

ANGLO-INDIAN EXPERIENCES DURING PARTITION AND ITS IMPACT UPON THEIR LIVES

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Introduction

As an Anglo-Indian born in Rawalpindi soon after Partition in newly created Pakistan, I grew up hearing snippets of stories about events that had taken place at that time in the district. An incident recounted by my mother was the experience of her father, an auditor in the railways, awaiting a train at Lahore station. The train never arrived, but the driver eventually walked in along the rails without his clothes because his uniform had been stolen by people who had stopped the train to attack the passengers.² Other stories included those of our family cook who disappeared half-way through preparing a meal, a Hindu doctor who hid himself under a British colleague's bed,³ and whisperings about women who jumped into nearby wells to kill themselves.⁴ At the time I never learnt the full stories so it was predictable many years later when gathering oral histories to conduct research into 20th-century society in Anglo-India, that my questionnaire sought details relating to memories and experiences about Partition. This paper draws together that aspect of the testimonies.

Details of the violent events during 1947 appear to have been too painful to recall, let alone document earlier, but after a lapse of fifty years the

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² Betty Doyle [b. 1915, nurse, left Pakistan 1963] Oral History, May 1997.

³ Tommy Walker [b. about 1913, left Pakistan 1970] Recorded conversation, December 1996, Transcript, p. 5.

⁴ An account of such an instance in a village near Rawalpindi is recorded by Urvashi Butalia in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 155-156.

tragic memories are gradually surfacing.⁵ These accounts, together with major histories on Partition, show that violence was restricted to Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, and that Europeans and Anglo-Indians were not targets.⁶ Bapsi Sidhwa's now famous novel *Ice-Candy-Man* demonstrates that Parsees were also exempt, and this has been substantiated by three Parsee interviewees.⁷ A British turbine engineer in the northwest Punjab said that his Hindu sweeper, along with other sweepers, stayed on in Pakistan after Partition,⁸ which supports a finding by Urvashi Butalia that some dalits were also exempt from violence.⁹ However, it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss the experiences of Parsees and dalits during Partition, except to note that they too were exempt from violence.

This paper will demonstrate that despite witnessing brutal communal violence not all Anglo-Indians felt at risk, and only a few emigrated immediately after Partition. It was the removal of employment privileges which had existed under the British that forced them to examine their own ambivalent position, and raised concern for their future prospects. The spectre of communal rivalry between Muslims and Hindus made Anglo-Indians acutely aware that the interests of these two groups were likely to be promoted in Pakistan and India respectively after Partition. It is for these reasons that those who had the option chose to emigrate.

This paper will first outline the historical background to the rise of communal violence behind the testimonies quoted, prior to and following Partition in August 1947. A description then sketches the origins and subsequent shifting identity and status of the mixed European and Indian communities, originally called Eurasians but now known as Anglo-Indians, and explains the reasons for adopting the present legal definition of an

⁵ Butalia, S. Kaul (ed.) *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2001; Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1998; and Gyanendra Pandey *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

⁶ Some of these are Rakesh Batabyal *Communalism in Bengal: From Famine to Noakhali 1943-47*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2005; Mushirul Hasan (ed.) *Inventing Boundaries: Gender Politics and the Partition of India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000 and also *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1993; David Page *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920-1932*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1982; Ian Talbot *Freedom's Cry: Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1996; and contributions in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, North India: *Partition and Independence*, Special Issue, Vol. XIII, 1995.

⁷ Bapsi Sidhwa *Ice-Candy-Man*, London, Heinemann, 1988, made into the film *Earth* by Deepa Mehta. Oral histories with members and family members of the Parsee community Kersie Khambatta, Zarine Malik (née Wadia) and Dorette Kharas confirm this experience.

⁸ Walker, p. 2.

⁹ Butalia, pp. 235-261.

Anglo-Indian. Large extracts of the oral histories then form the bulk of this paper, describing how Anglo-Indians were involved yet excluded from mass slaughter during Partition. The oral history testimonies, and specifically the quoted extracts, albeit derived from inevitably fallible and selective memories, provide a rich body of evidence on an implicit but unexplored silence in contemporary historiography on Partition. The testimonies add an extra dimension to burgeoning Partition literature, as well as providing an important contribution to the historical understanding of the effects of decolonisation upon Anglo-Indian communities in South Asia.

Historical Background to the Rise of Communal Violence

Protests against British rule and the rise of nationalist consciousness had risen in tandem since the turn of the 20th century, bringing with it unintended divisive elements between Hindus and Muslims, which had surfaced with the call for unity between these 'two nations' in India.¹⁰ The Muslim population of ninety-five million represented only twenty-two percent of India's overwhelming Hindu majority.¹¹ Despite assurances to the contrary, Muslim leaders were concerned that Hindu elites would not share power and that Muslims would be marginalised.

In further bids to oust the British from India, the policies of Mohandas Gandhi were adopted by the National Congress Party in 1920. The policies appealed to all sections of hierarchical Indian society but, paradoxically, the means to unite political support from the elites to grass root levels served to heighten the awareness of differences and harden communal attitudes between Hindus and Muslims.¹² For example, Gandhi's support for the pan-Islamic Khaliphate movement expected, in return, Muslim support for cow protection campaigns; but rather than uniting these communal agendas into a wide nationalist framework, the campaigns became a catalyst for divisions between radical elements among Muslims, caste Hindus and the untouchable groups.¹³ In fact the campaigns aggressively fuelled religious reconversion movements, *shuddhi* and *tabligh*, further inflaming communal tensions.¹⁴

Notwithstanding Gandhi's non-violent ideals of passive resistance, *satyagraha*, violence constantly followed in the wake of political rallies,

¹⁰ A call made by Syed Ahmed Khan in 1880s.

¹¹ Ayesha Jalal *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 2 and map 1.

¹² Page pp. 78-79; the use of inflammatory rhetoric is shown by Dorothy McMenamin in 'Democracy in Islam? Elections, Religion and the Military in Pakistan', in *History Now*, Vol. 7, No. 3, August 2001, p. 9.

¹³ Gyanendra Pandey *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 162-186.

¹⁴ Page, p. 79.

which was blamed on ruffians, *goondas*, whilst Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in central northeast India took advantage of the unsettled conditions to settle old scores.¹⁵ What becomes evident is the decrease of law and order as the scale of unrest and violence grew. The British government did not consider it appropriate to resort to the oppressive methods employed following the 1857 uprising and 1919 massacre of demonstrators in Amritsar.¹⁶ During the early 1940s, troops were used to ruthlessly suppress political rallies and curb violence, although by 1947 British troops were seldom deployed to control unrest.¹⁷ During the Quit India campaigns large numbers of arrests were made, but prosecution in the courts was slow and some defendants were often let off virtually free.¹⁸ This failure to effectively deal with violent offending arguably provided a further incentive to resort to violence for revenge and material gain during the brutal events of 1947. The lack of law and order or use of British troops, together with the partisan involvement of local police, saw the rise in violence between Muslims and Hindus.

