sup> These details tally closely with Charles Allen's description of clubs in his *Plain Tales of the Raj*.<sup>88</sup> The ultimate criteria for membership were status, position and wealth, although anyone could be refused membership to a club, by means of voting or "black balling", if their behaviour was deemed inappropriate.<sup>89</sup>

The European, rather than Indian, lifestyle of the Domiciled Europeans is again evident in the descriptions of their school days, and is part of the community's transient lifestyle. Except for Flack, whose home was in the hill station Darjeeling, the interviewees spent nine months out of twelve each year away from their homes attending boarding school in the "hills".<sup>90</sup> The schools, originally part of the Orphanage schools, such as La Martinere, were taken over by various Christian mission denominations, which enforced regular church attendance, assembly, prayers and grace at meals.<sup>91</sup> Pupils were drawn mainly from Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European communities and included a small percentage of Indians.<sup>92</sup> Lessons were taught in English, and the second language taught was either French or Latin, but it was compulsory for Doyle to pass Urdu in her school leaving exams.<sup>93</sup> The school leaving exams were set in England, being the Junior and Senior Cambridge exams and the interviewees indicate that the standard was high. Teachers were provided by European religious missions and supplemented by locally trained Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians.<sup>94</sup>

School uniforms, like their dress in general, were of European style. Frost said that his school never required a uniform to be worn, whilst the three women wore specific tunics, blouses, black stockings and shoes throughout the year.<sup>95</sup> At school, hats were worn for going to and from

<sup>83</sup> Frost p. 22; Flack Tape 2: p. 8; Doyle Tape 1: p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> Doyle socialised at the Burt Institute in Lahore see Tape 1 : p.5 and Cloy p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> Flack 2: pp. 16-17; Frost p. 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Burra* means great or important and *chota* means small or unimportant.

<sup>87</sup> Doyle Tape 1: pp.24-26; Cloy p.18.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Allen *Plain Tales of the Raj* (Bucks, Futura Publications,1975) pp.116-124.

<sup>89</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 26; Cloy p. 19; Flack 1: p. 5; and Frost p.5, 21 and 24. Voting by "Black-balling" is also found in Allen p. 122-3.

<sup>90</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p.7; Cloy p. 8; Flack Tape 1 : pp. 8-9 and Frost p.13.

<sup>91</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p.7; Frost pp. 8 and 13; and Flack Tape 1: pp. 7-9.

<sup>92</sup> Flack Tape 1: p.9; Doyle Tape 1: p.8 and see also Abel p. 40.

<sup>93</sup> Cloy p. 12 and Doyle Tape 1: p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Abel pp. 68-69.

<sup>95</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 16 and Doyle Tape 2: p. 10.

Church.<sup>96</sup> All the interviewees said their family religion was Anglican, although Church and religion were not a central focus in their lives. They attended church with their family only on special occasions, but regularly at school. Nevertheless they all said their parents enjoyed church services, especially at Christmas and Easter.<sup>97</sup>

These details demonstrate that Domiciled Europeans adhered to a distinct European culture, rather than assimilating with Indian culture. The interviewees perceived a difference between people of only European descent and Anglo-Indians.<sup>98</sup> Fair skins were indicative of superior status, because they enabled one to join better clubs, from which Anglo-Indians were usually excluded.<sup>99</sup> It is significant that prior to the 1920s, ICS officers were only selected in England; thus the top echelon of society were people with fair skins, contributing to class distinctions based on race and colour. However some Indian princes were allowed to join the “exclusive” clubs, demonstrating that economic wealth together with high social status could overturn the usual eligibility criteria of race and colour.<sup>100</sup>

## Bicultural Interactions

The occupation and morals of the British communities maintained standards which paralleled, “keeping-up-with”, Brahmin standards of purity and pollution. It is hardly coincidental then that British Indian society was jokingly equated with the Indian system of caste. In this notional hierarchy the elite ICS officers were euphemistically aligned with the “heaven born”<sup>101</sup> priestly Brahmins at the top of the Hindu order, the British army and its officers were equivalent to the warrior Ksatriya caste, whilst the British businessmen, merchants and traders paralleled the Vaisya merchant caste. Lower classes and servants to the British represent the lowly Sudras. The untouchables remain the unclean although, of course, this notional hierarchy is not intended to seriously encompass caste ideas of purity and pollution. In this entirely notional scenario Domiciled Europeans serving in the army could be aligned with the Ksatriya caste, whilst those in the army, professions, trades or public services perhaps fitted in the Vaisya caste.

