

State Change in the Punjab:
Professional and Personal Experiences of British Civil
Servants over India's independence and beyond

By Catherine Eleanor Brown Coombs

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of PhD

The University of Leeds, School of History

September 2011

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement. The right of Catherine Eleanor Brown Coombs to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
©2011, The University of Leeds, Catherine Eleanor Brown Coombs.

This work would not have been possible without the financial backing provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the professional support I received as part of the AHRC-funded project 'From Subjects to Citizens', in particular from Dr Sarah Ansari, Dr Taylor Sherman and Dr Daniel Haines. Over eight years, the University of Leeds School of History has provided a superb intellectual and social environment, where many people have encouraged and enthused me in producing this thesis. I would like especially to thank Professor Simon Dixon, Dr Owen Hartley, Dr Kevin Linch, Dr Moritz Foellmer, Dr Chris Prior, Dr Shane Doyle and Dr Simon Hall. Above all, I have been fortunate to have a constant inspiration and support in the fertile imagination and generosity of spirit of my brilliant supervisor, Dr William Gould. Finally, my thanks go to the support of all of my family and friends; financial, technical and emotional. This thesis could not have been completed without the help of my parents Anne Coombs, Frank Brown and Tony Seymour and my brother Isaac Seymour, the hospitality and friendship of Hannah Terwilliger and Bryony Biles, and in particular relied at all times upon the camaraderie and generosity of my friend Andrew Hogan, and the sympathy and encouragement of my boyfriend David Parr. Thank you.

Abstract

“The Government of one country by another inevitably leaves its mark on both ruler and ruled.”¹

The 1947 partition which accompanied the independence of India and Pakistan was a colonial tragedy which as yet has not been fully explored. The extent of the violence which accompanied the division of Bengal and Punjab has invited recourse to explanations which emphasise its exceptionalism. This thesis uses a case study of British Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) officers in 1930s and 40s Punjab to challenge this representation, and suggest how the mentality of late colonial rule accepted violence as a fundamental aspect of Indian nature. The sources used are memoirs, recounting brief colonial careers after several decades of subsequent work back at ‘home’ in Britain or elsewhere in Britain’s declining empire. These experiences shape a collective memory of colonial Punjab which is transmitted as a remarkably cohesive narrative form. The unity of message gives important insights into the mind-set of the I.C.S. at district level, and its surviving *esprit de corps* beyond the colonial environment. Collective memory alongside fictional representations have disseminated an image of the I.C.S. which emphasises its power and prestige; this thesis challenges the extent of that authority to suggest how reliance upon local networks of control facilitated continuity in styles of local governance in Punjab post-1947. The memoirs in this thesis have attracted previous attention in nostalgic histories of the *Raj* and its lifestyles. Whilst this has led to them being overlooked by historians in the past, this thesis argues that the use of these accounts in popular representations of empire in Britain has made them vital to understanding the idealised, romantic imagery of empire which still survives today.

¹ Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. vii.

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Abbreviations key	4
Glossary	5
Introduction	6
i. The I.C.S.: the ‘heaven born’ cadre	9
ii. The Punjab: land of the four rivers	14
iii. Caste and ethnography: conceptualising racial identity in colonial Punjab	20
iv. Understandings of partition: the development of local history	26
v. Memory and history: risks and benefits of the memoir as a source	31
vi. Structure	35
Chapter One – Punjab between the wars: from doubt to calm	37
i. World War I and its aftermath: the beginning of uncertainty	40
ii. Recruitment in the 1930s: doubt and the I.C.S.	45
iii. Regained calm: Punjab in the years before World War II	56
iv. Recruitment successes: first impressions of the service	59
v. World War II and the Punjabi reputation	69
vi. Conclusion	82
Chapter Two – The ethics of control: the descent into violence, 1945-1947	86
i. Violence and bureaucracy: administering the riot in 1946-47 Punjab	90
ii. Centre –v- Periphery: negating guilt through bureaucratic detachment	100
iii. Justifying paternalism: images of India in the late colonial mind	108
iv. Conclusion	115
Chapter Three – The limits of control: the transfer of power, 1947	119
i. The apprenticeship to power: enacting ‘white’ control in late colonial Punjab	122
ii. ‘Power’ to ‘powerlessness’: mythologizing the British empire	129

iii.	The ‘power vacuum’: continuity across the transfer of power	137
iv.	Conclusion	141
Chapter Four – Anachronistic figures in a changing world: post-I.C.S. careers and lives		144
i.	‘Homesick’ for the Punjab: departing recollections and growing nostalgia	149
ii.	Not in my name: alienation from modern Britain	159
iii.	Post-war Britain: adjusting to a ‘smaller’ life	163
iv.	‘A job worth doing’: second careers in colonial Africa	168
v.	Conclusion	178
Chapter Five – The India of fiction: popular narratives of the colonial experience		182
i.	Living in the past: the anachronism of Anglo-Indian society	186
ii.	The frontier life: building the reputation of Punjab and the I.C.S.	194
iii.	Anglo-India under threat: the constant fear of violence	199
iv.	Conclusion	206
Chapter Six – Post-colonial Britain: race, memory and nostalgia in the legacy of empire		209
i.	Late imperial culture: the legacy of romanticism	212
ii.	Post-war imperial culture in the face of local and global change	217
iii.	Commonwealth immigration and the changing face of ‘whiteness’	225
iv.	Interrogating ‘Britishness’: the problem of identity in the post-colonial era	231
v.	Conclusion	238
Conclusion		241
Appendix I: Biographies		253
Bibliography		278

Preface

Starting this PhD as part of an AHRC project group uniquely informed the development of my research. Framed by the starting point of 1947 and its aftermath, 'From Subjects to Citizens' set out to offer new perspectives and take the existing historiography of India and Pakistan's independence into a consideration not of 1947 as a turning point but as an event integral to mid-twentieth century history. My starting point was a feeling that the wealth of I.C.S. memoirs held in London and Cambridge had something more current and valuable to offer the area of independence and partition studies than the previous uses to which they have been put. Memoirs inevitably invite a nostalgic use; and this set skirt the tragedy and humanity of partition with a mind-set which is consistently bureaucratic and fundamentally orientalist in its parameters. The narratives produced raised questions for me which seem at the heart of the problem of partition's relatively unappreciated pathos, and of Britain's eerily nostalgic approach to its imperial history. How did these men, who proclaim their 'liberality' and 'modernity' come to choose a career so invested in the values of a past that was quickly slipping away? How did the obvious trauma of witnessing massacres affect those who claimed to be in control right into 1947? The answers appear to lie, at heart, in a choice not to recognise the humanity of those involved; and a fundamental belief in the values of empire, whether in-bred or developed as part of the institutional culture of the I.C.S., that allowed comfortable conviction to be maintained.

Beginning my research in 2007, the sixtieth anniversary of India and Pakistan's independence and partition formed a backdrop of television memorials and public discussion surrounding my topic. Commemorative programmes showed the lasting anguish and bewilderment of now elderly Indian and Pakistani witnesses to the horrors of partition. Yet in my undergraduate teaching, opening David Cannadine's book *Ornamentalism* and works of Anglo-Indian fiction like *A Passage to India*, I was struck not by shame and disgust at imperial memories, or a desire to forget, but often rather pride and affection expressed through the trappings of monarchy, last night of the Proms and popular novels and series. Empire, it seemed, was a comfortable memory, which propped up a sense of decline in British identity. The two impressions clashed

horribly. In reading my memoir sources, I saw a bridge between the two: a case study of the specificity of work in the Punjab in the 1940s, related in the terms of a narrative that negated guilt or trauma and set up a legacy of empire that emphasised its worth, reiterated its values, and bemoaned its loss in a world that was fast changing.

The annual workshops held as part of 'From Subjects to Citizens', alongside the rich School of History seminar programme at Leeds and three meetings of the 'South Asian Studies in the North' (SASIN) group that I have been able to attend have provided fantastic opportunities to meet the authors whose work has shaped my own. One memorable paper was that given by Thomas Blom Hansen at the SASIN conference in Leeds in 2007, in which he introduced his concept of the performative state, starting me thinking about the negotiations involved in 'power' and the everyday demonstrations of it necessary to build local belief in the concept of a new nation state. Taylor Sherman's papers and recently published monograph have taken this further, through her thought-provoking approach to the 'everyday state', in which the actions of individuals at local level shape perceptions of authority to a far more significant extent than the ostensible policies by which that state is governed.

At a conference at Huddersfield University in 2008, I spent two days considering the meaning of 'Britishness' and continued to alight on the fact that, when pushed to define our identity, the stock images are overwhelmingly anachronistic. The Britain to be proud of, it seems, was one from the past in which global reach was supported by imperial possessions. At another conference in Sydney in 2009, the topic was memory and we considered at length the example set by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to apologise on behalf of the nation of Australia to the aborigine people decimated by European occupation. The message was that as inhabitants of a modern nation, we all buy into an image of nationality which draws on collective – and selective – memories of that nation's history. While to some Kevin Rudd's apology seemed a fruitless gesture, the recognition of the losers from national mythologizing was very moving to many others. Explicit and painful reminders of our national heritage are important: by skimming over the British role in atrocities like partition, we as a nation have an unsettled relationship with our past. In trying to move forward – to woo the growing

economies of the subcontinent – British heads of state as well as those of other nations are faced with similar questions to those of Australia’s Prime Minister. For the British, the colonial reach of the past and the continued reliance on its legacy, forces a responsibility to consider what our history means to our future.

The definitive history of partition can perhaps never be written. Tragedy and brutality on such a scale atomise public memory and break down the structures through which communities share and communicate about the past. Yet to despair of being able to represent such events is to fail to ask questions of both what went before and what followed. In the last decade, historians have increasingly turned to personal narration as a route into 1947 that avoids the bewildering scope and urge to negate the violence as somehow too exceptional, too messy to allow for valid analysis. Such accounts come with their own challenges; shaped by memory and its attempts to form narratives of progress and identity from diffuse and interrupted lives, the historian must sift through the narrative form to discover insights into the problems between the lines. The formation of a narrative of the self, however, is an intensely valuable process to the historian, which exposes personal and institutional values. This thesis uses sources which offer an insight literally into the mind of the everyday late colonial state. The descriptions they provide, and the way in which they justify themselves and their organisation speak valuably of the legacy of colonial rule in the Punjab: its bureaucracy, its pageantry and its self-belief. The men’s assessment of the ‘home’ they returned to, and ability to write in valedictory terms about the role of their service also feeds into a culture of ‘Britishness’ where pride in empire continues to find a place through the back door, where nostalgia champions over infamy, and where a replacement for imperial pride has not yet been found to allow Britain to survive a more rigorous examination of the apologies we perhaps owe.

Abbreviations Key

A.C.	=	Assistant Commissioner
C.B.E.	=	Commander of the British Empire
C.I.E.	=	Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire
D.C.	=	Deputy Commissioner
G.C.M.G.	=	Order of St Michael and St George
I.A.S.	=	Indian Administrative Service
I.C.S.	=	Indian Civil Service
I.P.S.	=	Indian Political Service
K.C.I.E.	=	Knight Commander of the Indian Empire
K.C.S.I.	=	Knight Commander of the Star of India
K.C.V.O.	=	Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order
O.M.	=	Order of Merit

Glossary

Anglo-Indian	=	Colonial British (or persons of mixed race)
Bearer	=	Indian man-servant, usually the most valued
<i>Chapراسى</i>	=	Indian clerk or office junior
<i>Crore</i>	=	Indian unit meaning ten million (10,000,000) or 100 <i>lakhs</i>
<i>Cutcherry</i>	=	Government offices / law courts
Eurasian	=	Antiquated Anglo-Indian term for mixed-race people
<i>Feringhis</i>	=	Hindi/Urdu word meaning ‘foreigners’
<i>Lakh</i>	=	Indian unit meaning one hundred thousand (100,000)
<i>Lakhpal</i>	=	Land record administrator
<i>Memsahib</i>	=	Term used for white women in colonial India
<i>Naib-Tahsildar</i>	=	Deputy revenue administration officer
<i>Patwari</i>	=	Land record officer, at sub-division or <i>tahsil</i> level
<i>Pukka</i>	=	Hindi/Urdu word meaning ‘firm’ or ‘true’
<i>Raj</i>	=	literally ‘rule’ in Hindi/Urdu
<i>Sahib</i>	=	Urdu term of respect used to refer to those in authority
<i>Sola Topi</i>	=	Sun helmet worn by Europeans in colonial India
<i>Sowar</i>	=	Mounted orderly / cavalryman, of Mughal derivation
<i>Tahsil</i>	=	Administrative division, comprising c.100 villages
<i>Tahsildar</i>	=	Revenue administration officer
Tiffin	=	Anglo-Indian term for lunch, or any light meal

Introduction

In the 1960s and 70s, many of the servants of Britain's now declining empire reached retirement age, and chose to turn their time to recording their experiences for posterity. The accounts produced achieved, in some cases, independent publication, and many others contributed to the series and books produced by Charles Allen: *Plain Tales from the Raj* and *Tales from the Dark Continent*.¹ The appearance of colonial nostalgia in Britain by the 1980s was compounded by the popularity of films and television adaptations located in imperial settings, most notably *The Jewel in the Crown*. Whilst the latter received critical attention for ostensibly compounding romantic idealisation of colonial India, in which Indian characters and politics received little screen-time, the memoirs of ex-colonial army and civil service officers have passed more subtly into the popular imagination. Books like Charles Allen's unapologetically champion a form of history told by those who were there, without critical questioning or contextual analysis. They set out to offer oral history, unfettered by the hand of the historian; a narrative of a lifestyle now lost and worthy of remembrance, anecdotal and non-specific in its approach. The success of the phenomenon of nostalgia for 'the Raj' justifies a more intense critical analysis of these sources; partly as they reflect something about the culture not only of the services and people involved, but about the legacy of the colonial state left behind in both India and Britain; but also because they create a silence in historical memory about the more uncomfortable aspects of empire which requires more intense interrogation.

This thesis will focus on the memoirs of one group of men working for the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S) in its last decade of existence, in the Indian (and now part-Pakistani) region of Punjab. By considering this body of memoir narratives, I set out to highlight the insight they offer us into the operation and mind of the I.C.S, to suggest how British styles of government and modes of thought about the Punjabi environment impacted (and continue to impact) upon the people involved, and finally to reflect upon the interaction between narrative forms used to describe empire back in Britain and the

¹ Charles Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj: Images of British India in the Twentieth Century* (Aylesbury: Macdonald Futura Publishers, 1975).

Charles Allen, ed., *Tales from the Dark Continent: Images of British Colonial Africa in the Twentieth Century* (London: MacDonal Futura Publishers, 1980).

accounts the men produce. The colonial relationship between Britain and India had a longevity and reach which makes it impossible to ignore in considering the two modern nations. In the inter-war period, Britain ruled over 400 million people worldwide, 322 million of whom were Indian.² Judith Brown's recent work on life histories suggests the use to which individual accounts can be put in analysing the extent and nature of impact of colonialism upon both its subjects and its rulers. Brown writes that,

Working in part with life histories enables a more nuanced methodology that allows the historian to shift gaze from the general theme and theory to the particular and precise experience of people and groups, moving from one to the other as each type of focus checks and illuminates the other. Moreover, it is an approach which is particularly productive as we examine some of the issues that deeply concern historians, such as the nature of individual and shared identities and the ways these develop over time in different contexts...³

The question of identity lies at the heart of this thesis, starting with the individual narratives of personal experience that I.C.S. officers recorded in the wake of losing their careers in the Punjab. The accounts offer an insight into the process of coming to terms with loss and re-defining the way their time in empire related to their sense of self and values, a process which in turn reveals a great deal about their motivation to work in empire, attitude toward the Indian people with whom they worked and style of operation whilst in the Punjab.