As communal divisions mounted, self-government was advocated in the majority Muslim populated regions, either within some type of federation or as a separate state. Hostilities and violence in the Bihar region in the early 1940s translated into retaliatory actions occurring with ever increasing vengeance.¹⁹ In August 1946 the most serious, yet discriminate, communal violence occurred in Bengal known as the Calcutta Killings. Five thousand Hindu and Muslim men, women and children were killed and over a hundred thousand made homeless, but no British or Anglo-Indian shops or interests were attacked.²⁰ The evidence in relation to the killings on both sides show that violence was not spontaneous but planned, involving also the Sikh community and partisan police involvement.²¹ Stories of the atrocities committed by Hindus, and especially Sikhs, filtered back to relatives in the northwest provinces, resulting in Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab being attacked by Muslims, with three thousand killed and entire villages burned

¹⁵ D. A. Low 'Digging Deeper: Northern India in the 1940s', in *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, 1995, pp. 5-6; and Patrick French *Liberty or Death*, London, Flamingo, 1998, p. 252.

¹⁶ Details of General Dyer's infamous massacre of civilians in Amritsar appears in most general histories of India, including Lawrence James *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India*, Great Britain, The Softback Preview, 1998, pp. 472-484.

¹⁷ Sumit Sarkar *Modern India 1885-1947*, Madras, Macmillan, 1986 reprint, pp. 395 and 434-435.

¹⁸ Vinita Damodaran 'Bihar in the 1940s: Communities, Riots and the State', in *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, 1995, pp. 158 and 160.

¹⁹ Damodaran, pp. 157-169.

²⁰ Batabyal, p. 243.

²¹ Suranjan Das *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905-1947*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 175-199.

during the March riots in 1947. Yet again the violence was planned and discriminate.²²

Based on the population densities of Muslims and Hindus, in June 1947 a solution was finally agreed, dividing the western and eastern portions of Punjab and Bengal respectively to fall into a new state, Pakistan. With the announcement that Independence and Partition would take place on 15 August 1947, a catastrophe began to unfold in the Punjab with an exodus of Hindus and Sikhs eastwards into India, and Muslims west into Pakistan. The Sikh population, which historically inhabited the Punjab, saw their sacred homeland split and radical leaders called for a separate Sikh state, Khalistan, which never materialised.²³ Statistics on the numbers of deaths are impossible to accurately determine, estimates varying from half to one million people killed, and between ten to eighteen million people displaced in the forced population movements between Muslims into east and west Pakistan and by Hindus and Sikhs into India.²⁴ The violence and forced migrations did not reach the same proportions in Bengal, but the movements and problems continued for decades.²⁵

Amongst the jubilation of Indian Independence, the extent of the ensuing carnage and tragedy was not fully envisaged. Even those who feared Hindu, Muslim and Sikh reprisals were unprepared for the ferocity unleashed. Despite the massive brutality of the bloodbath, the violence was organised, specifically between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs although the motives varied from region to region, and even within communities in the same region. Overall the violence was instigated by cycles of fear, revenge, retaliation, financial opportunism and even family honour.²⁶ Anglo-Indians were not targets of violence because of the specific and discriminate nature of the attacks; also perhaps because Anglo-Indians posed no physical or economic threat to Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, being neither moneylenders nor wealthy landholders. Apart from leaders such as Frank Anthony, Anglo-Indians were generally apolitical and the interviewees indicate that it was not until Gandhi's Quit India campaign that their attention was drawn to their own ambivalent predicament in Independent India.

²² Pandey *Remembering Partition*, pp. 74-84; Menon and Bhasin, pp. 34-35; Butalia, pp. 91-92 and 156; also Andrew J. Major 'The Chief Sufferers: Abduction of Women During the Partition of the Punjab', in *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, 1995, pp. 57-59.

²³ Talbot, pp. 157-159; and also Shahid Hamid *Disastrous Twilight: A Personal Record of the Partition of India*, London, Leo Cooper, 1986, pp. 259-264.

²⁴ Pandey *Remembering Partition*, pp. 89-91; and Gyansh Kudaisya 'The Demographic Upheaval of Partition: Refugees and Agricultural Resettlement in India 1946-47', in *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, Special Issue, p. 73.

²⁵ Mahbubar Rahman and Willem van Schendel 'I am NOT a refugee: Rethinking Partition Migration', in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2003, pp. 551-584.

²⁶ Low, pp. 5-9; Butalia, pp. 153-194; and Pandey *Remembering Partition*, pp. 196-204.

The Anglo-Indian Community and its Status in British India

The Portuguese arrival in South India at the turn of the 15th century marked the origins of what is called the Eurasian community. Portuguese encouragement of inter-marriage and forced conversion of Indians to Roman Catholicism gave rise to the Lusco-Indian community in India and Goanese in their territory of Goa.²⁷ The subsequent arrival and ascendancy of the British in India produced hybrid communities who followed their paternal parents' culture and religion, mainly Protestant Christianity. The mixed liaisons were disdained by caste Hindus and Muslims, both of whom were strictly endogamous, to the extent that some officials maintained that "half-castes" should not be appointed to senior positions due to the lack of respect paid them by local Indians.²⁸ Gradually, the rulers feared that these mixed-race communities might rival them for influence, as had occurred in Haiti, and in 1791 Eurasians were excluded from senior and covenanted positions, being recruited for lower clerical posts.²⁹ Nevertheless, after the 1857 uprising, when the British received loyal support from the Eurasians, in return their fortunes improved. The British rulers found it expedient to depend on the burgeoning Eurasian population, recruiting them into the armed forces, police and as staff in administrative services, the post office and customs. The growth of the telegraph and railways in India required large numbers of loyal, responsible personnel, and these privileged positions were given to Eurasians to run Britain's most advanced technologies.³⁰

Originally, it had been the British in India who were called Anglo-Indians, but as the mixed-race communities grew, the prosperous fairer members of the community called themselves Anglo-Indians. The term Eurasian began to be associated with the lower socio-economic groups. In order to distinguish themselves from the mixed races, terms such as Domiciled European surfaced, denoting the British who had settled in India but had no Indian ancestry.³¹ In 1911, the census officially extended the term

²⁷ Evelyn Abel *The Anglo-Indian Community: Survival in India*, Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1988, p. 14; see also Geraldine Charles 'Anglo-Indian Ancestry', in *Genealogists' Magazine*, Vol. 27, No. 1, September 2001, p. 106.

²⁸ Kenneth Ballhatchet *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, pp. 98-99.

²⁹ Abel, pp. 15-18; and Alfred D. F. Gabb, *1600-1947 Anglo-Indian Legacy*, Overton, York, 2000, pp. 14-15.

³⁰ *The Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. I, Simon Report, 1930, p. 401 states that in 1878 these services were entirely staffed by Anglo-Indians; see also Abel, pp. 31-32.

³¹ Dorothy McMenamin 'Identifying Domiciled Europeans in Colonial India: Poor Whites or Privileged Community?', in *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 2001, pp. 106-127.