Right into the mid-twentieth century, the British rulers and educators in India preferred to adhere to Victorian ideals. These Victorian ideals were more compatible with Indian social mores, offering a moral highground and right to guardianship which helped legitimate their own fragile security on foreign soil. Macmillan’s comment that it was usual for Western people in the nineteenth century to see societies in evolutionary terms, rather than study other societies “for themselves” is consistent with the attitudes of the interviewees.<sup>102</sup> The

<sup>96</sup> Doyle Tape 2: p.10; Cloy: p. 8; Flack 1 : p.16, Frost: p. 13.

<sup>97</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 6; Cloy: p. 7; Flack Tape 1: p. 14; Frost: p. 12.

<sup>98</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 34 and Tape 2: p. 1; Cloy p. 1; and Frost p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 25 and Flack Tape 1: pp. 2-3.

<sup>100</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 3, cf. also Hawes pp.76-78.

<sup>101</sup> A term used by Rudyard Kipling, see Gabb p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Mcmillan p. 85.

superiority of whites and their introduction of advanced technology had consolidated evolutionary ideas of white supremacy. In particular, nineteenth century ideas of good hygiene and sanitation had increased segregation between richer and poorer classes, Europeans and Indians, simply in the interests of good health, if not survival. Subsequently, however, higher education and widespread ideas of improved hygiene helped erode barriers of colour and racial superiority. By offering western education, medicine and modern hygiene to the Indians, patterns of mutual dependency between the British communities and Indians were perpetuated.

Nevertheless, all the interviewees confirm that despite the close proximity of radically different cultures, British and Indian cultural groups remained separate, with the respective communities leading what could be called “parallel lives”. Apart from contacts with servants, the interviewees had minimal contact with local Indians, but nothing they said suggested they despised, disliked, or scorned Indian cultural values, although they had no interest or inclination to adopt any aspect of Indian culture, except their food. Where minimal contact did occur there is no evidence of threat or serious friction. Doyle and Flack recall that as young girls it was quite safe for them to walk or cycle alone around their home towns.<sup>103</sup> As a schoolgirl, Flack used to walk three miles to school and back alone.<sup>104</sup> This co-existence between Domiciled Europeans and Indians is consistent with the subsequent events during partition which saw non-Indians utterly unscathed by the violence and mass slaughter which took place.

Only a few contacts with Indians are recorded. Flack met a few wealthy nawabs and maharajas who were permitted to belong to the same clubs as herself.<sup>105</sup> Later with impending independence, she met Indian ICS officers through her husband, but they did not socialise together.<sup>106</sup> Frost lived with the British Army and had contacts with Indians through his work as a doctor, but none socially.

Whilst living in the Railway colonies, at boarding school and training as nurses, Doyle and Cloy mixed almost exclusively with other Domiciled Europeans, only occasionally with Anglo-Indians whom they personally liked, and rarely with the local Indians.<sup>107</sup> Cloy said that people tended naturally to stick to their own kind, because “it was accepted.”<sup>108</sup> Cloy regretted that they had been rather “one-eyed and didn’t think about other people”.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, as a nurse she had preferred tending Indians because they were more appreciative than the Europeans, who always “expected a lot more of the nurses”.<sup>110</sup>

As a child Doyle remembers playing with some darker skinned children in the Railway Colony, and playing games, such as hopscotch, marbles, kite flying and skipping with the servants’ children.<sup>111</sup> None of the Domiciled

<sup>103</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 9 and Flack Tape 1: pp. 8-9.

<sup>104</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 8.

<sup>105</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 3.

<sup>106</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 9; Cloy pp. 4-5 and Flack Tape 1: p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> Cloy pp. 4-5.

<sup>109</sup> Cloy p. 15.