As a body of memoir sources, the men's accounts reveal not only individual storytelling and narrative creation, but also a strong element of group cooperation and collective identity. The aspects of consistency between the accounts thus show us how the I.C.S. worked on a day-to-day basis, in terms of what was expected of recruits and the power of its organisational culture beyond even its dissolution. Indeed, Brown suggests that "the careers of prominent individuals are... a valuable source for the historian – not in the biographer's sense of 'what did my subject achieve in his lifetime?' but more deeply, as a window into the networks and systems in which these individuals worked."⁴ Moreover, she argues that individual accounts can take the

² Barnor Hesse and S. Sayyid, 'Narrating the Postcolonial Political and the Immigrant Imaginary' in *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain*, edited by N. Ali, V. S. Kalra and S. Sayyid (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), p. 15.

³ Judith M. Brown, "Life Histories" and the History of Modern South Asia', *American Historical Review*, 114, 3 (2009), pp. 587-588.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

history of British India beyond a conception of organisational identity such as Ronald Robinson and Jack Gallagher's concept of the 'official mind' in London being at the heart of the evolution of colonial policy, suggesting that "it is possible to go further than this and to look at those who inhabited those institutions, and the attitudes and patterns of work that were developed in them over time, as a way of doing history that is broader and different in focus from older institutional history."⁵ Finally, the themes of the memoirs can be identified in other sources pertaining to India, and particularly the life of Britons working in the subcontinent. Common themes of style and content in referring to India and Indians can be seen in novels, films and advertising, both feeding into, and drawing on, the memoir sources. These popular images offer an impression of a certain popular British conceptualisation of India, which in turn reflects upon the British themselves as members of an imperial world. Brown sees in 'life histories' the possibility to "illuminate important intellectual, social, and political issues, adding depth and complexity to our analyses by anchoring these firmly in lived experience."⁶ In this thesis, the memoirs of members of the Punjab administration provide a basis for consideration of such wider questions, by indicating how individual members of the I.C.S. both drew on, and added to through recounting their own experiences, a more nuanced 'sense' of the relationship between Britain and India which remains unresolved today.

As William Gould suggests, "the public and private activities of the 'public servant' have perhaps been avoided as an outdated relic of an older historiography dealing with the history of the civil services in India."⁷ Partition scholarship in particular has tended to overlook the British civil service perspective on the unfolding violence. To neglect these accounts of colonial lives lived in an era of transition is, however, to miss an opportunity to understand the nature of a state institution with far-reaching influence on the modern administration of India and Pakistan, and on British images of those countries and their people.⁸ As Gould suggests, these state level records "are uniquely

⁵ Ibid., p. 591.

⁶ Ibid., p. 595.

⁷ William Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India: Society and the State, 1930s-1960s* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 24.

⁸ For example, Malcolm Lyall Darling, *At Freedom's Door*, introduced by Ian Talbot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 284: Ian Talbot's recent edited publication of Malcolm Darling's final tour around the Punjab pre-partition provides valuable insights into the state of the administration at this point, as Darling comments that, "An important factor in the decision to leave India at the earliest possible date

located to connect centre and locality, documenting the means by which over-arching ideals of governance were translated or interpreted lower down.”⁹ Thus this study moves away from ‘high politics’ style studies of partition or research based on the lives of ‘great men’ to instead analyse the everyday working of district-level administration as understood and described by the last generation of British men to work in the Punjab. The scope of the topic necessitates interaction with several different historiographical strands, and thus this introduction sets out to define my methodology in relation to each aspect. The first section will consider the background and image of the I.C.S., in terms both of its constitution and reputation. The second section will provide some context about the Punjab region and its significance to the British colonial state, as well as the factors that made it subject to the brutal partition of 1947. Section three will offer an explanation of my methodology in relation to colonial ethnography and ideas about race. Section four will then indicate some of the recent developments in research on partition, suggesting how this study draws on these new approaches. Finally, section five will consider the value and risks of using memoir sources in history, suggesting how the dichotomy between memory and history means that the emotive power of the former often has much greater reach than the meticulous care of the latter. As the British Empire slips beyond living memory, the development and retention of broader and vaguer collective memories is a phenomenon which bears closer inspection.

The I.C.S.: the ‘heaven born’ cadre

All of the men discussed in this thesis began their careers in the Punjab as members of the I.C.S., and as such were the most prestigious class within the society of Anglo-India.¹⁰ As Clive Dewey describes, “they constituted a ruling class, a class apart.”¹¹ They were also part of what was a tiny elite; as David Potter suggests, “minute in relation to the state structures in which it was located”.¹² In 1938, there were only 1029

was the weakening of the administration... By the autumn of 1946 it was clear that, under the pressure of politics, propaganda and war, the structure, in spite of its noble proportions, was dangerously strained.”

⁹Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰ J. H. Smith, ‘Preface’ in *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services 1837-1997*, by Anthony Kirk-Greene (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. xxv: Moreover, Smith observes how the reputation of the I.C.S. extended beyond India, making it the model for the development of the Colonial Service.

¹¹ Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambleton Press, 1993), p. 5.

¹² David C. Potter, *India’s Political Administrators 1919-1983* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 21.

I.C.S. officers in British India.¹³ This was reflective of the indirect rule utilised by the British colonial state, and meant on the ground that each district officer undertook the administration of a huge area and correspondingly large population. The service was no longer entirely British by the time the subjects of this study joined it, as simultaneous I.C.S. examinations in London and Delhi had been introduced in 1922 as part of a long-term strategy intended to gradually increase Indian involvement in government.¹⁴ Indeed, the memoirs reflect this fact as one of the group who contributed to the British Library's collection of Punjab memoirs was himself Punjabi, and many of the other men strive to emphasise their 'colour-blindness' in approaching Indian colleagues, as part of an effort to demonstrate their 'liberalness'.¹⁵ Notwithstanding these changes to its make-up, the culture and mythology of the I.C.S. was firmly established by the late colonial era; with a reputation for honesty, chastity and *esprit de corps* well entrenched by the Edwardian period.¹⁶ Indeed, Bradford Spangenburg suggests that the image of romanticism associated with the I.C.S. was embellished and affirmed in the early twentieth century precisely in response to a sense of growing uncertainty about its future.¹⁷ The histories of the service that have subsequently emerged, he suggests, have been largely either nostalgic or apologetic,¹⁸ written formulaically or entirely neglected as a subject which is considered to have already had sufficient attention.¹⁹ As Spangenburg argues, "the resulting picture follows generally consistent lines – a monolithic bureaucratic system run by a few men at the top or subordinates in the districts, responding to challenges with more or less unanimity and common resolve."²⁰

¹³Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁴ Sir Edward Blunt, K.C.I.E., O.B.E., *The I.C.S. – The Indian Civil Service* (London: Faber & Faber, 1937), p. 52.

¹⁵ For example, London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'John Martin Fearn C.B., Indian Civil Service (Punjab) 1940-47', MSS Eur F180/67, p. 1: "The year at Oxford provided first contact, for me at least, with educated Indians who believed that the end of British rule in their country would come about in the foreseeable future."

And, London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Peacocks Calling: One Man's Experience of India 1939-1947', by W. Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 28-9: "The Indian Civil Service had long recruited equal numbers of British and of Indian probationers and certainly my generation were never conscious of anything other than equality amongst us."

¹⁶ Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), p.159: Hyam points to the Edwardian 'revolution' in attitudes to the sexuality of civil servants, with social distance between ruler and ruled becoming an important value in the Indian administration.

¹⁷ Bradford Spangenburg, *British Bureaucracy in India: Status, Policy and the I.C.S. in the late nineteenth century* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1976), p. vii.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. ix.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. ix.

²⁰ Ibid., p. v.

This unity of action and narrative should not be a deterrent to considering these men's accounts, however. The uniformity of the accounts in this thesis offers an insight into the functioning of the late colonial state and the way in which moments of crisis were understood and represented.

Philip Woodruff's affectionate histories of British Indian administration exemplify the nostalgic form of I.C.S. history-writing. Unlike the monolithic image Spangenburg describes in histories like those of B. B. Misra,²¹ Woodruff depicts a professional community in which eccentricity and individual projects were a frequent exception to the homogeneous face of colonial rule. He suggests that as men of the service were selected and trained for the confidence to act independently, the process often produced a defiance of authority so that individual characters featured strongly in the system.²² Arguing that district officers' isolation gave them both power and individuality, Woodruff writes:

The young district manager in a lonely district is monarch of all he surveys and can be as un-English as he likes, provided he has sense enough to keep most of his ebullience out of his fortnightly reports. And in fact the system did produce plenty of men whose fads provided just that warmth the centre lacked, men with hobbies they enjoyed which happened very often also to be something the district needed.²³

Clive Dewey's monograph *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* provides a case study of two Punjabi I.C.S. officers of the early twentieth century whom Dewey contends demonstrate exactly this individuality of mind and indulged in pet projects determined by their particular upbringings and attitudes. Dewey's work raises a question of the extent to which this example of independence of method and attitude was developed or tolerated in the I.C.S. in its final decades of existence, whilst Woodruff's account of I.C.S. life in the Punjab suggests a level of power held within the hands of individual officers which allowed such independence of action and influence. Focussing on the final decade of British rule, I will suggest in chapter three how both the extent of power and the individuality of attitude of these men were evidently more shallow than may have appeared to have been the case in earlier decades. The apparent

²¹ B. B. Misra, *District Administration and Rural Development in India: policy objectives and administrative change in historical perspective* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

B. B. Misra, *Government and Bureaucracy in India: 1947-1976* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

²² Philip Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians* (London: J. Cape, 1954), p. 15.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

freedom to act relied upon much wider structures of rule than the mythology of the I.C.S. would suggest.

Dewey's research indicates how within the prestigious cadre of the I.C.S., the Punjabi administration had a reputation for attracting the best candidates and providing the greatest freedom of action due to its interventionist form of government.²⁴ He writes that,

The civilians who served in the Punjab – about a tenth of the I.C.S. – were picked men. They saw themselves, and were seen by others, as a *corps d'elite*. They got so many of the plum jobs at the centre that civilians from Madras and Bombay complained about the Punjabi takeover of the Government of India. They chaired the most important commissions of enquiry – into famine, drugs, the public services; they were drafted in to set up new administrations whenever large chunks of territory were annexed; above all, they were head-hunted as governors of other provinces ... the Punjab's reputation [was] as a training ground for brilliant administrators.²⁵

The prestige associated with an appointment to the Punjab becomes apparent immediately upon looking at recruitment files from the 1930s. In an India Office file containing responses to probationers' requests for their province of preference, Secretary G. H. G. Anderson's letters give a sense of the status of Punjab as one of the top choices. To one candidate, Peter Ensor, Anderson wrote on 23rd September 1938, "I hope it may be possible to post you in accordance with your wishes but almost everyone seems to want either the Punjab or the U.P."²⁶ In another example of what is a common message, Anderson wrote to D. J. C. Crawley on 20th September 1938 that whilst he hoped to be able to satisfy the requests submitted to him, "it is going to be difficult to please everybody, as all the lists I have received up to the present, start either (1) Punjab (2) U.P., or (1) U.P. (2) Punjab!"²⁷ The men at the core of this study were, therefore, in most cases the highest achievers of their peer group.

Dewey bemoans the lack of historiographical attention paid to the I.C.S., suggesting how decolonisation has disproportionately sidelined an area of research with the

²⁴ Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*, p. 201.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

²⁶ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'London exam 1938 – Allocations to Provinces (candidates' preferences)', IOR/L/SG/7/163.

²⁷ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'London exam 1938 – Allocations to Provinces (candidates' preferences)', IOR/L/SG/7/163.

potential to explain the nature of the colonial state in its front-line, everyday form. He writes that:

A few scholars have looked at the I.C.S. as a profession, without tackling the beliefs that drove it on; a few biographies have discussed the attitudes of prominent individuals; two monographs have fallen still-born from the press. Otherwise, all is night. The reason is simple. History is written by the victors so decolonisation wiped the I.C.S. off the agenda... Scholars wrote India out of our 'island story'. The Tolpuddle martyrs loomed larger, in the soft left indexes of the 1970s, than the conquest of a subcontinent. Relegating the empire to a fantastic appendage, detached from the mainstream of British history, assuaged the sense of loss and guilt as a world power imploded into an insignificant island.²⁸

The result, Dewey argues, is “a historiography which neglects the ruling race”.²⁹ This thesis attempts to re-dress that balance by considering in detail the views and interpretation of a group of men ostensibly ‘in charge’ at the point at which Punjab descended into disorder and bloodshed. As David Cannadine suggests in the preface to *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, the process of “recovering the world-view and social presuppositions of those who dominated and ruled the empire, and also of those followers and supporters who went along with it in Britain and overseas” does not imply an assumption that “the victims and critics of empire [are] unimportant” but rather that “the outlook of the dominators and rulers and fellow travellers – their sense of how this empire they dominated and ruled and supported and went along with actually *worked*, and what it *looked like* – is one major element of the British imperial experience that has been relatively neglected, by historians, and by critics and admirers alike.”³⁰

To ignore the most prestigious cadre of colonial administrators in approaching the transfer of power, or to assume institutional homogeneity without investigating the bases on which young men growing up in the 1920s and 30s felt compelled to work in empire is to produce a vitally incomplete picture of colonial India. Despite the transfer of power and brutal partition, the structure of the I.C.S. survived to a notable extent in the Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.), meaning that much of the working

²⁸ Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*, p. 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁰ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. xx.

mechanisms and approaches of I.C.S. men had an influence beyond 1947.³¹ Moreover, placing these men poses significant questions about the nature of Britain's relationship with its Indian empire. Chapter one will consider what kind of men the I.C.S. was managing to attract to colonial service as late as the 1930s, and what imagery it used to do so. The continued attraction of imperial imagery in this period not only allowed for the recruitment of new administrators, but shaped their preconceptions of the subcontinent and their manner of thought in approaching Indian people. The final chapters will consider the opposite end of this process, as I.C.S. officers returned to the UK upon premature retirement and became part of the imagery of the declining empire. Whilst the subcontinent and its rule were distant and often peripheral issues to the British public in the early twentieth century, the loss of prestige linked to empire, repatriation of colonial administrators and arrival of commonwealth immigrants all brought this group of men's experiences more to the forefront of British ideas about empire in the post-war decades.