Anglo-Indian to include those of mixed heritage. The definition was included in the 1935 Government of India Act and subsequently adopted by, and remains unchanged in, the Indian Constitution of 1948:

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.³²

Accordingly, so long as paternal descent was European (not merely 'Anglo'), irrespective of whether the mother was Indian, European or mixed descent, a person born and permanently resident in the region of what was then British India was deemed to be Anglo-Indian.³³ This wide definition was adopted following the implementation of the Indianisation policies introduced by the Montford Reforms in 1918, so that Anglo-Indians could still apply for positions to which Indians were now eligible, which had previously been the exclusive domain of the British and Anglo-Indians.³⁴ The privileged status of Anglo-Indians was eroded and, in a bid for alternative employment, many turned to higher education, qualifying as teachers and doctors, whilst others emigrated.³⁵ Many of those who stayed on after Partition appear to have suffered diminished socio-economic status because they were unable to compete with Indians who were better qualified for jobs.³⁶

The population figures for Anglo-Indians are problematic because not all the community identified themselves as Anglo-Indians. The 1943 census put the population at 140,422,³⁷ although it is probably nearer double this figure. Anglo-Indians were perceived as distinct from the British and local Indians. They maintained a Western style of life, received Christian religious instruction at schools, and wore Western rather than local attire.

³² As set out in the Government of India Act 1935, Article 366(2).

³³ Earlier works by the author expound the wide implications of this umbrella term. See McMenamain 'Domiciled Europeans', pp. 106-7; and 'Questioning the Stereotype: Anglo-Indian Communities in New Zealand', in the Proceedings of Conference, Melbourne, *Who are the Anglo-Indians*, August 2002, view at <www.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/confer~1.html>.

³⁴ Coralie Younger 'Racial Attitudes and the Anglo-Indians Perceptions of a Community Before and After Independence', in *South Asia*, Vol. VI, No. 2, December 1983, p. 34.

³⁵ McMenamain 'Domiciled Europeans', pp. 113 and 124.

³⁶ Lionel Caplan 'Cupid in Colonial and Post-Colonial South India', in *South Asia*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1979, p. 2; Coralie Younger *Anglo-Indians: Neglected Children of the Raj* Delhi, B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1983, p. 40; and Abel, p. 6.

³⁷ Government of India, *Census of India*, I, Part I, Table 13, 1943, pp. 98-99.

Depending upon their individual employment, the status of Anglo-Indians varied, from business people, army officers, senior positions as regional inspectors and auditors in the railways, post office, security, customs and telegraph, to clerical workers in these essential services. Their rates of pay and conditions did not compare favourably with those of British officials, which is part of reason why Anglo-Indians have been referred to as *Poor Relations*³⁸ and *Neglected Children of the Raj*³⁹ and why the leader of the Anglo-Indian Association, Frank Anthony, entitled his book *Britain's Betrayal in India*.⁴⁰ The purpose of my wider research aims to delineate the different groups camouflaged by the umbrella legal definition of an Anglo-Indian, identifying the gradations and hierarchies ever-present in British-Indian society.

Interviewees

To date, my research cohort comprises forty-one interviews, eleven being recorded conversations and the remainder are formal oral histories.⁴¹ The majority of interviewees emigrated and became New Zealand residents. Of this cohort, four are British interviewees, twenty-one Anglo-Indians, nine Domiciled Europeans, three Anglo-Burmese, two Parsees, one Goan, and one Pakistani-Christian. Except for the Pakistani and Goan, all interviewees were born in British India and the majority were resident there at the time of Partition in 1947. The interviewees are now aged from fifty-five to ninety-three, mainly in their 70s and 80s. Residence of most of the interviewees was not fixed in India as they moved constantly, their education being at boarding schools nine months annually, and once employed they were frequently transferred to different parts of India. None of the interviewees, including those whose testimonies are not included in this paper, knew of any specific Anglo-Indian family members or friends who were attacked amidst Partition violence. The testimonies of seventeen interviewees are referred to here.

³⁸ Christopher Hawes *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India 1773-1833*, London, Curzon Press, 1996.

³⁹ Coralie Younger *Anglo-Indians: Neglected Children of the Raj*, Delhi, BR Publishing Corporation, 1983.

⁴⁰ Frank Anthony *Britain's Betrayal in India: The Story of the Anglo-Indian Community*, Bombay, Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1969.

⁴¹ Ten of the oral histories, including those quoted in this paper of Bill Barlow, Norman Barnett, Dick Cox, Dick Leckey, Tony Mendonça, Beryl MacLeod, and Daphne Pugh-Stemmer, were conducted with the assistance of an award received from the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust and filed at the Alexander Turnbull Library. The remaining oral histories are, or will be, filed at the Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

Their date of birth, occupation and year of departing India or Pakistan is provided in the first citation for each of the interviewees.

Oral History Testimonies

The testimonies below are organised regionally and, in the main, chronologically. The first extracts relate to experiences in Calcutta in 1946 and 1947, then accounts shift to Bombay and Agra after August 1947. Turning the clock back slightly, interviewees recall events during the March 1947 riots in the northwest Punjab, moving on to describe the experiences on the railways in the Punjab, and a description of conditions in Karachi after Partition. Brief testimonies then give reasons why Anglo-Indians chose to quit India.

Bill Barlow describes the conditions outside the environs of Calcutta during or after the Calcutta Killings of 1946:

While the Calcutta riots were on, in Calcutta, the police sergeants were all Anglo-Indians, the constables and sepoy or whatever you call them. And when the riots came, the Anglo-Indians were there and they shot to kill.

The Anglo-Indians shot the Indians to kill?

Yes, that or get killed yourself, because there were so many thousands of them.

Do you know any Anglo-Indians who were killed?

No, I don't know of any who were killed. But I certainly do know one or two from school who joined the police, who were senior to me, they were on the front line and they had to do this to let the folks know that they were serious. Firing over their heads is one thing, but to shoot!

So they actually did shoot under orders to keep the peace?

Yes.

But you don't know of any incident when they were attacked?

No, they were never attacked. There was an [another] incident I do remember in Kharagpur, I think it was before Independence. There had been a lot of trouble leading to Independence. Once, about early morning, 10 or 11 o'clock, the apprentices were all told to meet at the time office. And they told us all to get ourselves down to the armoury and get equipped with rifles. There was trouble in the workers' area, . . . there was a square, an open space, and one mob standing on one side, and another on the other, with all the weapons they had fashioned in the workshops.

So you had rifles, and they didn't, they just had implements?

Yes, well they had long iron bars which they had sharpened into points like spears. We drove into the middle of it and they saw us and dispersed. There was only a handful of us and there were thousands of them but this is the respect for us, the Anglo-Indians.

So the whole problem stopped?

Oh no. They saw us and thought well it is no point in carrying on but in any case, they weren't doing anything, just screaming at each other across the space, and when we got there it quietened down. And then they dispersed to their quarters. In the evening was the problem. And like I said, we had this old bus and some of us got off and stayed in the market square, and the rest stayed on the bus and of course they kept going round giving the impression that there was more than one truck. But it was just one damn truck. But the evening was the worst. At one end of the street there was the Hindu temple and you went along the street for two hundred yards, and on the other side was a [Muslim] mosque, and they were actually facing each other. We were to patrol in between the mosque and the temple and it was alright, they never bothered with us, but they were taking pot shots at each other over us. The funny part of it was, we would be marching up and down this street and we would get to the mosque and the fellows in the mosque would say "Sahib, come into the mosque and have something to eat". And they would give us *kedgerie* and we'd have a damn good feed there, then march back and get to the temple and they would say "sahib, come and have some *meethai*" so we would have our dessert at the temple. And that is how much they were interested in us, they were not interested in us.⁴²

As amusing as this incident appears, it was associated with the violent riots besetting Bihar and Bengal, but Bill's experiences demonstrate the friendliness of the Muslim and Hindu Indians towards Anglo-Indians. Daphne Pugh-Stemmer recalls the same period from her home in Calcutta:

Prior to Partition I can remember a lot of riots and trouble.