<sup>110</sup> Cloy pp. 15-16.

<sup>111</sup> Doyle Tape 2: p. 6.

Europeans said that they ever wore Indian clothes, except for Doyle who says her neighbour lent her a *shalvar* and *kamiz* (native pants and shirt) to wear to a child's fancy dress party.<sup>112</sup> The facts that Cloy preferred to nurse the Indians, and Doyle borrowed a *shalvar* and *kamiz* from her neighbour, suggests that although they had little to do with the Indians, these contacts evinced no friction. In fact Doyle says that after partition, when she found herself in a position to socialise with the local people, she thought how pleasant the Pakistanis were and wished she had known more local people.<sup>113</sup>

Cloy said that it was considered impolite to speak to their servants in the local language, although Doyle said that an ungrammatical form, *gumarr*, was commonly used in communications with servants.<sup>114</sup> English was the first language of the Domiciled Europeans. Doyle and Frost had learnt Urdu or Hindi at school, although neither were fluent speakers. But they knew and used the polite form of *ap*, rather than *tum*, for "you" even when speaking to servants.<sup>115</sup> This politeness is in line with the manners and decorum Domiciled Europeans expected of themselves.

Relationships with servants reflect aspects of "*ma-bap*" (mother- father) ideology. It is significant that masters and servants co-existed, living within the same compound, irrespective of the vast differences in cultural values and lifestyles. It was this amicable co-existence which induced respect and fond memories between employers and servants, some prevailing even to this day.<sup>116</sup> A reason for this amicable co-existence was their mutual dependence upon each other. The servants depended on their masters for their livelihood and, in return, they performed the tasks considered beneath the dignity of masters in India. The fact that Domiciled Europeans had servants indicates they did not live like poor people. Each interviewee had at least five servants, all usually living on the premises which meant that their private lives scarcely escaped observation.<sup>117</sup>

It has already been noted that the class hierarchy within British society found parallels within the Indian caste hierarchy. The interviewees recognised their own position in the British class hierarchy and accepted hierarchies at all levels in society, even between their servants. The cooks were usually of a high caste, whilst the sweepers and cleaners were of a low caste.<sup>118</sup> The Hindu belief that contact with those of lower caste would pollute one's own caste status prevented each caste from performing jobs which belonged to the domain of other castes. Doyle pointed out that there were two types of *ayahs* (nannies). A higher untouchable *mali ayah* would perform most duties including putting a baby on the potty, but would not clean the pot or the nappies, whilst a lower untouchable *sweeper ayah* would perform all these duties.<sup>119</sup> Respect for Indian tradition by Domiciled Europeans is apparent in that servants were not expected to perform tasks which conflicted with their own *jati* taboos.

<sup>112</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p.11; Cloy: p. 8; Flack 1: p.4.

<sup>113</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 11 and 13, 2: p. 15; Cloy p. 16.

<sup>114</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 13.

<sup>115</sup> Doyle Tape 1: pp.11 and 13; Cloy p.12; Flack Tape 2: p.8; Frost p.17.

<sup>116</sup> Frost p. 30 and Doyle still keeps in regular touch with her cook's family.

<sup>117</sup> Flack Tape 2: pp. 11-12; Frost p. 15; Doyle Tape 1: p. 14 and Cloy p. 12.

<sup>118</sup> Doyle Tape 1: pp. 9-10.

<sup>119</sup> Doyle Tape 2: p. 10.

## Colour Prejudice and Social Status

The social hierarchy in colonial India due to British class and Indian caste, *varna* and *jati*, is closely linked to race and colour, after all, *varna* means colour. The interviewees were quick to mention that Indians displayed colour prejudices of their own.<sup>120</sup> This goes right back to the constant rivalry between the fairer northerners and darker southern Dravadians, also known by the perjorative term *dasas*. The superior status of Domiciled Europeans over darker Anglo-Indians is implicit in criticisms that fair Anglo-Indians “passed themselves off” as Europeans in order to be eligible for the commensurate benefits of better jobs and higher status.<sup>121</sup> This is what has been referred to as “leakage at the top”<sup>122</sup> of the social ladder and is the basis of Anthony’s criticism that fair skinned people in India preferred to associate with and call themselves British or Domiciled European, rather than link themselves with the mixed blood Anglo-Indian community within which they were legally included.<sup>123</sup>