The Punjab: land of the four rivers

As one of the two Indian provinces partitioned at independence, the Punjab has attracted the interest of historians through the wish to understand the violence of 1947 and consequences of the division of the region between Pakistan and India. Colonial Punjab had a quite different image and reputation. As noted above, it was considered a region which nurtured an administrative elite. It was also an economically and militarily significant area for the British, providing both large numbers of troops and agricultural yields.³² The latter was achieved through major projects undertaken to create a system of canals which brought irrigation to previously barren parts of the province. W. F. G. LeBailly, one of the memoir subjects who will be introduced in chapter one, records his belief that the innovation of effective canal holdings to achieve regular irrigation was a great source of pride for the Punjab administration.³³ He adds:

Below I will explain more about the Canal Colonies of the West Punjab, in which I was to spend the greater part of my Indian service and to which in my view much too little

³¹ The extent of I.A.S. identification with the legacy of I.C.S. structures is emphasised in the interviews conducted by William Gould for his recent monograph: Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*.

³² Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (Riverdale, Md.: Riverdale Company, 1988), pp. 10-11.

³³ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Indian Reminiscences - 1927-1946', by W.F.G. LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 28.

has been written and too little credit given.... Briefly, they were immense projects which turned a wilderness into one of the most prosperous parts of the sub-continent, enjoying standards of living unrivalled in the British India of that day, and without which the West Pakistan of today could not have survived as a separate entity.³⁴

As Ian Talbot suggests, the defining features of the Punjab, its closeness to the Afghan border and extensive river system, defined a unique system of rule in the region, and also a special status.³⁵ The frontier nature of Punjab, alongside its unusual religious demography, led to it being the bastion of army recruitment. Colonial Punjab had a marginal Muslim majority, focussed in the western districts, and also contained the Sikh centre of Amritsar.³⁶ Both religious groups were considered more ‘martial’ than Hindus and were disproportionately recruited into the Indian army. As Tan Tai Yong suggests, “one of the most distinctive features of Punjab’s colonial experience was its close and sustained relationship with the military.”³⁷

The value of Punjab as an economic and military resource was matched by a mythologised status. Colonial fiction not only depicted the region in romantic terms, as will be considered in chapter five, but overwhelmingly used Punjab as the setting which represented the best and most authentic image of British-Indian life. As Allen Greenberger argues,

The Punjab fitted in perfectly with the rest of the British image. It is impossible to say whether the setting caused the image or the image the setting. It is clear, however, that without the large-scale agreement between the two there would not have been this continual emphasis.³⁸

Beyond its contributions to the *Raj*, the geography and frontier location of the Punjab in themselves inspired this idealistic image. Moreover, the challenges of ruling a region of such religious diversity, bordering the threats of Afghanistan and dominated by powerful landed elites gave the Punjab a reputation as an exciting and rewarding place

³⁴ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 3.

³⁵ Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*, pp. 10-11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Gopal Das Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events leading up to and following the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 90: Khosla gives the population statistics from the 1940 Census for united Punjab as 28.4 million in total, comprising 16.2 million Muslims, 7.5 million Hindus and 3.7 million Sikhs.

³⁷ Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), p. 12.

³⁸ Allen J. Greenberger, *The British Image of India: A Study in the Literature of Imperialism 1880-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 35.

in which to work and engendered a particular pride in the maintenance of the region under British control. Punjab was one of the last regions to be brought under British control, only being fully annexed in 1849, and posed a challenge to British administration throughout the following century because of its religious and geographical diversity. The Muslim majority constituted over 80% of the population in the western districts, but in some parts of eastern Punjab, as little as 15%; the British response, Ian Talbot suggests, was to encourage allegiances based on kinship and tribe which cut across communal divisions.³⁹ Maintenance of control also relied in part upon a strong police force, but the I.C.S. officers who served in the region were expected to demonstrate the moral strength of the administration on a day-to-day basis. As Talbot argues, “the district officials were thus expected to win the allegiance of the rural population by their example of hard work and fair-mindedness.”⁴⁰

W. F. G. LeBailly’s introduction to the Punjab offers an indication of the province’s reputation in the 1920s and 30s. Commenting upon the climate, he demonstrates the way in which topography and temperament merged in the colonial mind. He describes the Punjab as:

...part of Central Asia, and though indeed the winter is generally most pleasant, though dusty, the summer is among the most severe in the sub-continent. It is however, dry, and not I believe unhealthy. Certainly the Punjabi is among the physically best developed of all the many peoples of the former British India.⁴¹

The preference for Punjabis in military recruitment, drawing in part on their role in suppressing the 1857 ‘mutiny’, fitted with the image of Punjab as a frontier region, thus thought to produce ‘manly’, physically capable ‘types’.⁴² The title given to district administrators in the Punjab was Deputy Commissioner, as a result of the divisional structure in which the province was split into five administrative areas, each under the charge of a Commissioner. Within this structure, Punjab was split into 29 districts, each under the control of a Deputy Commissioner, and containing approximately 1000

³⁹ Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, p. 18, 34, 46 and 77: Talbot points to the development of the canal colonies and the important military role of Punjabis as sources of income and favours which could be distributed across communal divisions. He suggests that in rural areas, these economic ties and tribal loyalties were able to cut across religious difference.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴¹ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, pp. 2-3.

⁴² Andrew J. Major, *Return to Empire: Punjab Under the Sikhs and British in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1996), p. 200.

villages.⁴³ LeBailly indicates in his account how the title of Deputy Commissioner had a unique status and image, writing that:

The title Deputy Commissioner was only held in the more recently acquired provinces of British India viz., The Punjab, NWFP (cut out of the Punjab in Lord Curzon's time), Sind, Oudh and Burma. It signified authority to exercise under special acts appropriate to newly acquired territories, which in fact were rarely used in my time. In addition he had the usual offices Collector and District Magistrate as well as, in the Punjab generally being ex-officio Chairman of the District Board (the body corresponding to a County Council) elected to deal with local authority matters. Much the greatest part of his work came to him in his capacity as Collector. Not only had he to keep a close watch on collections of revenue... but the Collector was the authority to whom disputes between landlord and tenant and most other matters which related to the land were referred either in original or appellat jurisdiction to the Collector.⁴⁴

In describing the role he undertook, LeBailly explains one of the attractions as having been the expectation of power that he drew from his preconceptions of the Punjab in particular; chapters two and three will suggest how the position and scope of the Deputy Commissioner role necessitated not the romantic individualism which LeBailly idealises, but a steady administrative mind-set and careful management of local sources of information and support. Greenberger suggests a further reason for the image these men gleaned of the Punjab as being due to preconceptions about the region's people. As well as the image of defending "the borders of civilisation from the primitive Pathans and the always dangerous Russians while bringing material improvements to the local peasants",⁴⁵ the Punjab was considered an attractive posting due to its population being thought to be less westernised than that of regions like Bengal, which were considered untrustworthy.⁴⁶ As Greenberger argues, "the westernised Indians did not fit into the image of how a 'good Indian', or for that matter, a 'real Indian', behaved."⁴⁷ Punjabis, however, are relatively positively portrayed by colonial sources as "a strong hardy stock, assertive of their own rights, men of the toughest fibre, innocent of nerves, with

⁴³ Gurharpal Singh, 'The Partition of India in a Comparative Perspective: A Long Term View', in *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent*, edited by Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 35.

⁴⁴ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 18.

⁴⁵ Greenberger, *The British Image of India*, p. 36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

little or no physical fear.”⁴⁸ Greenberger nonetheless notes how “the Punjabis that Candler describes in such glowing terms are still ‘helpless as cattle when there was no one to lead them.’”⁴⁹ In chapters two and three, I will suggest how such stereotypes of Punjabi colleagues and servants quickly merge into essentialising ideas about the underlying differences between east and west, and became an easy catch-all in minimising any sense of British responsibility for the tragic events of 1947.

Whilst the Punjab became the focus of a devastating partition at independence, the previous years were marked more by cooperative inter-religious government through the Unionist Coalition. As Gurharpal Singh writes,

In Punjab the Unionist Party was able to build a cross-communal alliance of agriculturalists that incorporated elements of power-sharing, proportionality, segmentational autonomy and the mutual veto. These arrangements commanded sufficient political support in the province from the 1920s to the mid-1940s to marginalise the challenge of the Muslim League and the Congress.⁵⁰

Indeed, chapter one will suggest how the constitutional changes of the inter-war period brought a remarkably successful resolution in the Punjab during the 1920s, 30s and even early 40s. Unlike Muslims living as a minority in regions such as India’s Central Provinces (CP), United Provinces (UP) or Bihar, Punjabi Muslims were perceived to have been relatively well served by British rule, and were less attracted by the claims of the Muslim League, making the late colonial period a relatively stable time in the Punjab. As David Page suggests, the role Punjabi Muslims had played in putting down the 1857 ‘Mutiny’, plus their continued importance to imperial military strategy, made them a group favoured by the *Raj*. Page describes how, as a result,

the *Raj* bolstered Muslim interests in the Punjab, and when irrigation schemes led to the reclamation of large areas of west Punjab in the later nineteenth century, the Muslims of that area were among the chief beneficiaries. This development marked the most important accession of landed wealth to the community during the British period.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 128.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 170.

⁵⁰ Singh, ‘The Partition of India in a Comparative Perspective’, p. 103.

⁵¹ David Page, ‘The Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1920-1932’, in *The Partition Omnibus*, by David Page, Anita Inder Singh, Penderel Moon, G. D. Khosla and Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 9.

Punjab's Sikh community also had a reputation as militarily valuable, and benefitted from the 1919 Montagu-Chelmsford reforms as they provided communal representation to both Sikhs and Muslims in the region.⁵²

The conservatism of the constitutional reforms made by the British Indian Government in 1909, 1919 and 1935 produced stability in the Punjab, but also cemented the separate representation of the religious communities. As David Page suggests, the reforms sought to put any power that was devolved into the hands of those on whose cooperation the *Raj* had relied rather than those demanding reform, and as such Muslim landowners in the Punjab achieved an increasingly unassailable position.⁵³ Tan Tai Yong suggests how the reliance on a rural, military base of control in the Punjab allowed the British remarkable continuity and stability throughout the 1920s and 30s, but eventually broke down because of the pressures on an administration so overwhelmingly identified with the stresses of wartime. He writes:

In managing the military districts, the Punjab had traditionally relied on its rural-military allies – the province's landed elites and rural notables. Their importance as military intermediaries of the state facilitated their entrenchment in the provincial legislative councils created by post-war political reforms as well as their subsequent dominance in Punjabi politics in the form of the Punjab National Unionist Party. This was largely achieved through the support of an electoral base which was dominated – during diarchy and provincial autonomy – by landlords, peasant proprietors and the military classes. The civil-military regime survived the Second World War, but not before being strained almost to the breaking point by all-India issues such as the food crisis and the demand for Pakistan.⁵⁴

Chapter one will suggest how the reputation of the Punjab and the success of its governing strategies in the inter-war period made the region seem a touchstone of calm as set against the Congress movements occurring elsewhere in India, making the partition and accompanying violence of 1947 unpredictable and shocking to all those involved.

⁵² V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1957), p. 23.

⁵³ Page, 'The Prelude to Partition', pp. 13-14.

⁵⁴ Yong, *The Garrison State*, p. 13.

Caste and ethnography: conceptualising racial identity in colonial Punjab

Conceptualisations of race are a core theme throughout this thesis, and focussing on the Punjab offers an insight into the complexity of colonial characterisations of race. As a religiously diverse society, in which Hindus formed a minority, the Punjab was not thought of as a ‘caste-ridden’ society, justifying much of the positivity about its people expressed by the British living there. However, as will be suggested throughout the following chapters, the Punjabis with whom the men in this thesis worked are nonetheless characterised in terms of their race, religious identity and often by a representation of fundamental natural primitiveness. It is important to note the variability of the discourse of race in colonial India, within which debate and disagreement featured more often than the generalised terms used by colonial agents might seem to suggest. Quite in contrast to the idea of a colonial consensus, Susan Bayly’s work on caste demonstrates how research into Indian racial identities and characteristics formed a fluid and contested body of new ‘science’. As Bayly argues,

The major element in the portrayal of colonial thought about Indian society is the theme of race. The ethnographers who are still cited as observers of regional castes and ‘caste systems’, such as Ibbetson, Hunter and Risley, are much better seen as men who sought to make their mark in a wider learned world which had come to be dominated by ethnographical debate. These debates about the definition and significance of race were applied to an extraordinary wide range of issues in contemporary science and social theory... India for them was not a self-contained and ethnographically separate ‘other’, and certainly did not constitute a domain of purely localised imperial or strategic significance. Although they are often caricatured as ‘orientalists’, all monotonously portraying India in the same terms as a childlike, passive, and hierarchical ‘caste’ society, the colonial theorists and fact-gatherers did not think alike. A close reading of their works reveals something more complex and colourful, often more intellectually sophisticated, than a uniform colonial ‘discourse’ that worked to invent or fabricate the ideology and social reality of caste.⁵⁵

Most importantly, Bayly separates the occupation of ethnographical research as a practical, administrative exercise, seeking to distinguish between groups in order to categorise and control them, from detailed scientific observations which recognised

⁵⁵ Susan Bayly, ‘Caste and ‘Race’ in the Colonial Ethnography of India’, in *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, ed. by Peter Robb (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 167.

regional differences and subtleties.⁵⁶ Indeed, Christopher Pinney suggests that the late nineteenth century was marked by an emerging desire among academics to distance themselves from the administrative use of scientific information.⁵⁷ Rather than being a specifically oriental occupation, Bayly suggests how the discussion of race represented a broader European scientific discourse, as part of which it seemed necessary to exploit the potential of India for ethnographic research in order to keep up with European academic competition.⁵⁸ The variation in approaches taken toward India as a scientific resource, Bayly argues, highlights a broader Victorian revolution in the value of the sciences; she writes, “the expansion of education and publishing, and the growth and professionalisation of the human sciences, created the essential context for their involvement in ‘orientalist’ knowledge-seeking.”⁵⁹ Thus Bayly concludes that “in reality then, British rule generated a remarkable quantity of statistical and analytical documentation in which references to caste featured very prominently, but did not create an all-powerful ‘colonial’ consensus about this or any other aspect of the society.”⁶⁰ Francis Hutchins work on the British ‘illusion of permanence’ reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that:

British attitudes towards India were of course never a monolithic orthodoxy. The British throughout their connection with India engaged in a dialogue amongst themselves, and if certain approaches and attitudes were dominant at different times they were constantly under attack by those who preferred other approaches and attitudes. When experience and inclination dictated the need for a change of policy there were always formulated alternatives from which to choose.⁶¹

The representation of the Punjab in colonial race science exemplifies the role of debate and differing theories. In contrast with H. H. Risley’s approach of focusing upon the physical aspects of race,⁶² Denzil Ibbetson’s work on the Punjab led him to the conclusion that political and employment status were the more definitive markers of

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 169.

⁵⁷ Christopher Pinney, ‘Colonial Anthropology in the ‘Laboratory of Mankind’’ in *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, ed. by C. A. Bayly (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990), p. 260.

⁵⁸ Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India: From the eighteenth century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 132.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 121.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

⁶¹ Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, pp. xii-xiii.