Is this a year before, or a few weeks prior?

I am not sure, could have been a couple of years before Partition actually took place. There was a lot of antagonism towards the British by the Indians because they wanted independence and [the British] to quit India. I can remember Gypsy and Peggy, my other aunt, her younger sister, they worked at the telephone exchange. It wasn't safe to go on the public transport so the telephone exchange organised

⁴² Bill Barlow [b. 1929, marine engineer, left India 1950] Oral History, February 2001, Transcript, pp. 18-19.

transport with the taxis. When they saw a crowd, the taxi drivers used to say, get down, hide yourselves because you don't want to show a white face.

Did you hear of anyone who was attacked?

I think there was.

Was it the British being attacked.

Yes, British people. At that time a lot of Europeans left India and they sent their women and children back.

This is roughly a couple of years before Partition?

Yes.⁴³

Daphne's view that many Europeans left India is corroborated by two interviewees. Joan Flack was married to a British Indian Civil Service administrator in Monghyr, Bihar, where early violence had occurred.⁴⁴ Joan and her children were sent to England in 1946 because her husband feared for their safety.⁴⁵ However, after the British withdrawal from India, the Flacks did not enjoy the post-war conditions in England and emigrated to New Zealand. Christene Evans, a British interviewee who has written her memoirs, confirms that because of the violence associated with the Quit India campaign, and especially the killing of two British soldiers on a train,⁴⁶ her family became fearful and decided to emigrate to the safer living conditions offered in New Zealand.

Daphne Pugh-Stemmers continues with her experiences in Calcutta after August 1947:

At Partition it [the violence] was mainly between Indian against Indian. The Muslims against the Hindus.

What you are saying that before the Government had agreed to quit India, the British and Anglo-Indians were the focus of attack, and then it changed once they agreed.

They were not the targets. It was between themselves [Hindus and Muslims].

Do you know of any British or Anglo-Indians who were killed?

⁴³ Daphne Pugh-Stemmer [b. 1931, stenographer, left 1957] Oral History, May 2001, Transcript, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Flack's story is discussed in my article 'Identifying Domiciled Europeans in Colonial India', pp. 112-126.

⁴⁵ Joan Flack [b. 1919, teacher, left 1946] Oral history, May-June 1997, Transcript 2, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Christene Evans [b. 1918], copy of unpublished memoirs given to the author. The incident relating to the two soldiers killed on a train is also reported by Damodaran, p. 157.

I think there were instances but I can't really remember we were still at school. But I am sure some Anglo-Indians were caught in the cross fire.

But you don't know any friends or family who were attacked?

No.

See any violence on the streets?

You would see a lot on the streets, people with sticks beating, then the Police would be out.

No bodies?

Yes, there would be bodies lying.

Was there a curfew?

Yes, there was a curfew from about six o'clock onwards. You would have to have a pass that you would have to show to get through. My father had to do shift work with the customs and he would have to show his pass.

How long did the curfew last? Weeks, months?

I don't really know Dorothy it varied according to the time of the violence. When the violence quietened down or started up again.⁴⁷

In response to my question where he was at Partition, Bill Barlow gave the following account, although it seems his recollection over fifty years later misplaces the time period and his account more likely refers to one of the more serious Calcutta riots or even the Calcutta Killings in August 1946. His testimony is as follows:

The thing I remember most, which sticks out in my mind, . . . I was an apprentice and . . . three of us who lived in Calcutta got a few days off and we decided to go on holiday in celebration of Independence. We hopped on the train, got to Calcutta and got off at Howrah station which was always a very very busy station, scores of people lying on the platform. But anyway, when we got there, there wasn't a soul on the platform, it was absolutely dead. It was frightening, silence can be quite frightening, especially in a place like that. Anyway, we got off the train and there couldn't have been more than us few apprentices going home on leave, we must have had the train to ourselves.

So when you left you never suspected there would be any problems?

No, not at all. We just thought it would be like any other day except for celebrations. Anyway, we got off the train, walked to the end of the platform. The platform was raised from the road and we had to go down steps to get to the road. From the top of the platform you could see, there was a wall either side of the road, and over the walls you

⁴⁷ Pugh-Stemmer, pp. 19-20.

could see the river. And you could see the big barges of hay floating down the river and numerous bodies. But when we got down on to the road, there wasn't a tram or a bus, or taxi or vehicle of any sort on the road, nor were there any people. It was frightening, not a sound, especially for a place like Calcutta where you usually can't hear yourself think.

We had to walk home so we walked over the Howrah bridge, over the river. When we got the other side, the Strand Road, on our right, down the road was the docks with all the warehouses and the docks and what have you, and on the other side were the houses and you could see all these people standing above, on the roofs of the houses, shouting and screaming, celebrating I suspect, but frightening nonetheless because we didn't know who they were shouting and screaming at. Anyway we decided we had to walk, and as we walked down the road you could see the bodies lying on the side of the road in the gutters, with their throats cut and various other things.

Both men and women?

Mostly men. Thrown into the big dustbins which they had in Calcutta, bodies chucked into them, and it was frightening. But we got home unharmed. They for some reason never bothered with the Anglo-Indians.

And no one accosted you on the way walking home?

Nothing, we were left entirely to ourselves.⁴⁸

Cecil Anderson completed his medical training in Calcutta during that period and confirmed the exclusion of Anglo-Indians from street violence: "They attacked each other, Muslims and Hindus, right in front of us, but they never touched us. . . . We used to go out and see them on the street, dead. Yes, Muslims and Hindus. *How long did that last?* Several months. I must say they left us alone."⁴⁹

What becomes evident is that not all the interviewees feared for their safety as the violence escalated across northern India. Despite curfews, they continued working and were not attacked. Beryl MacLeod was living in Bombay during the time of Partition and, although Bombay did not experience anything like the massacres in northern India, random incidents and mob intimidation occurred which Beryl experienced and explained as follows:

⁴⁸ Barlow, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Cecil Anderson [b. 1923, medical doctor, left 1949] Oral History, November 2001, Transcript, p. 17.

There was a Muslim mosque up on a little hill not far from our bungalow, about half a mile away. We were in the district of Suri, Bombay. To the right of us was a Hindu quarter for Hindus to live in and for some reason or another one night they decided that they would go and burn the mosque. We heard a mob of Hindus down the road, and as they came closer and closer, the Gurkha watchman at the gate came over to the bungalow and told the bearer these men had lighted flame torches, an oil soaked rag on the top of a stick of wood. . . . It was frightening. . . . They could easily have got in if they had wanted. We saw the procession and the chanting, . . . but luckily the Muslims had heard about this and they'd gone up and defended it. So they actually did not get together. The Hindus turned around and came back. . . . And the terrible thing was that the newspaper *The Times of India* in Bombay, was at one stage printing "last night in Bombay thirty Hindus were killed". The Muslims had read this and the Hindus had read this, and the next night they would go and kill more Muslims in retaliation. The press did this for about a week, and the numbers went up and up and up, and then somebody had the sense to say "for God's sake stop this because they are just trying to race each other and kill more of the other".