Despite Anthony’s inaccurate observation that Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans were strictly endogamous communities, he admitted the preference for women to marry British males.<sup>124</sup> These marriage preferences, referred to as “hypergamy among the fairer daughters ... many of whom married officials holding high positions”, indicate a desire for higher status, and demonstrate the existence of colour prejudice.<sup>125</sup> The interviewees agree that such prejudices did exist, and a British male was considered a “good catch” and it was not the “done thing” to socialise with Indians or darker people. It was certainly improper to marry them even though such marriages did occur occasionally, an example being Doyle’s marriage to an Anglo-Indian IMD doctor.<sup>126</sup>

These attitudes point to an upwardly mobile community who capitalised on their fair colour to improve their status through marriage to Europeans and ordinary British soldiers. Irrespective of the frequently low class origins of some “poor white” soldiers in their home country, in India they represented part of the elite Raj.<sup>127</sup> A comparison of this trend to marry outside their own community is noted by Caplan. In contemporary Madras, Caplan suggests that Anglo-Indians seek “improved financial security and status” by finding suitable marriage partners amongst Indians.<sup>128</sup> Although this recent trend leads to important changes in identity, it is argued here that this trait is motivated by some of the same reasons as those prompting earlier generations to marry the British. In both cases, the marriages improved one’s social status and included the natural expectation of improved financial security.

<sup>120</sup> Cloy p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> Arden Wood pp. 420-1.

<sup>122</sup> Arden Wood p. 420.

<sup>123</sup> Anthony pp. 6-7.

<sup>124</sup> Anthony pp. 7-8.

<sup>125</sup> Arden Wood p. 419.

<sup>126</sup> Cloy pp. 3-4.

<sup>127</sup> Caplan points out that some of these “poor Europeans” and “time-expired British soldiers” were the ancestors of some Anglo-Indian families in Madras in “Cupid” p. 7.

<sup>128</sup> Caplan “Cupid” p. 9.

A salient feature of these marriages is that the partners shared the same cultural values. Previously, eligible males outside one's own community were the British, whilst in contemporary Madras they are usually Indian Christians.<sup>129</sup> Caplan notes that, as in the past, for marriages between Anglo-Indians and respectable Hindu families "the principal impediment is caste".<sup>130</sup> The interviewees state that, although marriage with Indians was rare, skin colour was not the over-riding criterion for choosing marriage partners. Although Cloy says that it seemed natural that those of similar skin colour mixed socially and married amongst themselves, personal "feelings over-rode colour prejudice" if one liked a darker person.<sup>131</sup> Doyle's comments about an Englishman who married a dark Anglo-Indian woman, confirm the accepted, but flexible, ideas of colour prejudice. She said his family were at first dismayed "until they got to know what a lovely person she was."<sup>132</sup> Her own marriage to an Anglo-Indian met with the same family response.<sup>133</sup> So although colour prejudice was linked to racial difference and ideas of superiority, in the final analysis, status, personality and common culture were factors that could overcome mere colour prejudice.

On the other hand, the testimonies of the interviewees provide an insight into the fears and protective concerns that lay behind the acceptance of colour prejudice. Doyle explained that marriage to those with similar skin colour was preferred because it was unfair to bear siblings who might have different complexions and would face future discrimination in opportunity.<sup>134</sup> Such a situation is recounted by Flack. As a child she was taught by a dark skinned teacher who had a fair skinned, red-haired twin sister, and Flack recalls thinking "how unlucky" the dark teacher was.<sup>135</sup> Presumably "unlucky" indicated lesser future prospects for the darker sister, whether through marriage to improve her economic position and status, or simply social rejection by higher levels of society and clubs. Even limericks were known relating to children from marriages to "darkies" which would produce children who could be "one black, one white and one khaki".<sup>136</sup> A similar derogatory limerick is quoted by Gabb.<sup>137</sup> Flack said that being partly coloured was like a "stain on escutcheon".<sup>138</sup> These reflections by Flack signify simultaneously simple and complex attitudes towards colour prejudice prevalent within families.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Caplan "Cupid" pp. 9-11.