⁶² Pinney, ‘Colonial Anthropology in the ‘Laboratory of Mankind’’, p. 256.

caste.⁶³ The profound differences between Ibbetson's 1881 work *Panjab Castes* and the ideas of Hunter and Risley highlight not a uniform colonial consensus, but a real variation in the theories of researchers writing about the subcontinent.⁶⁴ A more generalised conception of caste was to link racial attributes to environment and topography; as Bayly suggests, "this distinction between casteless mountaineers and caste-'fettered' tropical lowlanders became a major theme in the racial classification schemes devised by the ethnologists of the later nineteenth century."⁶⁵ This idea of dry heat being healthier than tropical heat was part of LeBailly's description of the Punjab in the previous section, where he overtly links the climate to an impression of the native Punjabis being 'well developed'. Another of the men whose memoir will be introduced in chapter one, Bill Cowley, offers a similarly extensive account of the racial make-up of Punjab, in which the geographical and political situation of the region merge with racial description. Cowley indicates the Punjab's unique position with the following summary:

The rest of India was always distrustful of the Punjab. There were many reasons for this – historically, invasions had come that way; it was the last province the British had taken over and in many ways they had created it, building the great canals that transformed it; the Punjab had swayed the balance of 1857, standing by the British against the rest of India.⁶⁶

This description of the location and history of Punjab is immediately related to the racial characteristics of its people, as he continues,

In the Punjab you were not conscious of any colour bar or racial bar either way. I had never been conscious of any distrust or diffidence because I was a shade paler than my companions. In point of fact the pale Punjabis tended to look down on the dark Dravidians from the south. There was more of an obvious gulf between the Punjab and Madras than between the Punjab and Europe. An average Punjabi could pass for a Spaniard or a Marseillaise any day. Some of the hill women had an almost north European complexion.⁶⁷

Cowley's ideas about the Punjab draw on one particular concept of racial segregation between so-called 'Dravidian' south Indians and Punjabis with an apparently 'Aryan'

⁶³ Bayly, 'Caste and 'Race' in the Colonial Ethnography of India', p. 208.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 205.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 176.

⁶⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 103.

⁶⁷ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 103.

background, reinforcing that positive characteristics and ease of social intercourse between British and Indians must indicate some form of racial link. His emphasis upon the pale complexions of the Punjabis with whom he worked is given as approval, and presses the idea that they are physically distanced from other Indians. The passage suggests how small elements of a wider scientific discourse continued to be adopted for political and administrative purposes right into the 1940s, without reference to the existence of further debate. Cowley's final words in this explanation of the Punjab attempt a disassociation from race, by claiming "but colour was a very minor factor. The real point was that the British could feel completely at home in the Punjab and never be conscious of any anti-British feeling. This was not so in the rest of India".⁶⁸ The emphasis he makes throughout is on the ease of social relations, marking out for him the individual significance of Punjab.

Cowley is not alone in emphasising social relations and status in his understandings of racial identity. The Punjabis described in the memoirs, as I will show in chapters one, two and three, are categorised not by colour specifically but by their social status and conformity to certain ideas of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Thus the loyal Indian servant who knows his place and does not challenge it is praised, with the important caveat that he is a subject of British care, unable to manage independently. The humble villager or poor peasant receive similar treatment. Educated, modern Indians, or those in any position of authority are treated as the 'unacceptable' figure, outside of the expectations of colonial administration and uncooperative with it. Indian members of the administrative services or army are notable exceptions. In all cases, the suggestion of equality rings false: the 'acceptable' Indian still requires care and support, a British model of behaviour; the 'unacceptable' Indian revolts against it. Above all, social position and behaviour shape the hierarchy, but all Indians are considered in the end to have a fundamental primitiveness. Elizabeth Buettner's work on the Anglo-Indian public sphere suggests a similar gradation of 'whiteness', whereby social acceptability and professional status form part of racial belonging.⁶⁹ In a society in which, "below the most elite sectors, which included the I.C.S. and Indian Army officers and their families, were countless others, including tea, coffee and indigo

⁶⁸ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 103.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Buettner, 'Problematic Spaces, Problematic Races: Defining 'Europeans' in late colonial India', *Women's History Review*, 9, 2 (2000), p. 278.

planters, those in commerce and trade, and missionaries”,⁷⁰ Buettner emphasises that “neither skin colour (or other biological markers) nor birthplace was sufficient proof of an individual’s European or Anglo-Indian status”.⁷¹ Education and sufficient wealth to remain transient and not overly connected to any Indian location are two of the most significant factors to which Buettner points in maintaining the fragile construct of ‘whiteness’ with the colonial environment.

William Gould’s work on corruption in U.P. suggests equally how ‘whiteness’ appeared in opposition to characteristics both of Indian people and locations. The existence of corruption, Gould argues, was valid as a justification for British rule, especially as the colonial state developed its image of ‘moral’ paternalism.⁷² The problem of British civil servants’ involvement in and reliance upon networks of corruption, moreover, could be written off by reference to “the environment in which he worked”, resulting in an underlying assumption that the Indian location and people naturally inclined toward corruption.⁷³ Such assumptions underlie all of the memoirs: favoured Indian friends or colleagues are nonetheless subject to an Eastern ‘essence’, vaguely defined but considered fundamental. Beyond this basis, I would suggest, the gradations of ‘acceptability’ were defined by a subtle mix of education, status and wealth, just as Buettner argues that British members of the community were fitted into the hierarchy.⁷⁴ My approach also draws on the work of Partha Chatterjee in dividing ‘the governed’ from the ‘bourgeois class’,⁷⁵ but I would contend a more nuanced treatment of the Indian upper classes as those with links to the administration are referred to in favourable terms within the memoirs. David Cannadine’s emphasis upon class over merely race in creating the colonial hierarchy is also a valuable framework,⁷⁶ although I will suggest here more factors at play in defining ‘acceptability’.

Colonial power fundamentally relies upon an assumption of difference – indeed superiority – between the colonisers and colonised. As Catherine Hall argues,

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 279.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 281.

⁷² Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, p. 10.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁴ Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 10.

⁷⁵ Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004).

⁷⁶ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*.

The time of empire was the time when anatomies of difference were being elaborated: it was the work of culture. These oppositions, constituted through processes of differentiation which positioned men and women, colonisers and colonised, as if such divisions were natural, were constantly in the making, in conflicts of power. For as Cooper and Stoler argue, the most basic tension of empire was that ‘a grammar of difference was continuously and vigilantly crafted as people in colonies refashioned and contested European claims to superiority.’⁷⁷

The process of constructing difference had its basis in a vocabulary of hierarchy, with various factors, and with the input of countless colonial actors. Rosalind O’Hanlon points to its significance, suggesting that “colonial power thus derives its strength from two sources: from the material ability to coerce which it brings with it in its armies and from the Orientalist discourses of its second, shadow army of textual scholars, linguists, historians, anthropologists and so on.”⁷⁸ In this section, I have indicated the extent to which there was dispute and variability within what is often thought of as a colonial consensus of ideas about race in India. Nonetheless, the first chapter will introduce colonial civil servants who continued to accept and participate in the narrative of Indian exoticism and weakness, and to undertake careers in the subcontinent in order to rule over such people. As such, there are two key aspects of the conceptualisation of race that will be used in this thesis. First, I will contend that despite the developments toward independence and altered working conditions this entailed, these men had a fundamental belief in the value and workability of one nation’s rule over another, demonstrating a simplistic belief in the inability of Indians for self-rule. Secondly, whilst the discourse of colonial race science had complexity and serious research within its range, this was often compromised by its continual use in justifying administration, and for the men in this study, their references to its terms suggests a perfunctory knowledge in which the subtleties are lost.

⁷⁷ Catherine Hall, ‘Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire’, in *Cultures of Empire: A Reader – Colonisers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Catherine Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 20.

⁷⁸ Rosalind O’Hanlon, ‘Recovering the Subject: *Subaltern Studies* and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia’, in *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, edited by Vinayak Chaturvedi (London: Verso, 2000), p. 103.

Understandings of partition: the development of local history

The 1947 partition of Punjab produced a situation of chaos, bloodshed and tragedy which deserves recognition and research but raises difficulties of method for the historian. Even the number of casualties during 1947 is unsettled, being subject to estimates ranging between 200,000 and 1.5 million.⁷⁹ The immediate causal factors for the beginning of violence can be seen in the resignation of the cross community Unionist coalition government on 2nd March 1947, under pressure from Muslim League agitation, and in the growing presence of private armies and public tension across the region.⁸⁰ Explaining the extent of bloodshed and the breakdown of previously cohesive communities is, however, a challenge with which historians have so far struggled. Ian Talbot suggests how “in this great human event, human voices have been strangely silent”,⁸¹ describing how partition has often been written about in terms of all-India politics rather than local events.⁸² In the last decade, work on partition has taken an increasingly local view, using techniques of oral history and focussing on the individuals involved in the violence. As Yasmin Khan suggests,

The history of partition is very much a work in progress, with major oral history projects still under way and new archival sources still to be unearthed, and there have been seismic reappraisals of partition in the past decade. Many writers in recent years have been rather allergic to national histories, preferring to deal with provincial, local or regional arenas, sensitive to the risk of over-simplification and the constraints imposed by attempting national narratives.⁸³

Whilst this thesis considers the position of a ruling elite departing amidst the violence, there is a lot to be gained from studying the attitudes with which this group viewed rioting and bloodshed as it occurred during their tenure and within the districts

⁷⁹ Ian Talbot, ‘Introduction’, in *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947-2002*, edited by Ian Talbot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. xiii.

Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 298: “It is not possible to make an accurate estimate of the total loss of life or the extent of damage to property caused by these riots. Figures computed on the population basis must, of necessity, prove extremely misleading. The census returns of 1941 were not accurate even at the time they were compiled. They became hopelessly wrong, at the end of six years, when a general increase in population, and local movements made it impossible to determine, with any degree of accuracy, how many non-Muslims were living in the West Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Sind. Nor is it possible to know the total number of Hindu and Sikh refugees who later arrived in India.”

⁸⁰ Ian Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, in *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan*, edited by Ian Talbot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 3.

⁸¹ Ian Talbot, *Freedom’s Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India* (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 15.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸³ Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 9.

supposedly under their control. This section will consider some recent approaches to writing about partition which inform this study.

Until recently, approaches to partition and independence have tended to be focussed on central politics and national figures. As Aparna Basu suggests,

The history of partition is based largely on official documents as a history of government-to-government debate, concentrating on the differences between the Congress and the League and on the British policy of divide and rule. This history has ignored the dislocation of human lives and the loss, trauma, pain and violence people suffered.⁸⁴

This tendency to view Indian history as part of a peripheral story of empire, or to write from the perspective of key central politicians and administrators has been challenged more generally in the late twentieth century by the rise of area studies. As P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins explain,

A generation of historians has shifted the emphasis away from the centre and towards what was called the periphery – a term that now seems to be an uncomfortable fit for parts of the world that were often centres in their own right. This trend was propelled by two influences: the rise of Area Studies, which were committed to restoring historical independence to former constituents of the empire, and the complementary stimulus given by the ‘excentric’ theory of imperialism, which sought to export the causes of empire from the metropolis to the frontier.⁸⁵

Subaltern studies has also encouraged an approach which rediscovers the experiences of those local, forgotten voices most involved in the upheaval of 1947.⁸⁶

Aparna Basu’s article about the search for women abducted during partition, and the process of trying to unite them with their families, exemplifies recent work on partition in its efforts to tell the story of those who suffered most and study the activity of the new states of India and Pakistan at the most local level. Similarly, Urvashi Butalia’s book about the untold stories of partition seeks to avoid definitive analysis and instead to allow the tales of people who experienced partition to speak for themselves. One of

⁸⁴ Aparna Basu, ‘Uprooted Women: Partition of Punjab 1947’, in *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicising Gender and Race*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 271.

⁸⁵ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, second edition (Harlow; London: Longman, 2001), p. 13.

⁸⁶ An example of this kind of work is: Ishtiaq Ahmed, ‘Forced Migration and Ethnic Cleansing in Lahore in 1947: Some First Person Accounts’, in *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial, and Post-colonial Migration*, edited by Ian Talbot and Shinder Thandi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

the key problems that she identifies with writing conventional history about partition is its singularity, and complete divorce from normal life. As she describes,

Ironically, and tragically, in subsequent conflicts and strifes, it is partition that has provided a reference point: to say of a communal situation that it was like partition again is to invest it with a seriousness, a depth of horror and violence that can, now, immediately be understood. Yet for those who lived through the violence and dislocation of partition, the language they had available to them must have seemed particularly lacking to describe what it was they lived through.⁸⁷

Personal testimony has been key to the new wave of partition histories, moving away from high politics to talk about what happened on the ground, but has this limitation; that experiences so horrific can be beyond description or even beyond mnemonic capability, as the memory of chaotic and violent times may be confused and incomplete.

Ian Talbot highlights a different problem of approach to partition experiences; that the violence has often been discussed as if it were a “unique phenomenon, divorced from the rich literature on ethnic and communal violence in the contemporary subcontinent and beyond.”⁸⁸ This narrative of exceptionalism is an understandable response to the scale of loss and devastation caused by partition, but is unhelpful in its unwillingness to recognise the continuities across 1947, in which antecedents may be found. As Talbot writes,

To use Gyanendra Pandey’s telling phrase, official histories have made the violence ‘non-narratable’. They have achieved this by firstly reducing it to a ‘local’ detail that is irrelevant to the wider event of national independence and secondly by portraying it as an aberration, arising from a temporary moment of madness that does not require rational explanation.⁸⁹

In a collection of first-hand accounts gathered by Ishtiaq Ahmed, an example of this response to partition is provided by Jamna Das Akthar, who left behind his career in Lahore to take his family to safety in Delhi. In his interview, he concludes by saying, “what happened in Lahore and Punjab in 1947 baffles me even now. It must be some temporary insanity that caught in its grip all the communities.”⁹⁰ Ahmed highlights how

⁸⁷ Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (London: C. Hurst, 2000), p. 285.

⁸⁸ Talbot, ‘Introduction’, in *The Deadly Embrace*, p. xiii.

⁸⁹ Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Ahmed, ‘Forced Migration and Ethnic Cleansing in Lahore in 1947: Some First Person Accounts’, p. 111.

“standard accounts of the 1947 communal violence in the Punjab concentrate on the ‘summer madness’ of mid-August”, focussing on disorder created by the transfer of power and uncertain boundary demarcation during this process.⁹¹ Significant though these factors were, Ahmed emphasises the need for deeper analysis as he notes that violence “occurred equally as deadly in the Sikh and Muslim princely states of the Punjab where administrative structures remained intact.”⁹²

Moreover, Ahmed argues that the focus specifically on August, to the exclusion of the March violence, is a mistake which facilitates over-simplification of the events of 1947. He writes,

The chronological concentration on August 1947 similarly locates the violence in a ‘special’ time of flux and transition when conventional mores could be overturned. It is immediately apparent why psychological explanations of violence, dealing in essentialised ‘Hindu’, ‘Muslim’ and ‘Sikh’ identities, rather than state-centric understandings of the genocidal murder should appear so powerful in such a liminal moment. Its uniqueness has further discouraged comparison with post-independence communal violence.⁹³

By considering in chapter two some accounts in the memoirs of experiences the men had of riots or violent incidents, I will seek here to demonstrate how ‘communalism’ was interpreted by British administrators and how their attitudes impacted upon the way they dealt with such events. This impression of the operation of the local state offers an important insight into the months leading up to the actual partition. Rosalind O’Hanlon writes in a valuable article about recovering the subaltern subject that “we are to recuperate him as an agent, rather than as the helpless victim of impersonal forces, or the blind follower of others, through the recognition of his capacity for purposeful action: for a considerable degree of self-determination in favourable times and, returning to his own inextinguishable subjectivity, possessed at least of his own modes of ideation and practice in unfavourable ones.”⁹⁴ By considering in this thesis the experiences and attitudes of administrators acting as part of the colonial state, I seek not to take away from the importance of such reclamation of lost voices in favour of a voice of power but rather to return subjectivity to the individuals running the local state in

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁹³ Ibid, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁴ O’Hanlon, ‘Recovering the Subject’, p. 80.

partition-era Punjab. This aim serves in part to give a face to what has often been represented as a monolithic organisation (the I.C.S.), but also, in reference to the problems of studying partition itself, the exercise of fleshing out the local state as it touched those most involved in the violence offers an opportunity to contextualise better the period up to August 1947 and assess the extent of continuity across partition.