So it wasn't worth having a free press at that time?

No, definitely not. . . . There was the curfew and we were not allowed to leave our bungalows after six at night, . . . but all the European staff had to man the petrol tankers . . . to deliver the petrol and oil because the drivers wouldn't. A Muslim driver would not go to deliver anywhere in Bombay because he would be driving through either Muslim or Hindu areas. . . . The company armed them in case they were attacked. But as soon as they saw a white face driving there was no problems. In fact, they salaamed and waved them through the gates of the factories. They knew the fuel had to get through or they had no work to go to. . . .

Did you hear of any Anglo-Indians or British people who were attacked during this time?

No.

Or anywhere else where they were attacked?

No, I can't. No, I don't think we knew anyone.⁵⁰

George Henderson's encounter in Agra depicts an example of the ferocious violence between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.⁵¹ Other witnesses

⁵⁰ Beryl MacLeod [b. 1923, hairdresser, left 1960] Oral History, April 2001, Transcript, pp. 9-10.

often describe the aftermath of violence, but George's testimony is an eye-witness account of the awful brutalities that occurred during Partition:

One Thursday, aged about thirteen, I was going with my bearer to buy some magazines at a bookstore on Tundla Junction platform, not far from Agra. A Muslim girl, probably fourteen or fifteen years of age, was walking along carrying her baby brother, when four Sikhs carrying swords came down some steps in the opposite direction. The girl tripped and said something like *Aai Allah*, a distinctively Muslim expression. The Sikhs snatched the baby, decapitated it, ripped open the girl's belly and put the baby into it.⁵²

George did not know any more details about the incident because he was rushed home. Another time, upon returning from the movies, he and his father, approaching Agra station found it in darkness and all they could hear was a buzzing noise which got louder as they got closer. The station was deserted but littered with buzzing flies on bloodied bodies. George knew of Anglo-Indians involved in incidents during Partition troubles. His cousin, Melville Killoway, was taken off a train and stripped to examine whether he was circumcised, therefore a Muslim. Finding he was in fact circumcised, he had to recite the Lord's Prayer to prove he was a Christian, otherwise Melville believed he would have been killed. A train driver, Ginger Cracknell, was caught by rioting Indians and made to don a Gandhi cap and wave the Indian national flag, but was otherwise unharmed. George also heard about two Anglo-Indian nurses, the William sisters, being thrown off a train.⁵³ The latter is the only instance known by any of the interviewees of Anglo-Indians being harmed, but the circumstances are unknown. The details are insufficient to significantly alter the overwhelming evidence that, in the main, Anglo-Indians were excluded from direct Partition violence.

It was in the Punjab that the wrath of Sikhs and Muslims was unleashed against each other in March 1947. Tommy Walker was a turbine engineer from Durham County in north England, married to a Domiciled European. At that time Tommy was in charge of an oil refinery at Morgah near Rawalpindi. He witnessed savage attacks on Sikh and Hindu workers by Muslims, and offered assistance driving the injured to hospital and transporting others to a nearby racecourse being used as a refugee camp.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Instances of such brutal attacks are given by Ian Talbot in 'Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition', in *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, 1995, pp. 41-47, and also Major pp. 57-63.

⁵² George Henderson [b. 1933] notes on conversation 16 July 2003. Oral history to be recorded.

⁵³ Henderson, personal communication.

⁵⁴ Walker, pp. 2-3 and personal correspondence.

He said that all the Sikh and Hindu employees of the oil company either left or were killed, and that the Hindu company doctor had taken refuge under the British manager's bed before he was evacuated.⁵⁵ No Europeans working for the company were attacked and, in fact, many Anglo-Indian and British employees protected their Hindu servants from Muslim attacks and assisted their escape. Tommy added that "the only Hindus who stayed were the lower class, the sweepers, . . . because [the Muslims] did not want to clean. . . . We must have had at least a dozen sweepers staying in [our sweeper's] house at the bottom of the garden . . . [they were safe] because of me." These comments concur with the finding of Urvashi Butalia that dalit groups were not specifically targeted during Partition violence.⁵⁶ Tommy also recalls:

Tara Singh was the cause of the trouble in March. . . . He said that they were going to celebrate the Hindu festival *Holi* in the blood of the Muslims. . . . He actually broadcast it on the wireless. . . . It was alright for him to say that from the Golden Temple in Amritsar but what about the poor sods up in northwest Territory. . . . I can't say I heard it with my own ears, . . . but it was the story that went around, . . . rumour could be just as dangerous as the truth. . . . All hell was let loose and they started the murders.⁵⁷

The memoirs of Randolph Holmes, a photographer in Peshawar, records hearing this proclamation by Master Tara Singh over the wireless.⁵⁸ Tommy said that he slept with a pistol under his pillow for fear of an attack, although this did not eventuate. The comments reported to have been made by Tara Singh support the idea that some Sikhs planned to attack Muslims or perhaps even "ethnically cleanse the Punjab".⁵⁹ A passenger on a train from Delhi to Pakistan looking out of the window observed that "on some roads and walls you could see the signs of *Holi* played with human blood".⁶⁰ The brutality of the Muslims against Sikhs during the March riots, and Sikhs slaughtering their own womenfolk to save the family honour, appear to have been systematically organised.⁶¹ Poorer Muslims in the area looted and burnt shops to free themselves from the grip of Hindu *baniyas* who were also money-lenders. Three thousand Sikhs perished and 40,000 were evacuated to refugee camps, although as in the past there were more Muslim deaths by

⁵⁵ Walker, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Butalia, pp. 235-261.

⁵⁷ Walker, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Private collection papers of Randolph Holmes, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

⁵⁹ Talbot *Freedom's Cry*, pp. 12 and 170.

⁶⁰ Talbot *Freedom's Cry*, p. 185.

⁶¹ Menon and Bhasin, p. 35.

Hindus and Sikhs.⁶² The March riots were a precursor to massacres and revenge killings following the announcement of the Boundary Award in June 1947, where in East Punjab the administration lost control of Sikhs attacking Muslims travelling to the west.⁶³

Betty Doyle, living in Rawalpindi, remembered the vicious local violence, especially in March, but surprisingly did not feel personally threatened, although she felt there was no future for her family after Partition.⁶⁴ Esmee Cloy, at the nearby hill station of Murree, saw villages in flames and determined to leave as soon as possible after Partition.⁶⁵

Following the Partition Boundary announcement a forced migration of reportedly four million Sikhs and Hindus set off east from west Punjab, and nearly six million Muslims moved in the opposite direction, by foot, cart and train, the more affluent managing to board the few small planes available.⁶⁶ Trains between Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Amritsar were filled with families fleeing each way. On both sides trains were stopped and the passengers butchered and murdered. Despite the detailed historiography and horrific literature recently published, no reference has been made to the Anglo-Indian train drivers, guards and staff caught in these events. Several of the interviewees witnessed the aftermath of massacres, others recall their fathers' experiences working on the railways. Significantly, none of these interviewees experienced or knew of any violent attack on Anglo-Indians.