<sup>130</sup> Caplan "Cupid" p. 11.

<sup>131</sup> Cloy p. 4.

<sup>132</sup> Doyle Tape 1: pp. 34-35.

<sup>133</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p.15.

<sup>134</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p.35 See Younger p. 115 who cites examples of these ideas.

<sup>135</sup> Flack Tape 2: p. 17.

<sup>136</sup> Flack Tape 1: p.2. In Urdu khaki means "dusty". Referring to the skin colour of those of mixed unions Younger quotes the term "brindle" p.115

<sup>137</sup> Gabb p.21.

<sup>138</sup> Flack Tape 1: p. 2.

## Politics and National Identity

The attitudes of the Domiciled Europeans discussed here are the basis of Anthony's criticism of "his community", whom he considered to comprise both Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, and their loyalty towards the British rather than to India. He particularly criticised those with fair skins and argued that they should "stop aping the British" and think of India, rather than England, as home.<sup>139</sup> Cloy asks how the question is valid since if one "was British" how could one "be aping the British?"<sup>140</sup> As regards home, again the interviewees are unanimous in their view that India was not home - and yet neither was England.<sup>141</sup> Only Frost thought of England as home as he had spent several years of his youth in London and married an English woman.<sup>142</sup> The interviewees did not think of any **country** as their home; their home appeared to be their hometown or place of abode where they had most family ties.<sup>143</sup> Ideas of home revolved around actual family location, not specific to any country, neither Britain nor India.<sup>144</sup> They saw themselves as colonials living in a foreign land chosen as home. However, culturally they saw themselves as British or European, not native Indians.

This evidence demonstrates why Anthony needed to argue, vainly, that "his community", that is Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, should consider themselves natives of India. All four interviewees emphatically say they never conceived of themselves as part of his community or as "natives" of India.<sup>145</sup> The category "native" was merely statutory; it retained eligibility for Domiciled Europeans to compete for jobs in the public services.<sup>146</sup> The problem of British identity, rather than Indian, is demonstrated by Anthony when he suggests that John Masters was legally an Anglo-Indian, despite Masters' own description of himself: a second or third generation European domiciled in India.<sup>147</sup>

Originally several Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European associations were formed in different parts of India, such as J. H. Abbott's association in Jhansi. By 1928 most branches had combined to form The All-India Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association.<sup>148</sup> The name itself demonstrates an explicit distinction between the two groups, which was subsumed when the name was shortened to The All-India Anglo-Indian Association. A notable feature of the various associations was the establishment of retirement centres, such as that at McCluskieganj in Chotanagpur, and Whitefield near Bangalore.<sup>149</sup> Part of the reason these centres were unsuccessful was because

<sup>139</sup> Anthony pp. 99 and 120.

<sup>140</sup> Cloy p. 20.

<sup>141</sup> Cloy p. 5; Frost pp. 7-8; Doyle Tape 1: p.4; Flack Tape 1: pp. 1 and 10.

<sup>142</sup> Frost p. 2.

<sup>143</sup> Flack Tape 1: p.10; Cloy p. 5; Doyle Tape 1: p.4.

<sup>144</sup> Flack Tape p. 11.

<sup>145</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 4; Cloy p. 5, Flack Tape 1: pp. 1 and 10; Frost p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> Simon Report p. 43.

<sup>147</sup> John Masters wrote the well known novel *Bhowani Junction* about the life of Anglo-Indians in the Railways, which Anthony describes as "lurid" and the interviewees considered atypical of their own morals. See Anthony p. 4 and also Gabb p. 30.

<sup>148</sup> Abel p. 115.