The approach taken to the state here draws on the recent work of Taylor Sherman. Sherman writes in introduction to her book on state violence in India that,

Taking its cue from anthropologists who have developed the idea of the ‘everyday state’, this work regards the state as a construct, constituted out of its quotidian practices. These include the ‘normalising’ processes which Foucault identified: ordering space and time, supervising and disciplining the population, and symbolically reiterating government authority. But apart from these, the state is also constituted by acts of corruption, coercion, violence and failure. It is through these everyday practices that the state makes its presence felt amongst the population.⁹⁵

As a result of this focus on the local state, “policy is important, but implementation (or lack thereof) is paramount to the experience of the state... the key focus of analysis therefore becomes the individual acting on behalf of the state.”⁹⁶ In the case of the I.C.S., the individuals working as district administrators claim to have taken on control over huge areas and numbers of people, and thus their attitudes and approaches have a wide significance. Moreover, for C. J. Fuller and John Harris, it is not the conceptualisation of the state that is important but its enactment; the state “‘as a structural effect’, that is, as the effect of practices that make state structures appear to exist.”⁹⁷ These practices include “Foucauldian ‘disciplines’ helping to produce the armies, schools, bureaucracies and other distinctive institutions of the modern state, and one of its particularly important characteristics, of course, is the territorial boundary policed by passports, immigration laws and the rest.”⁹⁸ Within colonial Punjab, many of these functions were nominally under the control of the I.C.S. officer, and chapter three will set out to consider how these powers were enacted on the ground and thus what the experience of Punjabis was of their local late colonial state. This perspective offers a

⁹⁵ Taylor Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. 4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁷ C. J. Fuller and John Harris, ‘For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State’, in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, edited by C. J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Co., 2001), pp. 4-5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

view of those in positions of power in Punjab right into 1947, suggesting what legacy the colonial state left at district level.

Memory and history: risks and benefits of the memoir as a source

In his monograph focussed on memories of partition, Gyanendra Pandey makes a valuable distinction between the nature of memory accounts and historical approaches, writing that:

There is a wide chasm between the historians' apprehension of 1947 and what we might call a more popular, survivors' account of it – between history and memory, as it were. Nationalism and nationalist historiography, I shall argue, have made an all too facile separation between 'partition' and 'violence'. This is one that survivors seldom make: for in their view, partition *was* violence, a cataclysm, a world (or worlds) torn apart. Whilst historians' history seems to suggest that what partition amounted to was, in the main, a new constitutional / political arrangement, which did not deeply affect the central structures of Indian society or the broad contours of its history, the survivors' account would appear to say that it amounted to a sundering, a whole new beginning and, thus, a radical reconstitution of community and history.⁹⁹

When considering a period like 1947, what might otherwise seem like errors in memory may evoke a more meaningful and lasting response as an event like partition cannot simply be enumerated and leaves an emotional trace which is far more powerful than any historical account. In this thesis, the core sources are a body of memoirs and letters written largely from memory by a group of men looking back at their career in the Punjab from a distance of around two decades.¹⁰⁰ The narratives produced have obvious limitations of accuracy, thoroughness and self-serving nostalgia, but these weaknesses can also be strengths. The account written to please an audience of British readers in the 1960s and 70s offers some insight into that readership. The style also reflects something of the men themselves; careful and organised with bureaucratic rigour. The explanations

⁹⁹ Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Ronald Belcher prefaces his account by writing: "So much happened in so short a time after independence on August 15th that at this distance of time my memory does not allow an accurate and collected account to be given of those weeks as I lived them from day to day. The outline in the following paragraphs is as true a record as I can make it without loading it with qualifications about the exact order of events or the degree of certainty of every detail." London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Recollections of the Indian Civil Service: Punjab 1939-1947', by R.H. Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. i.

given for partition do not serve as reasoned history, but offer an insight into the operation of an administrative cadre beyond its permanent retirement, with the legacy that entailed for the impression they give of India to their British audience.

In Geoffrey Cubitt's monograph analysing the relationship between memory and history, he defines memory by writing that:

In the last analysis, memory is not an object, but a concept – a mental category that we make use of in making sense of complex and elusive aspects of human behaviour and experience. Like any concept worth its salt, it is only serviceable at the risk of getting frayed at the edges. If we must regard it as a thing, we should think of it as a thing like a chemical element, never appearing in a pure state, but always mixed up in other things – in our processes of learning and perception, in our sense of identity or selfhood, in our awareness of time or place, in our habits of narration and our capacity for social interaction, in our sense of tradition or our potential for development.¹⁰¹

Rather than being a weakness, the necessarily tangled nature of memory makes it a vital subject for the historian. The memories of I.C.S. men reflect upon partition, and the disjuncture this marked in their own lives – albeit without the experience of violence to them personally – but also fit into a social memory of I.C.S. *esprit de corps* as it survived post-1947 and to a collective British commemoration of the experience of being an imperial power. Memoirs are inevitably a location for narrativising one's life, making sense of what has been achieved through a structure which is super-imposed upon the necessarily more disorganised reality. As Alistair Thomson suggests in his work on Anzac memories in Australia, "remembering is one of the vital ways in which we identify ourselves in story-telling. In our story-telling we identify what we think we have been, who we think we are now and what we want to become."¹⁰² In these cases, the men had an opportunity not just to be heard as individuals, but to re-constitute a sense of the value of the role they had played as an administrative corps, and to reinforce their belief in the need of Indian people for paternalistic government.

The experience of being present during outbreaks of violence had a very different significance for I.C.S. officers than for those actually involved. Nonetheless, loss of life within an officer's district certainly entailed failure and a loss of control, issues which

¹⁰¹ Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 6.

¹⁰² Alastair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 10.

will be considered in chapters two and three. Indeed, one of the civilians, Ronald Belcher recorded in his memoir that the period was so distressing that “I afterwards tried to erase them from my memory so far as that was possible”.¹⁰³ For all of the I.C.S. men, 1947 marked a precipitate end to their first careers and the ostensible certainties associated with them, and the necessity of a return to Britain after many years’ absence. Chapter four will consider this period in detail. As the loss of career extended to almost complete decolonisation during the lifetime of these men, the memoirs are largely written at a point when a worldview and value system with which they had grown up had also become anachronistic. Alistair Thomson argues that traumatic experiences necessitate a re-shaping of the self in order to achieve public recognition.¹⁰⁴ He writes, “dramatic life changes often render old identities irrelevant and require drastic re-evaluation”,¹⁰⁵ echoing Zygmunt Bauman’s argument that “both meaning and identity can only exist as projects”.¹⁰⁶ Ananya Kabir suggests how the elapsing of time also creates more will to recount earlier experiences. She records a comment by Krishna Sobti that “I wrote *Zindaginama* (A Life Chronicle) thirty years after the partition, even though I had made the first draft in 1952. Time is a strange chemistry. First we wanted to forget and then we wanted to relive the time that was!”¹⁰⁷

In terms of producing a narrative, 1947 offers the clear possibility of a ‘before’ and ‘after’ structure,¹⁰⁸ and by the time of writing the men had an ‘after’ to recount in terms of a second or third career which they could compare with their first life in the Punjab. These later experiences are inevitably brought to bear in assessing the administration in which the men had worked. As Cubitt suggests, “in remembering an event, the ‘reconstructivist’ view implies, we do not simply conjure up a set of images or impressions that derive from our immediate experience of that event in particular; rather, we make sense of that event, and read meaning into our perceptions of it, by combining such data with information drawn from other sources – from our general culture, from other areas of experience, and from the environment within which we are

¹⁰³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, ‘From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity’, in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ Ananya Jahanara Kabir, ‘Gender, Memory, Trauma: Women’s Novels on the Partition of India’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25, 1 (2005), p. 177.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

situated at the time of remembering.”¹⁰⁹ In particular, “further experiences that the rememberer may have had in the interval between the two occasions will have modified the interpretative apparatus that is brought to bear.”¹¹⁰ Above all, Cubitt suggests, there is a natural tendency to attempt to fit the experiences of one’s life into a conventional narrative structure in which the different phases hold some significance to one another. He writes that:

A more personalised kind of temporality is generally necessary, and again this is a narrative conception: we give a temporal structure to our recollections by connecting them to an implicit (or sometimes explicit) story of personal development. Here again, we draw on mental frameworks that are familiar in our culture. Culture may give us, for example, the concept of the ‘life cycle’ (with its standard procession from childhood, via youth and mature adulthood to eventual old age), or that of the ‘career’, which those pursuing a particular walk of life are deemed to follow. Frameworks of this kind may be so commonly accepted as to seem banal, yet they provide important scaffolding for autobiographical recollections and narrations, allowing individuals to assign particular memories to particular phases in a recognisable scheme of development.¹¹¹

Chapter four will consider how their subsequent lives impacted upon the way these men interpreted and portrayed their roles in colonial Punjab.

This thesis uses the memoirs not only as sources of individual remembering and identity, to flesh out the subjectivity of those involved in colonial rule, but traces these accounts in their relation to wider social and collective memories. The significance of memories of empire in Britain lies in its ongoing popularity in nostalgic and romanticised form, despite ostensible rejection of the concepts involved. Whilst chapter four will suggest how the memoirs form a body of remarkably united social memories of the administration they had served, chapters five and six will consider how these men drew on public discourses of empire and its loss in Britain, and subsequently contributed to those images. Ian Baucom suggests in his work on ‘Englishness’ and empire that memory is “effortless but demanding. It defines who we are. It delineates an environment in which we live, and move, and have our being.”¹¹² In part, then, this thesis seeks to highlight how certain romanticised ideas of empire continue to hold

¹⁰⁹ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 80.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹¹² Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 18-19.

appeal as a way of identifying Britishness as something ‘great’ where no modern replacement for the global reach of empire has been found. Memory is selective, and this is true of public, collective memories and impressions as it is of individual ones. As Cubitt argues,

The past... is not the totality of all past happenings – for this is a totality we can never hope to apprehend – but the past that we have a ‘sense’ of, the past as it exists in current awareness, a past constructed through a complex mixture of reflection and recollection, research and imaginative representation, that allows us the feeling of conscious retrospection... In its inherent selectiveness... it is to be regarded not as the continuation of the past that has been, but as the past that makes sense for the present.¹¹³

I will contend in chapters five and six that the selective remembering of the status that imperial power conferred on ‘Britishness’ continues to hold appeal, drawing on a substantial canon of literature, films and advertising which ran on beyond the zenith of the empire itself.

Structure

This introduction has offered some indication of the key themes running through the following chapters. The first three chapters will provide a case study of the men’s careers in Punjab. The memoir sources and men involved will be introduced properly in chapter one, alongside a more detailed contextualisation of their recruitment and the atmosphere of the Punjab in the inter-war period into which they arrived. Chapter two assesses the style of government used by the I.C.S. and the explanations the men provide for the collapse into violence in 1947. This chapter will consider how the I.C.S. operated in the face of violence and the ethical justifications the men offer for their role. Chapter three will challenge the image of state power in the districts, suggesting how this was never as complete as the men claim and breaking down the concept of the sudden change involved in the transfer of power of 1947. The second half of the thesis will approach the period after 1947. Chapter four will follow the men into their second and third careers, assessing both how subsequent experiences impacted upon the way they remembered Punjab and how the *esprit de corps* for which the I.C.S. was famous achieved a lasting effectiveness beyond the end of the service itself. Chapter five will

¹¹³ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 27.

consider the narrative conventions of Anglo-Indian fiction to suggest how I.C.S. men were influenced in their understanding of the Punjab, and equally how they conformed to existing styles in their own writing. Finally, chapter six will assess the legacy of empire in post-war Britain, suggesting how the experience of decolonisation and commonwealth immigration contributed to the emergence of popular nostalgia for a certain imagery of colonial life, which I.C.S. memoirs were able to fulfil.

Chapter One

Punjab between the wars: from doubt to calm

This chapter will flesh out in more detail the context into which the men who are the focus of this study entered. The introduction has already suggested the general reputation of the service and the region that these men were joining; this chapter will look more specifically at the mnemonic landscape into which new I.C.S. recruits of the 1920s and 1930s were introduced. By this I mean the inherited collective memory of the service which shaped their understanding of the Punjab. This relates to both perceptions of the service during their application process and the mentality of those working in the Punjab as it had been altered in between the wars. It is important to appreciate that the anti-colonial pressures in the Punjab were not always consistent with the wider picture of all-India politics: just as the region was exceptional in the violence of 1947, its reputation during the war years was at the other extreme; as the province which could be relied upon for consistent provision of men and resources towards the war effort, with relatively little internal disruption. Punjab had not been consistently stable throughout the inter-war period, however: the Amritsar massacre of 1919 and the protests which preceded it attracted attention even in Britain and enforced an appreciation upon the provincial administrators of the limits and negotiated nature of power in the late colonial India. The unrest of the post-World War I period gave the I.C.S. real reason to expect progression toward Indian independence and effected a shift in the perception of the service for prospective British candidates. The 1919 and 1935 Government of India Acts altered the working position of civil servants and dented the popularity of the service as a career option, as the ongoing discussion of India's future became increasingly visible in Britain. Gandhi's visit to Britain to attend the second Round Table Conference marked the nadir of confidence in the I.C.S. as a career, and correspondingly of the numbers of applicants. The men whose memoirs are used in this thesis joined the I.C.S. following a concerted effort to encourage and reassure promising young graduates of the continued role for a British element in Indian administration. Their memoirs suggest a cautious optimism following the 1935 Government of India Act which is the final point of what was a turbulent period in the history of the British in India.

The period 1918-1945 is significant because of the ongoing re-negotiation of the British role in India, and the effect this can be seen to have had on attitudes toward India back in Britain. For my subjects, the choice of the I.C.S. as a career was an unusual and less obvious one by the late 1930s and yet this is not part of their representation, so it is important to consider here the context in which they made their applications and the pressure applied on them, as an academic elite, to do so. In a different sense, the period is important as the prelude to 1947; a serious understanding of these years reduces the risk of viewing the violence in a way that separates it from the context of the previous decades. The tendency to treat the events, particularly the violence, of partition as exceptional, risks obscuring both what really happened and the pre-partition experiences which those involved brought to bear in understanding 1947. As Ian Talbot highlights, “official histories have made the violence ‘non-narratable’. They have achieved this by firstly reducing it to a ‘local’ detail that is irrelevant to the wider event of national independence and secondly by portraying it as an aberration, arising from a temporary moment of madness that does not require rational explanation”.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Ananya Kabir relates how survivor testimonies explain the “conjunction of forces and circumstances” at the root of partition, writing “the quasi-astrological language emphasises the inexplicability of the events leading up to partition, while exonerating ‘the masses’ from the mutual violence which accompanied it”.¹¹⁵ In reclaiming the partition narratives of British observers and drawing out the implications of this local study, then, it is essential to consider how the pre-partition context shaped their interpretation of what they witnessed in 1947.