Dick Cox, whose father was the North Western Railways District Commercial Officer, recalls:

My father was in Lahore, and Lahore was only twenty odd miles from Amritsar which was the Sikh's holy city, this is where they had their golden temple. My father told me that one day when he was at the railway station there were all these heads hanging up from the rafters. They were all Sikh's heads, there must have been about fifty or sixty heads just left hanging. . . . There were Indians, Hindus, in Lahore who wanted to go to India. My father organised their going over to India from Pakistan. They were the special people I suppose one would call them.

The more privileged ones?

Yes.

⁶² Talbot *Freedom's Cry*, p. 47.

⁶³ Talbot *Freedom's Cry*, pp. 158-161.

⁶⁴ Doyle, pp. 30-31. See details of Esmee Cloy and Betty Doyle's experiences in McMenamin 'Domiciled Europeans', pp. 111 and 124-126.

⁶⁵ Esmee Cloy [b. 1915, nurse, left 1948] Oral History, June 1997, Transcript, p. 6.

⁶⁶ Swarna Aiyar "'August Anarchy": The partition massacres in Punjab, 1947', in *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, Special Issue, 1995, pp. 13-14; Butalia, pp. 60-61; and cynical oral history snapshots by Sanjeev Saith 'Freedom', in *Granta 57: India The Golden Jubilee*, London, Spring 1997, pp. 23-38.

What about the ordinary people trying to flood across?

The ordinary people were put on trains, there were massacres on the trains, and lots and lots of people were killed.

Did you hear any stories about the Anglo-Indians who were train drivers or guards on those trains?

Not really. All I got was from my father, what he told me.

He would have known about it.

He would have known quite a bit. Like people who have gone through traumatic experiences, I don't think they like talking about them too much.⁶⁷

Ken Blunt, a sergeant in the railway police in Punjab remembers:

We used to have a compartment reserved for the police force and I used to move around. . . . One day I was with an escort going down to Lahore, and they pulled me off at Jhelum and said I was being relieved by another sub-inspector. I was damn glad I was relieved, the bloody train was wiped out, just outside Lahore. . . . They arranged that because the police were definitely in on that . . . they probably thought I would be a fly in the ointment or something.

What did they do to the train? Blow it up, derail it?

They stopped the train and then they just attacked the people by rifle fire, swords and God knows what.

How was it that the people were killed or attacked, but the trains still rolled into the stations with all the dead bodies?

They never harmed the driver or the guard or anything like that. They let them be.

Who were the drivers and guards then?

Mostly Anglo-Indians.⁶⁸

Dick and Gene Leckey were on their way to boarding school in Murree with their father who was a train driver, and their train was held up. Dick recalls:

Dad must have been aware of the troubles, but he was such a type of man that it didn't matter. If we had to go to school it didn't matter that there was a bloody war on, we still went to school. As we got towards Multan, Dad got information that there was fighting at the station and he was a bit concerned if the train would be stopped. The train went

⁶⁷ Dick Cox [b. 1932, medical doctor, left 1949] Oral History, May 2001, Transcript, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁸ Ken Blunt [b. 1915, police officer, left 1970] Recorded conversation, November 1996, Transcript, pp. 5-6.

through a cutting and on either side of the cutting were Sikhs who had raised themselves there with guns, stones and all sorts of missiles that they could lay their hands on.

Did you know all this?

No, but as we approached the cutting and the front of the train went into it, we could hear the shooting going on.

The cutting means a hill with a cutting through it?

Yes, for the train to go through. My Dad looked out of the window, then he quickly shut the windows, pulled the shutters down and told us to get down on the floor under the sleeping bunks. We went through and there was a hell of a lot of shooting, noise, yelling and screaming and thuds against the sides of the carriages. As far as Gene and myself were concerned this was great. Hey, did you hear that one, and all. We were only kids eight and ten roughly. All of a sudden everything stopped and Dad opened the window and we had gone through. Looking back, we stuck our heads out and the whole section was on fire. Multan station was on fire. People were fighting with swords. You could see crowds of people fighting there. We could see it all, it was disappearing pretty quick but we could see it. Gene and myself were very excited. Being young, although you were a bit frightened, you didn't realise it all and we were excited.

Your sisters were with you?

Yes, our sisters were with us. Then we pulled up at Lahore and the train was put on a siding because there was fighting again. Dad told us it would be quite a few hours before the train left again but we had to leave the track open in case another train came through in a hurry. Because the waiting time was quite a few hours, Gene and I got restless. We hopped off the carriage and there was another train on the siding at the side of us. Gene and myself climbed up and opened the door and were confronted with millions of flies buzzing. We had a closer look and the whole compartment was full of dead people who had been hacked to pieces. Men, women and children, blood all over the place. This of course was quite a shock for us to see so we hopped down and ran back to our carriage and said 'Dad, Dad, there are a whole lot of dead people in that train over there'. Dad realised that it was a train which had been attacked and they could have been all Sikhs attacked by Muslims, or all Hindus, or all Muslims attacked by Sikhs. We didn't try to find out who they were. . . . We still had to wait there and Dad told us to stay in the carriage and stop mucking

around. So we stayed where we were and just kept looking out the windows.⁶⁹

Brian Birch was living in Rawalpindi and remembers his father returning from work, regularly in the depths of despair, having been the helpless train driver of special trains carrying refugees assigned from Peshawar via Rawalpindi to Lahore to assist with the exodus of Hindus and Sikhs.⁷⁰ Brian explained the details as follows:

So how many trains do you think were attacked?

Every train, during that period, every train that went and brought Indians from Peshawar and from all that way to Lahore, every train was just

How long did that go on?

Till I think the army had to step in and try and guard the trains.

So was it weeks or months?

I think it went for a few months. I recall my father just coming back distraught, he just didn't want to go to work. He couldn't do anything. . . . I think the railways tried to help look after their own people. I think my father said they had wagons where they could lock the doors so that the people could lock it from inside, but the guys just smashed the windows and got them out.

Was everybody killed apart from him?

The train driver and the guards were okay, but all the passengers, whoever, . . . I don't know how they identified them, I suppose they realised they were Hindus, they just took them out and killed them.

So the Muslims were not attacked?

No. The Christians, they wouldn't attack.

So therefore not everyone was killed necessarily.

Not necessarily.

As long as they thought they were Hindus, didn't matter if they were children or

Didn't matter, they just killed them. And it happened the other way as well.

Your Dad used to go to work every day during this period. . . .

Yes, he was away for a week.

And how many trains?

⁶⁹ Dick Leckey [b. 1937, builder, left 1953] Oral History, May 2001, Transcript, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁰ Aiyar refers to the predicament on these special refugee trains, pp. 24-26.

Well he had one train that he had to take from Rawalpindi to Peshawar, and I think he stayed the night there. Then he took it all the way to Lahore and then back again, all the way. It was quite a distance.

So would that train be stopped just once?