<sup>149</sup> Younger pp. 48-49, see also Gabb p. 8.

the urban Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians could not adapt to the essentially rural conditions of the remote settlements. An example of this failure was a settlement set up by J. H. Abbott near the Nepalese border at Abbott Mount, called DEC, short for Domiciled European Community.<sup>150</sup> In the twenty-seven years he owned the estate and built homes for retired British and Anglo-Indians, there were hardly any rent paying tenants or prospective purchasers. Near his death, Abbott called it a “white elephant” and said, “Everything else I have touched has turned into gold, but Dec. has been my only failure”.<sup>151</sup>

Such failures confirm the interviewees’ testimonies that many Domiciled Europeans did not share Anthony’s political vision to seek representation within the impending Independent Indian government. In fact, the interviewees did not belong to Anthony’s Association and showed little interest in local politics. Frost was in the service of the British Army and says political links were not permitted and it was his duty to follow orders.<sup>152</sup> Flack, Doyle and Cloy were dependent on their husbands’ jobs and looked to these, not politics, in terms of their future. All three women expressed little knowledge of or interest in local politics.<sup>153</sup> They were all aware of the 1942 Quit India campaign, but knew few details of the earlier political activities.<sup>154</sup> It is perhaps significant that as the independence movement increased its momentum, the British exercised control over much of the press upon which the average person relied for information. Other Domiciled Europeans interviewed showed greater interest in political developments, but none belonged to Anthony’s association. This suggests that most Domiciled Europeans did not feel there was any permanent security or future prospects for themselves in the land of their birth after the withdrawal of British rule.

When the British officially left India, Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians were forced to choose a nation as their home, either within partitioned India or elsewhere. Three out of four of the interviewees, and all their wider families, left India about 1947 and moved to countries where their own culture was dominant; the fourth, Doyle moved in 1963. The transient lifestyles and lack of nationalistic identity of Domiciled Europeans assisted them to transplant themselves and set fresh roots in their new homelands.<sup>155</sup> Despite regrets, the descendants of Abbott also left India shortly after 1947.

## Partition experiences

A salient feature of the interviewees’ evidence is their experiences during the violent events accompanying independence and partition. Amidst an estimated one million deaths and about ten million people displaced, the interviewees knew of no acts of violence directed specifically against

<sup>150</sup> Babbott pp. 32 and 183.

<sup>151</sup> Babbot at p. 183. She recalls Abbott uttering these words whilst nursing him at DEC towards the end of his life.

<sup>152</sup> Frost p. 25.

<sup>153</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 27; Cloy p. 19; Flack Tape 2: p. 19.

<sup>154</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 27; Cloy p. 5; Flack Tape 2: p. 19.

<sup>155</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 30; Cloy pp. 8 and 20; Flack Tape 2: p. 19; and Frost p. 11.

Domiciled Europeans or Anglo-Indians.<sup>156</sup> Horrendous slaughter and violence were perpetrated against minority communities of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in areas inhabited by rival majority groups which led to retaliatory acts in other areas. With the exception of Flack, whose husband, an ICS officer, sent her to England a year earlier because he feared violence, the Domiciled Europeans interviewed lived in areas torn by violence, yet they themselves were never the targets of attack.<sup>157</sup>

Cloy, Doyle and Frost happened to be in the Punjab and North West Frontier where extreme violence occurred, and they knew of innumerable instances where Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians were able to provide safety for local Hindus and Sikhs who feared retaliatory violence from the Muslims.<sup>158</sup> Anthony gives descriptions of individuals throughout Northern India who assisted Muslims and Hindus at risk in dangerous areas, especially in Bengal.<sup>159</sup> The Abbott family moved between their home and troubled areas near Naini Tal but were never the focus of attack.<sup>160</sup> Penderel Moon's descriptions of the violence in his administrative area reflect similar patterns of terrible communal violence which, like the reports of the interviewees, excluded violence towards Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians.<sup>161</sup>

During the violence associated with independence and partition, Cloy said she was frightened and could not wait to leave India.<sup>162</sup> Doyle said she never feared for her own family as the violence did not enter the cantonment area where she lived, although some nights she could hear the noises of people wailing.<sup>163</sup> Frost was kept busy helping the injured in the Quetta hospital, and he and his wife helped their Hindu bearer to escape. Other interviewees drove covered truck loads of groups at risk to places of safety for onward travel.<sup>164</sup> The experiences of the interviewees, together with Abbott, Anthony and Moon's accounts, support the argument that, despite discrimination of race and colour, the earlier symbiotic relationship and reciprocity had established mutual respect between European and Indians.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore the testimonies demonstrate that Indians did not see the British, Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians as a threat or enemy, but as friends during the dangerous times of communal unrest.