This chapter will consider the Punjab of the 1920s, 30s and 40s; its political and social composition both in reality and in popular perception. It will also use the memoir recollections of this period, in conjunction with the contemporary discussions surrounding I.C.S. recruitment, to highlight the backgrounds of the British I.C.S. recruits and their initial impressions of the Punjab. In doing so, this chapter will lay the foundations of a challenge to the narrative of exceptionalism: questioning how aberrant the events of 1947 were, and building the mid-1940s into a perspective which takes into account the whole of these men’s Indian careers. The period will be considered over the

¹¹⁴ Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Ananya Kabir, ‘Subjectivities, Memories, Loss: Of Pigskin Bags, Silver Spittoons and the Partition of India’, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 4, 2 (2002), p. 248.

course of five sections. The first will discuss the fall-out of World War I in terms of the Indian expectations it created, and the new landscape of British power after the protests and constitutional changes of 1919. This year put Punjab on the map in a new way, and left a legacy of doubt in the collective mind of the I.C.S. as to the extent of their ability to act with authority; a legacy which formed part of the working inheritance of my memoir subjects. In section two, I will look at the crisis of faith in 1930s Britain, and the I.C.S. recruitment panic of this period, suggesting how impressions of empire back at home were not always consistent with the local picture in India. The next significant shift in the practical extent of I.C.S. power came with the 1935 Government of India Act, and the third section will consider how this worked in the Punjab,¹¹⁶ and how the relative calm it produced can be explained and contextualised in relation to the rapid post-war transition. The cooperative regime of the Unionist administration provided a stable base throughout the majority of the years of these men's time in the Punjab, often in contrast to a more turbulent all-India situation.

Following on from the analysis in section two of the adaptations made in the I.C.S. recruitment process, and the contextualisation of the local atmosphere in late 1930s Punjab, section four will look at the final generation of probationers, recruited through the reorganised process of the 1930s into the semi-autonomous environment of post-1935 Punjab. This section will introduce properly the memoir subjects used, with reference to their motivations in joining the I.C.S. and first impressions of the Punjab. Finally, section five will consider wartime Punjab: its reputation for stability and evidence for this, the roles undertaken by the I.C.S. during this period, and the evidence of communal disharmony and Muslim League successes pre-1946. For many of the memoir subjects used throughout the thesis, the World War II environment in the Punjab formed the majority of their experience of the I.C.S., and thus is the point of comparison used in understanding and reflecting upon their experiences during partition, yet this period itself was exceptional; in the case of the Punjab, for its remarkable stability, but also for the heavy workload and swift rise possible within the I.C.S. with the cessation of recruitment. Appreciating the contradictions and changing mnemonic landscape of the inter-war period in Punjab will provide the basis from

¹¹⁶ The intention here is not to give a full account of the 1919 and 1935 Government of India Acts, but rather to offer context insofar as it impacted upon the experience of district administration by the time of the arrival of this cadre of I.C.S. men.

which to understand the comparisons and context used by I.C.S. men in remembering their experiences of the independence and partition.

World War I and its aftermath: the beginning of uncertainty

The demands made upon Indian resources during World War I created a new tension in the country's relationship with its colonial rulers, and ended what is sometimes referred to as the 'high noon' of the *Raj*. In pragmatic terms, John Gallagher and Anil Seal suggest how the war had fundamentally damaged Britain's ability to maintain her empire, due to subsequent defence cuts and the reduction in investment possible in the 1920s.¹¹⁷ The new atmosphere necessitated real moves toward a negotiated end to British rule, and R. J. Moore indicates the start of this process, writing

The earliest official statement on India's eventual status was the declaration of Edwin Montagu (Secretary of State, 1917-1922) on 20th August 1917 that Britain's policy was 'the progressive realisation of responsible government'. It was incorporated in the preamble to the India Act of 1919, with the condition that parliament was to decide the time and nature of each successive advance.¹¹⁸

As this description indicates, the significant caveat was to be the pace of change, as controlled by the British. The ideology of imperial control specifically negated the idea that India was prepared for independence, and Moore adds,

Devolution by stages would enable the elements of modern politics, in particular parties based upon principles and interests, to supplant the divisions of caste and creed. The difficulty with such a policy was the time-scale that it assumed. Before India secured self-government it must pass through the stages of evolution that Britain had experienced since the Middle Ages.¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, the concept was established that constitutional change would be made.

In the Punjab, the context of protests made real the sense of weakened control, and events in Amritsar marked a step change in the negotiation of power. V. P. Menon explains how the precedent was set when "early in 1919 the Government of India,

¹¹⁷ John Gallagher and Anil Seal, 'Britain and India between the wars', *Modern Asian Studies*, 15, 3 (1981), p. 400.

¹¹⁸ R. J. Moore, *Endgames of Empire: Studies of Britain's Indian Problem* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

ignoring all protests and advice, passed the Rowlatt Act to deal with revolutionary crime. The Act provided the Executive with such wide and sweeping powers as to rouse widespread agitation throughout the country.”¹²⁰ The violent incident in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on 13th April 1919 marked, for Menon, the climax of the process begun by the passing of the Rowlatt Act.¹²¹ During the preceding days a series of violent protests had erupted in the city, marked by their ostensible targeting at European residents. The Hunter Committee Report of 1920 records that members of the crowds on Hall Bridge were heard by a Criminal Investigation Department Inspector to be crying out “where is the Deputy Commissioner? We will butcher him to pieces.”¹²² Echoes of 1857 were also brought forth by an attack on a lady missionary. Miss Sherwood was pursued by a mob as she cycled to her school, was knocked off her bicycle and badly beaten.¹²³ This incident, and other attempted assaults, are noted in the Hunter Committee report as evidence that “no European of either sex was safe from the mob”, indicating the real fear in the atmosphere preceding Dyer’s action on the 13th.¹²⁴ On the morning of the 13th April, General Dyer, who had been brought in to bring the situation under control, issued a proclamation declaring that,

No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city or any part of the city or outside it at any time. Any such processions or gatherings of four men will be looked upon as unlawful assembly, and will be dispersed by force of arms if necessary.¹²⁵

The extent to which this proclamation was successfully circulated was somewhat under question in the Hunter Committee Report. Nonetheless, on hearing that same afternoon of a large meeting planned to be held in the enclosed area of Jallianwala Bagh, General Dyer amassed his Baluchi and Gurkha troops and accompanied them to the main entrance of the garden.¹²⁶ Offering no warning to the unarmed crowd of what is estimated to have been 15,000 to 20,000 people, Dyer gave the order to open fire.¹²⁷

¹²⁰ Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 27.

The “almost universal opposition in the country” was also noted in the Hunter Committee Report produced subsequent to the Amritsar massacre: Tim Coates, ed., *The Amritsar Massacre, 1919: General Dyer in the Punjab* (London: The Stationery Office, 2000), p. 57.

¹²¹ Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 27.

¹²² Coates, ed., *The Amritsar Massacre, 1919*, pp 15-16.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

The enclosed nature of the garden prevented escape, and, as Robin Moore records, “some 379 Indians were killed and 1200 injured in the massacre. Dyer was cashiered but he was a hero to many in the British services who believed that he had forestalled a rebellion.”¹²⁸ Dyer stood by his actions, considering them a necessary “punishment”, calculated to “strike terror throughout the Punjab”; this they did, as the rioting in Amritsar came to an immediate end.¹²⁹ Indeed, Dyer carried on with his “punishment” of the city of Amritsar, declaring martial law on the 15th April, followed by the deeply controversial “crawling order”, whereby no Indian was permitted to enter the street on which Miss Sherwood had been attacked (including those whose houses opened onto that street) unless they did so on hands and knees. This remained in force between the 19th and 26th April.¹³⁰ The contemporary opinion is expressed clearly in the statement made by Governor Sir Michael O’Dwyer. Although he insisted upon an end to the “crawling order”, he nonetheless stated that:

I approved of General Dyer’s actions in dispersing by force the rebellious gathering and thus preventing further rebellious acts. It was not for me to say that he had gone too far when I was told by his superior officer that he fully approved General Dyer’s action. Speaking with perhaps a more intimate knowledge of the then situation than anyone else, I have no hesitation in saying that General Dyer’s action that day was the decisive factor in crushing the rebellion, the seriousness of which is only now being generally realised.¹³¹

There was widespread agreement with this attitude in the British community in the Punjab, to the extent that a collection was made for Dyer after he was cashiered. The Hunter Commission recognised, however, that “the story of this indiscriminate killing of innocent people not engaged in committing any acts of violence, but assembled in a meeting, has undoubtedly produced such a deep impression throughout the length and breadth of the country, so prejudicial to the British Government that it would take a good deal and a long time to rub it out.”¹³² In Britain, Winston Churchill, the then Secretary of State for War recognised straight away that it was “an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation.”¹³³ Over the

¹²⁸ Robin Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1990), p. 60.

¹²⁹ Coates, ed., *The Amritsar Massacre, 1919*, p. 68.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹³³ Derek Sayer, ‘British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre 1919-1920’, *Past & Present*, 131 (1991), p. 131.

course of time, Amritsar was to achieve recognition and infamy of this nature but at the time it raised more prosaic questions about the ability to maintain control.

Sir Conrad Corfield, later to become a senior member of the Indian Political Service (I.P.S.) arrived in the Punjab in 1921 as an I.C.S. probationer and felt the initial ripples of Jallianwala Bagh as a fundamental part of his introduction to working life. He found himself in the centre of the debate that ensued after the Jallianwala Bagh incident, and recalled in his memoir the terms of the controversy;

What was an officer in the Punjab to do now, if there was a riot? If he used enough force to stop disorder from spreading, he could be condemned for using too much; if he used too little, he could be condemned for allowing disorder to spread... in the circumstances, I should perhaps not have been surprised when a senior member of the I.C.S., who was a High Court judge, greeted me kindly when I was introduced to him as one of the new post-war recruits, and said ‘Surely you don’t think you’re going to serve your full time in this country do you?’¹³⁴

At that point of intense violence and insecurity in relations between British and Indian, the possibility of an imminent grant of independence obviously seemed much more realistic. Indeed, in his job as secretary to the Viceroy during the early 1920s, Corfield wrestled with the problems caused by this sense of insecurity, recording “the all-India services were unhappy: premature retirement of senior British officers was increasing, and recruitment from England was proving difficult because of the uncertain future.”¹³⁵

Sir James Penny, whose career spanned the inter-war period, reiterates the sense that 1919 was a nadir of British confidence, writing:

The 1919 disturbances, and their aftermath gave me a jolt, even a shock, and I daresay most officials felt the same. We knew of course that the urban intelligentsia disliked British rule, but we did not realise the length to which they were prepared to go in attacking it, or how misrepresentation of our motives would be believed by other classes, especially the ordinary agriculturalists with whom our relations appeared to be close and friendly.¹³⁶

The years after 1919 thus acted as a wake-up call to comfortable paternalism, and shifted perceptions from the confidence of the late Victorian and Edwardian *Raj* to such

¹³⁴ Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies, Corfield collection, p. 13.

¹³⁵ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 21.

Sir Edward Blunt’s book similarly records that after 1919, recruitment to the I.C.S. dropped off “chiefly due to the uncertainty regarding its future”, but also suggests that “in time this distrust was to some extent dissipated”: Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 200.

¹³⁶ Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies, Penny collection, p. 100.

an extent that it became clear that the British Government faced serious demand for Indian independence and could not fail to deliver it eventually.

Having survived this crisis, the 1930s were a period when the unexpected continuity and relative calm inspired popular complacency. W. F. G. LeBailly, who joined the I.C.S. in 1927, is one of the few men to have considered the possibility of a curtailed career. Having a family history in the Egyptian Civil Service, he wrote that “of course I was warned by my uncles (rightly as it turned out) that India would become as independent as Egypt had and one might well lose one’s employment in middle life, as of course happened”.¹³⁷ Looking back on it, he indicated that independence in the 1940s did not seem and perhaps was not inevitable, writing “it is arguable that, but for the Second World War, the replacement of British officers in the Indian Army by Indians would not have progressed to the extent at which it actually did”.¹³⁸ By the late 1930s, the fact that British rule had repeatedly come under challenge, with the peak in Punjab being in 1919-20, the status quo had nonetheless been maintained, with the two Government of India acts providing incremental change toward a goal of Indian self-determination which seemed, again, to have receded into the more distant future. Corfield returned to London in 1932 to settle his children with family friends after his wife’s death, and attended part of the Round Table Conference. His recollections suggest that the experience prompted him to feel more secure in his position as the barriers to change appeared significant at this stage:

The conference which I attended in London was something of an anti-climax. The Conservatives had returned to power and many of them were unsympathetic to Indian aspirations. The Congress was not represented and the Labour party took no share in the proceedings.¹³⁹

The initial shock of 1919 clearly calmed into a more stilted and negotiated process. Indeed, Moore argues that the tone of the 1935 Government of India Act was designed specifically to avoid the kind of commitments that would speed along independence.¹⁴⁰

In a sense of course, following the retreat from such a moment of crisis, the decreasing urgency of subsequent constitutional discussion allowed for a creeping complacency

¹³⁷ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 2.

¹³⁸ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 2.

¹³⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 68.

¹⁴⁰ Moore, *Endgames of Empire*, p. 13.

about the pace of change. What did not disappear, however, was that new atmosphere and realisation of the limits of British power. Following the inconclusive series of Round Table Conferences in Britain during the early 1930s, the 1935 Government of India Act furthered the terms of the 1919 act by replacing dyarchy with more extensive provincial autonomy. Although significant central powers were retained,¹⁴¹ and the act presented only a small evolutionary step in a process of preparing for a transition of power, it nonetheless impacted upon the way the I.C.S. operated, reiterating the sense of negotiated power and re-positioning of the British role throughout this period. Under section 35 of the quarterly survey made of the British political and constitutional position in India for the period 1st November 1938 to 1st January 1939, the reporter recorded:

The Punjab is probably the province where the pre-autonomy conditions of service have suffered least change: yet even here the Premier has recently complained that permanent officials have caused difficulties to the Ministry by failing to appreciate fully the implications of the new constitution: some of the more senior officers resent what they regard as undue interference by Ministers and do not make allowances for the exigencies of party government: local officials do not suffer gladly requests of Ministerial supporters, and are not always scrupulously loyal to Ministers in casual conversation...¹⁴²

Despite the gradual pace of change in the inter-war period, then, the shifts in working practices and the legacy of that sense from 1919 that British power to act was compromised was a background that undermined the confidence and security of the Punjabi I.C.S. The post-World War I period introduced the idea of imminent independence as a real and consistent concern, and this anxiety was to seep back to Britain itself and shape ideas about the I.C.S. as a career throughout the inter-war period.