Well, it depends, . . . if it was stripped clean and all killed, then he used to just take it into the next nearest railway station and ring up for instructions what to do.

It would be awful.

It was terrible.

So they didn't use guns?

No, just knives and sticks. I can remember the blimbling barbed wire wrapped on the end of the sticks.

It's an awful question, but what happened with the state of the trains?

No, they took them out. *So there wasn't a mess in the trains?*

They stopped the trains, got them all out and then just killed them.

Because one or two experiences . . . related to seeing a train, peeping inside and seeing bodies.

My father said they just took them all out of the train and just left them on the side of the train, killed them. Looted them, got all the jewellery off them, and whatever valuables they were carrying they took.

So why do you think they left the Anglo-Indian drivers and Anglo-Indians?

I think they felt it was because it was nothing to do with them, it wasn't their country. . . .

But the Anglo-Indians had even better jobs.

Yes, you would think they would. They never went into any churches to do any damage.

Did your father ever think he was going to be attacked?

Whenever the train was stopped, he thought oh, this is it. But no, they just left him.

And his own workmen with him?

Yes, they left the workmen because they knew they had to move the trains. And the guards were okay. But everybody else who was Hindu, or the other way around, Muslim, they just took them.

And how did the control come in?

I think the railways felt . . . I can remember my father saying that the railway would either stop all the trains, so there would be no more trains, or they would have to get army protection. Because you know, the drivers couldn't handle this any more, this killing, they just couldn't. Then although the trains were loaded with guards, and I think that eased it a bit, but there were still people being killed, waiting on the platforms. They would come up and kill them, even when the

train arrived. So they had to get guards or military on the stations as well.

So where you were living, what were the riots around that you say you saw.

Where we were living [Westridge cantonment] there was nothing [no violence] there, but you could see the city.

In 'Pindi?

Yes, see the city burning, for hours, just out of control. . . . We were able to get onto the roof of the house because it was all flat roofs. And after Partition we would look and see the smoke coming from the city, where they were just burning anything that belonged to the Indians [Hindus and Sikhs], they just burnt it.⁷¹

Brian said the trains were stopped by logs placed across the tracks, and when the killing was over, the attackers would remove the logs to allow the train to continue.⁷² The trauma of Brian's father led him to ask for a transfer to Karachi because he did not want to remain working in the northwest region.

The descriptions of normal life alongside horrendous Partition violence is exemplified by Saadat Hasan Manto, which is mildly reminiscent of Bill Barlow's experience in Kharagpur and the friendliness of Muslims and Hindus towards him whilst they shot at each other. Manto writes: "Rioters brought the running train to a halt. People belonging to the other community were pulled out and slaughtered with swords and bullets. The remaining passengers were treated to *halwa*, fruits and milk."⁷³ The discrimination of Partition violence is explicit in this excerpt, as is evident in the testimonies provided by the interviewees. The specificity of the violence is demonstrated, rather than sheer mindless violence directed at anyone in the heat of fratricide.⁷⁴

After Indian Independence, Connie Grindall moved from Calcutta to Sukkur because her father had taken a position with the Post and Telegraph service in Pakistan. Connie (aged sixteen), her mother, six siblings and another Anglo-Indian couple, embarked on a three-day train journey, crossing the newly created boundary into Hyderabad, Sind. During the oral history interview Connie merely said "I went in [to Pakistan] unhappy, but I

⁷¹ Brian Birch [b. 1936, draughtsman, left 1956] Oral History, August 2003, Transcript, pp. 4-6.

⁷² Swarna Aiyar confirms that trains were stopped by means such as trees placed on tracks, see p. 23.

⁷³ Saadat Hasan Manto 'Black Margins', in Mushirul Hasan (ed.) *Inventing Boundaries*, p. 295.

⁷⁴ This term is borrowed from Jason Francisco's insightful article 'In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India's Partition Burning Freshly' (A review article), in Mushirul Hasan (ed.) *Inventing Boundaries*.

don't want it to record."⁷⁵ Later she recounted the circumstances, unembellished, because she prefers not to think about the incident. Connie only remembers a man with a sword outside her train compartment window saying "*sab mar gaya*" [you're all dead]. She and her sisters had been giggling on the bunk and her mother told them to remain quiet. They heard a lot of noise for a long time, but stayed in their compartment. The train eventually moved off and reached its destination. Connie's father was awaiting its arrival, and had been told that everyone except the driver and guard had been killed. He was astonished when his family and the Anglo-Indian couple disembarked unharmed. Everyone else on the train had been massacred.⁷⁶ Connie Grindall's account is an extraordinary one, demonstrating that even as passengers, Anglo-Indians were excluded from violence in which all the other passengers, presumably Muslims entering Pakistan from India, were slaughtered.

Tony Mendonça lived in Karachi, which did not experience the extreme violence further north in the Punjab. Nevertheless, his family witnessed the exodus of Hindus departing and the influx of Muslims who were lucky enough to survive crossing the border. Random riots and revenge killings occurred on the streets in Karachi which Tony recalls:

I saw very little of it [the violence]. I was kept at home during that time, my Dad made sure. But I remember my [elder] brothers talked about seeing people being just

Did the violence occur during the day?

Day or night, any time. In fact there were groups of Muslims going out finding Hindus, even though they were neighbours, just attacking them. Some of them helped some of them to escape, but others joined in the fray for fear or what, . . . I don't know. I remember the priests in church telling us to remember to carry a prayer book or a rosary to let them know that we weren't Hindus. And I know of people who were stopped and were saved by the fact that they said "no I am a Christian" and they actually made them recite from the prayer book and then they wouldn't be killed.

So they didn't attack the Christians?

No, they didn't. I can't recall any of them being attacked.⁷⁷

Tony's testimony indicates that not only were Anglo-Indians exempt from violence, but being able to prove Christian identity saved individuals

⁷⁵ Connie Grindall [b. 1931, midwife, left 1954] Oral History, November 2001, Transcript, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Grindall notes on private conversation.

⁷⁷ Tony Mendonça [b. 1934, engineer, left 1956] Oral History, April 2001, Transcript, p. 29.

from attacks. An integral part of Anglo-Indian identity is being Christian, and as such, religious identity appears to be an important factor for exclusion from Partition violence. Essentially, Partition violence was restricted to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and the exemption of Parsees, who are Zoroastrians, confirms discrimination on the basis of religion. It is a moot point whether dalits or untouchables are strictly considered to be Hindu, although they are certainly not part of the caste Hindu communities, which may be why they were excluded from some of the violence in the Punjab.

Migration and Quitting India

Only three families, that of Esmee Cloy, Christene Evans and Joan Flack, migrated due to fear of violence. Despite the traumatic psychological effects of witnessing the horrendous violence, the fact that Anglo-Indians were totally excluded as targets meant the majority did not feel an immediate imperative to leave India or Pakistan because of the risk of violence. It was due to the changing climate in the employment sector after the departure of the British that the interviewees decided to emigrate. The majority left in the 1950s once the necessary travel documentation and immigration formalities were completed.