This lack of enmity reinforces notions that the Domiciled European community, together with Anglo-Indians, acted as a neutral buffer zone between the ruling British elites and ordinary Indians. At one level they were the paternal non-threatening arms of the rulers supplying public services and employment for local Indians. On the other, they affirmed the high status of the rulers by supporting their military causes and holding fast to British

<sup>156</sup> These statistics are quoted from Swarna Aiyar "August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947" in *South Asia* Vol. XVIII Special Issue, (1995) pp.13-15. Historical and non-fiction reports from this period validate the interviewees' testimonies.

<sup>157</sup> Frost pp. 22-28 and Cloy p. 16.

<sup>158</sup> Frost pp. 27-28 and Doyle Tape 2: p.12.

<sup>159</sup> Anthony pp. 440-441.

<sup>160</sup> Babbott pp. 207-213.

<sup>161</sup> See Penderel Moon *Divide and Quit* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1961).

<sup>162</sup> Cloy p. 16.

<sup>163</sup> Doyle Tape 1: p. 31.

<sup>164</sup> Frost p. 27.

<sup>165</sup> Frost p. 27 and Cloy p. 16.

cultural values which, in turn, formed a veil that perpetuated, mystified and enhanced the power of the rulers.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The testimonies of the interviewees in this research provide evidence that prior to the Indianisation reforms, rather than being merely the “poor whites” or the “neglected children of the Raj”, many Domiciled Europeans were a protected and even privileged group within colonial society whose public service jobs were secured to them by the Government. Undoubtedly there were some “poor whites” amongst British colonial society who, the British Government might well have considered, displayed unedifying behaviour. The conspicuousness of these people to local Indians was, perhaps, perceived by the Raj as a potentially destabilising risk to their carefully constructed but fragile hegemony. Therefore, as shown by Arnold’s research, these “poor whites”, numbering approximately six thousand were deported or institutionalised as vagrants and orphans.

In complete contrast, the testimonies of the Domiciled Europeans in this research rejects historiographical claims that the effects of Indianisation excluded Domiciled Europeans from their traditional preserves of employment in the public services, reducing their social status and employment prospects. Instead, the horizons of a section of the community, and accordingly their financial security and status, were improved through attainment of higher educational qualifications.

This paper demonstrates that from the period of Indianisation leading up to independence, education was the key means for upward mobility for many Domiciled Europeans. The value of education to improve one’s status has recently been noted by Caplan amongst contemporary Anglo-Indians in Madras. In both cases, education has improved the eligibility of the lower classes to join the ranks of the professional class, which in turn provided the opportunity to raise their social status. This broke down barriers of colour and class during the colonial period, and barriers of race in Independent India. Education has thus been the key to dissolving divisive segregations in colonial India, giving rise to the acceptance of inter-marriage between those of different colour and race. It has thereby been the means to change not only social status but also racial identity.

This research shows that the legal and historiographical inclusion of Domiciled Europeans with the Anglo-Indian community has obscured the gradations within Indian colonial society. The testimonies of the interviewees demonstrate that the comfortable lifestyle of these Domiciled Europeans gave them a sense of well being and mutual reciprocity in their relationships with the ruling class, ordinary Indians and servants.

The parallel lifestyles of Domiciled Europeans and those of ordinary Indians, typified in master-servant relationships, demonstrate a silent acceptance of different cultural values which existed side by side, both being based on hierarchies of class, caste, race and colour. A lack of hostility, and perhaps even the presence of empathy, is evinced by the absence of violence aimed at Domiciled Europeans, Anglo-Indians or the British, amidst the mass

slaughter which occurred during partition. Their position as havens of security for minority groups of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims under attack indicates an enduring sympathy between the Indians and European communities. With the withdrawal of the British from India, the interviewees saw their privileged status at risk and left for new shores where they did not feel their cultural identity and future opportunities would be restricted.