Recruitment in the 1930s: doubt and the I.C.S.

Gandhian non-cooperation gave the Indian demands for independence a new international stage in the 1930s, and the series of Round Table Conferences held in

¹⁴¹ The subjects reserved for British control under 1935 Government of India Act included defence, external affairs, and ecclesiastical affairs: Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 220.

¹⁴² London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Quarterly surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 6th April 1937-31st January 1939', IOR/L/PJ/7/1813.

London allowed colonial discontent a platform in the metropole, with Gandhi's attendance in 1932 gaining particular public notice. The discussions that took place in the course of the Round Table Conferences and in producing the 1935 Government of India Act brought to the fore a sense of real negotiations being made toward an independent Indian future. Allen Greenberger suggests how the period prompted a loss of hope in any imperial future, rather ahead of the reality of the negotiations themselves:

By the 1930s the serious doubts which infected all aspects of the British image of India had also made them see themselves as being unable to control their own destinies. In all their views the anti-*Raj* writers or those who felt that Britain had been a failure in India had little in the way of anything positive to say. The supporters of the *Raj* could only continue to hold forth the old solutions while the opponents held forth no solutions at all. A feeling of melancholy for an empire which, if it were not yet dead, was on the verge of dying, was beginning to fill the British image of India.¹⁴³

In the Punjab, the decade after 1919 had seen a gradual process of Indianisation and acceptance of the concept of preparing for a transfer of power, but the pace had been reassuringly slow and much of the working routine remained consistent. The British anxiety and gloom about empire in the early 1930s highlights how attitudes toward India, and the extent to which it was brought to public attention at all, fluctuated in a way that was not always consistent with the realities of the situation in India itself.

This background in the early 1930s took its toll on I.C.S. recruitment, as confidence in the continuing role of British administrators in the subcontinent was shaken.¹⁴⁴ The proportion of Indian recruits to the I.C.S. had steadily increased since the end of World War I; India Office records indicate how in 1914, seven Indians and forty-six 'Europeans' made up the year's intake, but by the mid-1920s Indian recruits made up at least half of each year's probationers.¹⁴⁵ In 1925, for example, there were twenty-two Indian recruits and twenty-one 'Europeans'.¹⁴⁶ By the early 1930s, however, numbers of British applicants consistently fell substantially below Indian numbers, with the nadir in 1935, when there were only five successful 'European' candidates compared with

¹⁴³ Greenberger, *The British Image of India*, p. 176.

¹⁴⁴ Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, p. 21: Gould adds that "The Round Table Conferences of the early 1930s in London, set up to determine India's fate and eventually decide upon a federal structure based on provincial autonomy, took place in the midst of a serious and widespread challenge to the personnel of the administration and the values they represented."

¹⁴⁵ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources', IOR/L/SG/7/126.

¹⁴⁶ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources', IOR/L/SG/7/126.

twenty-five Indians.¹⁴⁷ This fall in applications from young British men attracted press interest and concern, and many articles feature in the India Office records as part of an ongoing discussion about the need to increase the appeal of the I.C.S. as a career option. *The Times Educational Supplement* published an article on 5th March 1932, entitled “The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors”, anticipating the alteration in the role to be played by the I.C.S., presuming the advance of provincial autonomy.¹⁴⁸ The article argued,

Amid the far-reaching changes which have taken place in the political structure of India the old-established system of early training and administrative routine of the I.C.S. has not been altered... Can this old-established system be made with advantage to fit in with the provincial autonomy now fore-shadowed? All save pur-blind extremists agree that a British element should be retained in the service of India for a good many years to come, and that this element should consist of men of high character and ability.¹⁴⁹

The piece suggests two issues; first, the need to maintain a flow of British applicants by reassuring their concerns about the future of the service, and to this end indicates the importance that

due provision should be made in the new constitution for the maintenance of the rights and safeguards of all persons appointed to the services before the constitution comes into force; that it should provide suitable safeguards for the payment of pensions; and that such steps should be taken that might be necessary to reassure existing members of the services with the view that they might serve with loyalty and efficiency for their normal term.¹⁵⁰

To this end, there is also enclosed a protracted discussion of the possibility of including a residence requirement to balance numbers going into the I.C.S., such that Indian

¹⁴⁷ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126.

Brown, “‘Life Histories’ and the History of Modern South Asia”, p. 593: Brown suggests how during the 1920s and 1930s, whilst an I.C.S. career was a risky choice, Indian probationers were to reap the rewards of the decision to join the I.C.S. during the manpower shortage of the late 1940s, when they experienced accelerated promotion.

¹⁴⁸ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934’, IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors”, 5th March 1932.

¹⁴⁹ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934’, IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors”, 5th March 1932.

¹⁵⁰ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934’, IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors”, 5th March 1932.

applicants would have to spend a certain period studying in the UK before they could be considered eligible to apply.¹⁵¹ The second problem the article seeks to highlight is the alteration in the actual role to be played by I.C.S. officers within a semi-democratic system. The author states that,

The executive half of the provincial Government will soon have passed away, and there will be unitary Government in the hands (excepting the Governor) of politicians dependent upon the votes of constituencies with no more than rudimentary political experience. Interference by local politicians in administrative matters will almost certainly be expected in return for votes. The Indian official serving his own countrymen, usually in the province of his birth, will not be without friends and influence in the Legislature, while the English official will have no such advantage.¹⁵²

The issue is emphasised to be the inexperience and potential corruption of Indian ministers, and hence the need for a continued firm paternalistic hand in government; a hand which needed to be strengthened by a clear new role to play within provincial ministries. The article's case is summarised in the statement that "it is obviously desirable that in a period of transition there should be some strong and stable element in the administration which can stand apart and detached from local influence and intrigues and will constitute a link between the old administration and the new."¹⁵³ The presumption of the piece suggests the maintenance of a strong commitment to the ideals of colonial empire, and indeed to the concept of the 'white man's burden'; despite the article being written in 1932 the emphasis remains upon the unpreparedness of Indians for self-government and the necessity of keeping a British contingent on hand. The survival of these beliefs into the final decades of empire is a subject that will be considered in detail in chapter three. In this case, the solution suggested is of a new role for the I.C.S. as a "separate cadre of advisors".¹⁵⁴ This is presented as a way of maximising the value of a high-quality cadre of British officers as "if the Englishman is

¹⁵¹ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934', IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled "The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors", 5th March 1932.

¹⁵² London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934', IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled "The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors", 5th March 1932.

¹⁵³ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934', IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled "The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors", 5th March 1932.

¹⁵⁴ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934', IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled "The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors", 5th March 1932.

relieved of the routine business of office or court and retained in the position of administrative or judicial Advisor the decreasing number of Englishmen can be off-set by the extension of the area of this jurisdiction as Advisor...”¹⁵⁵ This article, then, provides a re-envisioning of the I.C.S. role to allow for continued importance during the transfer of power, but clearly anticipates this as likely to be a prolonged process.

By 1934, the diminishing number of applicants to the I.C.S. was attracting greater attention, particularly as those who had been successful in the civil service examination seemed to be routinely rejecting India as a career choice due to its perceived insecurity. In an article printed in the *Evening News* on 21st November 1934 and entitled “Keeping out of India: Civil Service entrants prefer Whitehall – security first”, the situation is blamed on “the Indian White Paper policy of the Government”.¹⁵⁶ This trend of those associated with the Government of India feeling themselves to be ill-served by the British Government’s policies on empire is apparent throughout the period, and significant in I.C.S. attitudes towards the causes of partition. The idea of betrayal from the outside is thus an important theme for understandings of negative portrayals of the Indian administration. This article is overwhelmingly morose and jingoistic in its interpretation of the recruitment statistics, claiming “the rot has set in as far as British candidates are concerned”,¹⁵⁷ and that “the best men are deserting India and in consequence those lower in the list of merit are now getting the vacancies in the I.C.S.”¹⁵⁸ This of course included a substantial number of successful Indian applicants, about whom the article states that “out of the 26 appointments made, the Indians have captured as many as the British”,¹⁵⁹ explaining “when the British candidates at the top

¹⁵⁵ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S. Recruitment 1927-1934’, IOR/L/SG/7/85, article re-printed from *The Times Educational Supplement*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service: A Corps of Advisors”, 5th March 1932.

¹⁵⁶ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article re-printed from *Evening News*, entitled “Keeping out of India: Civil Service entrants prefer Whitehall – security first”, 21st November 1934.

¹⁵⁷ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article re-printed from *Evening News*, entitled “Keeping out of India: Civil Service entrants prefer Whitehall – security first”, 21st November 1934.

¹⁵⁸ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article re-printed from *Evening News*, entitled “Keeping out of India: Civil Service entrants prefer Whitehall – security first”, 21st November 1934.

¹⁵⁹ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article re-printed from *Evening News*, entitled “Keeping out of India: Civil Service entrants prefer Whitehall – security first”, 21st November 1934.

reject the I.C.S. it is necessary to go lower in the list to find the men, and this explains why so many Indians have been appointed.”¹⁶⁰

In a further article, printed in *The Indian Empire Review* in February 1935 and entitled “The Indian Civil Service Examination”, Sir Evan Cotton reflected on the diminishing popularity of the I.C.S., with similar reference to government policy on India. He wrote,

There was a time – and it was not so very long ago – that the prospect of a career in the I.C.S. was the goal of the best brains in our universities... All that is now changed, as the result of the suicidal policy which the National Government has taken over from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, without any sort of mandate from the electors.¹⁶¹

Cotton describes the 1934 examination results with the conclusion,

These figures are extremely depressing, but what else is to be expected? It is not too much to say that they reflect the mind of the country on the subject of the White Paper. The risks, which are admittedly involved in Mr. MacDonald’s Indian proposals, have been fully realised by the younger generation...¹⁶²

As with the previous piece, Cotton’s comments in this article reflect the long-term I.C.S. culture of criticising the home government for not understanding the needs of India, and carrying on regardless of the consequences in the subcontinent. Describing the provincial allocation of the year’s recruits, with British probationers forming a minority everywhere except Burma, Cotton’s conclusion is that, “it is sad to look upon this spectacle of the ruin of one of the finest administrative machines in the world.”¹⁶³

This sense of crisis and unchecked decline in both the quantity and quality of British recruits to the I.C.S. is even recorded in questions asked in parliament. In one example from 12th February 1935, Sir Charles Oman presented a question to the Secretary of State for India, asking whether he was aware of the extent of decline in recruitment and what he intended to do about it.¹⁶⁴ The answer indicated recruitment provisions made in

¹⁶⁰ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article reprinted from *Evening News*, entitled “Keeping out of India: Civil Service entrants prefer Whitehall – security first”, 21st November 1934.

¹⁶¹ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article reprinted from *The Indian Empire Review*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service Examination”, February 1935.

¹⁶² London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article reprinted from *The Indian Empire Review*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service Examination”, February 1935.

¹⁶³ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, article reprinted from *The Indian Empire Review*, entitled “The Indian Civil Service Examination”, February 1935.

¹⁶⁴ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, parliamentary question no. 35, Sir Charles Oman to the Secretary of State for India, 12th February 1935.

the 1935 Government of India Bill as providing the solution.¹⁶⁵ These measures included alterations in the recruitment procedure but also an exercise in promoting the image of the I.C.S. to a new generation. Robin Moore describes how the results of 1935 prompted action:

To keep up the desired European complement in the I.C.S. it was necessary to resort to selective appointment rather than competitive examination for half the total European entry between 1936 and 1939. The Secretary of State believed that ‘uncertainty as to the future of the service’ was the primary reason for the difficulty in finding European recruits.¹⁶⁶

These changes were a result of the deliberations of the Recruitment Committee, who announced a series of measures to be put in place as of 27th April 1936 to combat declining British interest in the service.¹⁶⁷ The first was to restrict Indian success in the process by making the Delhi examination the main channel of Indian recruitment, with only a limited number of openings being made available for Indian candidates in the British examination, with the further caveat that these candidates must have studied at one of a limited list of British universities and graduated with an honours degree.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, although recruitment by examination was to remain the norm in the late 1930s, the committee allowed for any shortfall to be made up through selection “of candidates who have taken a good honours degree at an approved university and who are recommended for appointment by a selection committee, acting with the assistance of the Civil Service Commissioners.”¹⁶⁹

The second element of the recruitment problems of the 1930s, however, was the image of the service and the difficulty of attracting applicants in the first instance. Candidates who were successful in the 1939 examination were given an introduction to the service through a memorandum “designed to give some idea of the prospects of those who may enter the Indian Civil Service within the next few years, and some assistance in deciding whether a particular candidate should or should not be encouraged to enter that

¹⁶⁵ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126, parliamentary question no. 35, Sir Charles Oman to the Secretary of State for India, 12th February 1912.

¹⁶⁶ Moore, *Paul Scott's Raj*, p. 41.

¹⁶⁷ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘Recruitment Committee Report 1934-1936’, IOR/L/SG/7/86.

¹⁶⁸ London, BL, APAC, ‘Recruitment Committee Report 1934-1936’, IOR/L/SG/7/86.

¹⁶⁹ London, BL, APAC, ‘Recruitment Committee Report 1934-1936’, IOR/L/SG/7/86.

service.”¹⁷⁰ The piece offers a grand image of the continued significance and pride of the service despite its recognition of the changing working conditions to be expected. It explained,

The theory underlying recruitment for the Indian Civil Service is that, out of every hundred vacancies, fifty should go to British candidates and fifty to Indians. But a mere compliance with the 50:50 ratio is not enough; it is necessary also to ensure that the quality of the candidates appointed is adequately maintained. What is required, apart from “personality,” in candidates for the Indian Civil Service is a certain standard of intellect, and the quality of mental alertness and adaptability. Candidates for appointment must now, more than ever, be of a high standard, in order to maintain the character of the Service; for the work of the Indian Civil Service will be carried out in future in different and even more testing conditions than those of the past: to justify its existence, the Indian Civil Service must be more than ever a Corps d’Elite.¹⁷¹

To support this idea of the I.C.S. stature, and to attract initial interest, retired civilians became involved in advertising the image of the service. In 1937, Sir Edward Blunt, a retired civilian from U.P., wrote a book for potential applicants, negotiating the concerns of young men and their parents alike to suggest how the I.C.S. could still provide a reliable and prestigious career.¹⁷² Providing in equal part a handbook of the service, propaganda for it, and anecdotes about it, the book draws out all the romance and heroism possible from the image of the district officer.

The foreword is provided by a renowned member of the Punjab Commission, The Right Honourable Lord Hailey, and he offers the following explanation of the book’s purpose, writing,

There was a time when those who thought of a career in the Indian Civil Service felt that they could take India on trust... A faith so unquestioning is not easy today. A candidate for the service knows that he will have to face altered conditions, under a constitution which places him in a new relation to Indian ministers; and he will meet some who will tell him that he will go out to share in the last agonies of a dying service,

¹⁷⁰ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘1939 Open Examination – Application forms of successful candidates’, IOR/L/SG/7/173.

¹⁷¹ London, BL, APAC, ‘1939 Open Examination – Application forms of successful candidates’, IOR/L/SG/7/173.