Tony Mendonça left Karachi because the living conditions had deteriorated with the influx of millions of refugees competing for local jobs, and the poor and homeless building tin and cardboard shacks on every available green space. Initially, Tony joined relatives in northern England, then moved to London where he and his friend, Brian Birch (mentioned above) met their prospective New Zealand born brides and later emigrated to their wives' home country because living conditions for their families were easier and, they thought, healthier than London.

In Calcutta, Norman Barnett⁷⁸ and Cecil Anderson, who had both recently qualified as medical doctors, could not find employment. They recognised an inequality in the workforce, but considered that it was only natural for Anglo-Indian privileges to cease and that the community would pay the price. Cecil remarked: "The Indian said you will have to take your place with the Indians. If you want a job you didn't get it unless you were better qualified than the Indian who applied for it. A lot of them [Anglo-Indians] weren't. They couldn't stay on."⁷⁹ Unbeknown to each other, Cecil and Norman chose New Zealand as their destination because of job opportunities and good prospects for their children. Coincidentally, both

⁷⁸ Norman Barnett [b. 3.10.19, medical doctor, left 1951] Oral History, March 2001 and November 2003.

⁷⁹ Anderson, p. 13.

became Public Health Officers, and Norman went on to receive an OBE for his services.

Noelyne Graham, who lived in central India explained the reason her parents left India:

My father was in the police. He was RI, Reserve Inspector, in the police lines . . . in Allahabad District. It was a reasonably good position. . . . Then of course the Raj left. It was over. It was Indians in those positions. . . . He was demoted to a small district, . . . he was very bitter about that of course. . . . From Allahabad he was sent to Aligarh which was much smaller than Allahabad, and then from Aligarh he was sent to Khasgunj which was even smaller. So it was steadily downhill.⁸⁰

These conditions induced Noelyne's parents to emigrate, and the brochures on New Zealand, with the sunshine hours in Nelson, milk at schools and free medical care, appealed to them and they migrated in 1949.

The main reason for emigration given by the interviewees was that Indians, rather than Anglo-Indians, received preference for job opportunities and promotions. This appears more so in India than Pakistan. In Pakistan vacancies had become available for Anglo-Indians and qualified incoming Muslims because of the exodus and demise of educated Hindus and Sikhs. Connie Grindall's father moved from India to Pakistan because employment was available. However, in due course, the interviewees who stayed on in Pakistan also emigrated because, with the rising political Islamic agendas, they considered that Christians would be marginalised in favour of Muslims.

Only five of the interviewees migrated directly to New Zealand, the remainder originally emigrated to England, but the better weather and outdoor lifestyle prompted them to move to New Zealand. The majority paid their own fares, although some applied and received assisted passages. Four of the interviewees, Blunt, Doyle, MacLeod, and Walker stayed on beyond 1960 because they and their husbands felt secure in their good jobs. Nevertheless, by the mid-1960s when the children of these adults (who were not already abroad) needed jobs, the lack of opportunities in the land of their birth forced them to migrate for the sake of the future of their children.

Due to domestic pressures in the West from the 1950s, immigration laws tightened and Anglo-Indians without the means and/or necessary evidence of their European heritage found it difficult, if not impossible, to emigrate. Nevertheless, contemporary anthropological accounts indicate that Anglo-Indians who remained in India would choose to emigrate to the West

⁸⁰ Noelene Graham [b. 1932, teacher, left 1948] Oral History, August 2003, Transcript, p. 5.

if the option was available.⁸¹ Although India was the land of their birth, their European ancestry appeared to offer better opportunities than that offered by “recognising India as their native land”.⁸² A continued assumption that the low status of Anglo-Indians in India today is due to “being left high and dry by the departing colonial rulers”⁸³ does not reflect the full story gathered in this project. The interviewees recognised that the privileges they had previously enjoyed had ended and instead the community might face discrimination.

Recent research shows that the younger generation of Anglo-Indians in Independent India marry Indians, preferably Indian Christians, to improve their status.⁸⁴ Essentially, Anglo-Indians are Christians, whilst Indian marriage partners are often Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims. These marriages inevitably involve some compromise in terms of culture, as religions in India and Pakistan are more than a transcendent belief, incorporating a system of traditional behaviour and values which impact strongly upon quotidian life. The older generation of Anglo-Indians would seldom have entered into such marriages, not only to avoid cultural difficulties, but because they would not want family connections with Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs whom they had recently witnessed involved in horrific retaliatory violence.

Concluding Remarks

It is clear that Anglo-Indians were exempt from Partition violence because this was restricted to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who were motivated by fear of each other, cycles of revenge, material gain, and family honour. The interviewees recognised that the targets of violence were specific, and as Christians and outsiders of these communities, Anglo-Indians were not caught in the cycle of revenge, although at the time the violence around them caused serious fears. Anglo-Indians had stayed away from the violence, but often offered to help victims. The fact that Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs could turn to the British and their Anglo-Indian supporters to protect and help them escape from violence, demonstrates a level of trust between Indians and the supporters of the former imperialist rulers.

The exclusion of Anglo-Indians from violence is significant for scholars assessing the attitudes of ordinary Indians towards colonial rule,

⁸¹ Lionel Caplan ‘Iconographies of Anglo-Indian Women: Gender Constructs and Contrasts in a Changing Society’, in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 2000, p. 865.

⁸² Pandey *Remembering Partition*, p. 156.

⁸³ Pandey *Remembering Partition*, p. 156.

⁸⁴ Lionel Caplan *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World*, Oxford, Berg, 2001, pp. 76-85; also in his articles ‘Cupid’, pp. 26-27; and ‘Iconographies’, p. 888.

especially at such an emotive and crucial point in the history of the sub-continent. Although strong pockets of resistance to British rule existed, even when law and order were perceived as ineffectual during the massive retributive slaughters in northern India, individuals did not take advantage of the disorder to gain vengeance for any old grudges against the British and Anglo-Indians.

This research indicates that although Indians had perceived Anglo-Indians as the privileged, and somewhat resented lackeys of the British, a level of goodwill or at least lack of animosity existed. This is evident in the attitude of Indians in Bill Barlow's testimony describing the friendliness towards his patrol sent to quell armed Hindus and Muslims attacking each other, to the extent that the patrol was offered food by each of the opposing camps. The patrol obviously did not represent 'the enemy' to Hindus or Muslims, despite local support for the Quit India campaigns. The testimonies of Brian Birch and Beryl MacLeod demonstrate that Indians needed and trusted Anglo-Indian train and petrol-tanker drivers to keep essential services running. These attitudes point to a level of trust in working relationships between the supporters of colonial rule and the ruled. This trust appears to be returned by Anglo-Indians, the majority of whom did not feel an immediate urgency to emigrate after Partition when the memories of violence would have been greatest.

As historians continue to search for narratives giving meaning to the range of complexities making up Partition, it is hoped that these testimonies will assist in painting part of the picture towards a full and just remembrance of the events of 1947. For the interviewees it was not the impact of violence during Partition, but the flow-on effects of communal attitudes promoting the rights of Hindus in India and Muslims in Pakistan that induced them to emigrate. Despite the calls for democracy and freedom for all citizens by Nehru and Jinnah at Independence in August 1947, the partisan attitudes cemented at Partition impacted upon decolonisation and gradually compromised the status of Anglo-Indians.