¹⁷² Blunt, *The I.C.S.*

and in the exequies [sic] of a lost dominion. He cannot afford to be as incurious as his elders were; and he needs counsel.¹⁷³

In assessing the position of the I.C.S. in the wake of the implementation of the 1935 Government of India Act, Hailey suggests the relevance of two issues for the book to consider, the first being to provide an account of the roles undertaken by the I.C.S., and the second, as he emotively writes, to answer the questions, “is it the kind of work in which a man can feel pride and a sense of responsibility?”, and in the light of ongoing constitutional negotiation, “will the changes in India be such as to put an undue strain on their sense of self-respect, or threaten the feeling of pride which is the foundation of all good service?”¹⁷⁴ As well as commending to the reader Blunt’s description of the work of the I.C.S., Hailey offers his own conclusions on the latter questions:

For myself, I do not believe that the momentum which a great administration has acquired in the past can fail to continue to exert itself in the future, or that the traditions which a great service has established will be lightly discarded by the new authorities who will control its executive functions. Ministers in office under the passing regime have never shown themselves slow to acknowledge their dependence on the administrative services; their successors, now deprived of the support of their official colleagues in the executive and legislative councils, will be more than ever dependent on the services to secure that efficiency on which, in the long run, will depend the position of the ministers themselves.¹⁷⁵

This vision suggests a version of the illusion of permanence specified to the professional expertise of the I.C.S.; an ideal of their indispensability as India’s ‘steel frame’ on the back of an illustrious past.

Indeed, Blunt’s book is overt in its propagandising role, affirming that “in short, the rights and legitimate interests of the civilian of the future are no less safe, possibly safer, under the new constitution, than they were under the old.”¹⁷⁶ Whilst he admits that “the position of the civilian of the future will differ considerably from that of his predecessor of twenty years’ ago”, he nonetheless asserts that “so long as he seasons his advice with a spice of tact, he still remains as influential as he ever was.”¹⁷⁷ The terms of the book both reinforce an image of the Indian people to be served as innocents, and presses the

¹⁷³ The Rt. Hon. Lord Hailey, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., ‘Foreword’ in *The I.C.S. – The Indian Civil Service*, by Sir Edward Blunt, K.C.I.E., O.B.E. (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 1937), p. ix.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

¹⁷⁶ Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 261.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

importance of the very best British candidates being available to the I.C.S. In suggesting the nature of the new role to be undertaken the I.C.S., Blunt compares it with the experiences of parenthood, writing,

And if his advice be not taken, the blame will not be his. He will be in the position of the mother who, having warned her son not to eat green apples, said, when she found him doing so, ‘do not come to me if you get a pain; it will be entirely your pain’. And if his advice was right, he need not fear that it will be rejected a second time...¹⁷⁸

Finally, Blunt appeals with the assertion that as British numbers of recruits are reduced, “in future, quality must make up for quantity. If the biggest experiment in constitution-making that even the British parliament has ever attempted is to succeed, then Britain must send to India the best men that she has got.”¹⁷⁹

Another role in which retired I.C.S. men were encouraged to utilise their experiences in serving the needs of recruitment was in making visits to the main British universities to stir up interest in careers in empire.¹⁸⁰ Dennis Kincaid describes an example of such a visit, writing,

Retired civilians visited the universities to encourage recruiting by painting idyllic pictures of Anglo-Indian life based on recollections of their own youth in some remote Punjab district in the late ‘eighties. One distinguished official, having delivered his recruiting address to an Oxford audience, was asked how a young man with ‘liberal sympathies’ would fare in India. ‘Well’, said the distinguished official with a confiding smile, ‘I don’t mind admitting I was a bit of a liberal myself but once out there you soon forget all about that sort of thing. Too many other interests. Big game shooting, for instance.’¹⁸¹

The efforts to tempt in more applicants then were formed of a heady cocktail of jingoistic emphasis upon the proud role of the I.C.S., alongside romanticised and outdated allusions to the quality of lifestyle still available to the adventuring young man. Bill Cowley was one of the candidates exposed to this strategy, when he attended a lecture given on the I.C.S. in 1934 by Sir Edward Blunt.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 261.

¹⁷⁹ Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 264.

¹⁸⁰ Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, p. 27: Gould refers to this recruitment strategy, emphasising how the talks sought to create “an impression of the I.C.S. as a career involving challenge and adventure.”

¹⁸¹ Dennis Kincaid, *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937* (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 310.

¹⁸² London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 11.

The process as a whole had some success. As Kincaid suggests, “recruits responded satisfactorily to these siren appeals. Nationalist movements were succeeded by communal riots. And the recommendation of the Lee Commission increased the material comforts of the Indian services. The atmosphere of Anglo-India became much more cheerful.”¹⁸³ The numbers of British recruits returned to the levels of a decade earlier: from the five ‘European’ probationers of 1935, the total rose to forty in 1936, and although it fell slightly as World War II approached, the number even in 1939 was retained at twenty-four.¹⁸⁴ In these final four years, the ‘50:50’ ratio returned to the outnumbering of Indian candidates by British probationers, with Indians making up only thirty-three of the seventy-three recruits in 1936, and by 1939, only sixteen of a total of forty.¹⁸⁵ I.C.S recruitment ceased in 1939 under the demands of the war,¹⁸⁶ although a little-known recruitment-drive was attempted in 1945 to attract suitable candidates from the armed forces into the I.C.S., I.P.S. and Indian police, an incident which Paul Scott described as “an embodiment of the *Raj*’s illusion of its own permanence.”¹⁸⁷ The fluctuating attraction of the I.C.S. and variation in attitudes to the point where independence could be sold to the British public as a triumphant close to the imperial story demonstrates how attitudes to empire were often not in step with events on the ground, but also that the concept of the transfer of power was not realised in a smooth process but rather through incidents around which the British position was crystallised, often followed by long periods of relative inertia and return to largely unchanged working practices. By the late 1930s, at least, the I.C.S. image had pulled back to a reasonably positive position in Britain, using imagery of continuity rather than change to attract graduates to the status and adventure of the civilian lifestyle, however outdated this image may have been.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 310.

¹⁸⁴ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126.

¹⁸⁵ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources’, IOR/L/SG/7/126.

¹⁸⁶ Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 41.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 159.

Regained calm: Punjab in the years before World War II

Kincaid's contention that Anglo-India became "more cheerful" in the late 1930s and early 1940s,¹⁸⁸ following the end of the non-cooperation movement is a startling one, but certainly the 1935 Government of India Act provided a pause in the crisis of Anglo-India and allowed for a new *modus operandi* to become settled. Indeed, Azim Husain states in his memoir that "in this pre-World War II era with the Nazis and the Fascists in the ascendant in Europe, the British *Raj* seemed stable and firm, so there were no second thoughts about becoming a part of the British Indian Administration."¹⁸⁹ The legislation of the early 1930s served the interests of the Muslim-majority provinces fairly well. As Ayesha Jalal suggests,

MacDonald's communal award of 16th August 1932 left the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal in a strong position. In these two provinces they retained not only their separate electorates but they were also given more seats than any other community in the provincial assemblies. Provincial autonomy was now a pleasing prospect for Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal...¹⁹⁰

The elections following the 1935 Government of India Act, however, produced not a Muslim League success but a Unionist victory of seventy-one out of the seventy-five Muslim rural seats and ninety-nine of the 175 members of the Assembly.¹⁹¹ Indeed, the Unionists only lost out in the nine urban seats, of which they took only two.¹⁹² The Ministry contained a balance of interests, including notable Hindu and Sikh ministers. As Jalal suggests, "in the Punjab at least the aims of the 1935 act had been achieved – a ministry drawn from all the communities that mattered, ready to work provincial autonomy, and in the hands of the proven friends of the *Raj*."¹⁹³

The election of the Unionist coalition meant that provincial autonomy provided stability and consistency in the province in the years before and during World War II. Throughout this period, as Jalal highlights, "Punjab was the biggest prize for the

¹⁸⁸ Kincaid, *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937*, p. 310.

¹⁸⁹ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Memoirs of M. Azim Husain', MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁰ Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 12-13.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Muslim League. It was also the most elusive.”¹⁹⁴ The strength of a series of Unionist leaders, notably Sir Sikander Hayat Khan during the war years, held together a remarkably united coalition which worked generally cooperatively with the I.C.S. administrators, and prevented Muslim League advances in the province until the mid-1940s, allowing the Punjab to retain its reputation for stability and reliability. Although this picture of calm right up to the mid-1940s appears a contradictory one, within the stability of Unionist Punjab can be seen the seeds of Muslim League discontent and strategy in turning the situation around. Moore suggests how the all-India picture created by the 1937 elections critically weakened the Muslim position, creating danger for the future of any independence settlement:

The 1935 Act provided for the introduction of provincial autonomy prior to the creation of federation. In consequence, when provincial elections were held in 1937 Muslim parties were able to consolidate their control over the Punjab, Bengal and Sind. Moreover, Congress was able to secure control of the Muslim minority provinces and to deny the Muslim population any say in their government. A sense of exclusion and even persecution drove the Muslims into hostility against the Act for the scope that it afforded to Hindu Raj. The experience of Hindu provincial government stimulated the growth of Muslim separatism.¹⁹⁵

The strong position of the Congress in Muslim-minority provinces facilitated Jinnah’s position over the decade before independence as he was a useful obstacle for the British to put up against Congress demands, and this allowed the League to plant itself firmly as the all-India representative of Muslim interests.¹⁹⁶

Far from preventing this opportunity for Jinnah, the strong position of the governments in both Punjab and Bengal facilitated his developing status as one of the key players of independence discussions as neither Ministry had an all-India perspective. As Jalal suggests, “ever since separate representation had been granted in 1909, Muslim politicians had little incentive to organise real parties, or indeed even to join parties, as a way of consolidating their hold over local constituencies.”¹⁹⁷ The pragmatic nature of the Unionist coalition meant that, come 1946, the commitment to Unionist candidates

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁹⁵ Moore, *Endgames of Empire*, p. 16.

¹⁹⁶ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, p. 34.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

could easily be disrupted through adopting the same territory. Jalal describes the nature of the 1937 elections, suggesting they

were fought in the Punjab on the old lines with personal, tribal and factional rivalries, not party creeds, dominating the choice of voters. The Muslim candidates who won these factional struggles in their constituencies agreed once again to come under the umbrella of the Unionists.¹⁹⁸

Thus the weakness of the Muslim League at this point, and parallel solidity of Unionist successes, should not be misinterpreted: there was real security in the Ministry for the majority of the years of service of the I.C.S. memoir subjects used in this thesis, and that need not contradict the collapse into violence and communalism of 1946-47. The basis of Unionist success through these years was equally likely to constitute the weakness of the coalition by 1946, as

Politicians, safe inside the protective walls of Muslim constituencies had less reason to change their old tactics. Local influence was enough to get themselves elected; and factional alliances seemed to get them enough freedom to play their hands both locally and provincially without the constraints of links with parties above or real organisations at the base. Sticking to a party line, and organising its machine, was not essential to their political interests. This was the case even in minority provinces but it was particularly the case in the Muslim provinces.¹⁹⁹

It is a mistake, however, to over-emphasise the peace and security of late 1930s Punjab. The Unionist Ministry was a powerful partner in maintaining overall calm but the work of the I.C.S. did remain substantial, and it is important to view the period with some nuance in terms of continued awareness of the changed situation in reference to Indian expectations of devolution of power and British awareness of the limitations upon their own ability to act independently. The quarterly survey of the British constitutional and political position of late 1938 and into the beginning of 1939 suggests how overall stability in some ways masks a continual bubbling of significant local difficulties. Section twenty-five of the report, providing the Punjabi position, relates that

A few defections among Government supporters and the establishment of an independent party numbering about nine have not seriously weakened the Ministry's position. Further agrarian legislation has been received with the same modified hostility from Congress, governed as they are by urban interests. Provincial finances have been

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

seriously affected by expenditure on famine relief in the south-eastern areas, and drastic economy will be necessary as well as some new form of taxation.²⁰⁰

The Punjab into which probationers of the late 1930s arrived had settled into a routine dictated by the constitutional changes of the 1920s and 30s, and the immediate anxiety of the post-World War I period had relaxed, but this is not to be exaggerated. Working conditions had changed, and, as the previous section indicates, there was certainly awareness in Britain of the need to reassure probationers as Indian independence was widely recognised as an event that could be expected within the lifetime of those now joining the I.C.S. However, the relatively smooth running of semi-autonomous Punjab during these years clearly provided the necessary reassurance to those new arrivals that the federal experiment was operating well and could be expected to continue, with a role for British I.C.S. administrators, for the foreseeable future.

Recruitment successes: first impressions of the service

The core of memoirs used in this thesis are taken from I.C.S. men who applied and joined the Punjab Commission in the years following the review of recruitment made in the mid-1930s, and are testament to its success in luring successful graduates into an imperial career despite the widespread doubt about the future. However, set alongside the conclusions of the more senior members of the I.C.S. studied here, the reasons for joining and attitude to the process shows little difference. For those who became involved in the administration of the Punjab, the combination of doubt about, and confidence in, the need for a British contingent in the province is a consistent element of their thoughts about applying throughout the inter-war period. By the time of the cessation of recruitment in 1939, there were 157 officers listed as members of the Punjab Commission.²⁰¹ Of these, I am using records of fourteen men, the majority of whom were recruited in the 1930s and had the war period as the majority of their working life in the Punjab. This is balanced with examples of more senior civilians, who reflected upon the 1940s with reference back to their own personal memories of the

²⁰⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Quarterly surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 6th April 1937-31st January 1939', IOR/L/PJ/7/1813.

²⁰¹ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Punjab Civil List 1939-1940', V/13/1041.

period after World War I, and had experienced the development of increased Indian participation in government of the province. This section will introduce these memoir subjects and their first impressions of their I.C.S. careers, as applicants and then as probationers.

Ronald Harry Belcher, an examination candidate in 1938, spent his probationary year at Brasenose College, Oxford, gaining a reputation as described by J. G. Barrington-Ward as: “quiet and unassuming... a man of a singularly pleasant and well-mannered disposition with plenty of ability.”²⁰² His description of his reasons for applying to the I.C.S. gives no indication of its difficulties throughout the 1930s; rather he emphasises his choice as an obvious one, commenting,

For those of my generation there was a natural tendency, if one had jumped the established scholastic hurdles with reasonable success, to attempt another somewhat similar hurdle – the Civil Service Competition. One might say it was the path of least resistance; at any rate it was somewhat in that spirit – after half-hearted looks at two alternatives – that I decided to compete.²⁰³

Sir Olaf Caroe, who started his civilian career after serving as a soldier in India during World War I, echoes Belcher’s sentiments, despite the different circumstances, writing:

All ‘public-school’ [sic] adolescents from fifteen to twenty-two were then conscious of the Indian Civil Service as offering a fine career to any who could pass the stiff examination required.²⁰⁴

This idea of the Indian career as something that young men easily fell into without family connection or pre-meditation is echoed by contemporaries. W. F. G. LeBailly, another graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, who joined the I.C.S. in 1927, originally intended to apply to the Diplomatic or Home Civil Service and only changed plans because the lower age limits for these services was twenty-two unlike the I.C.S.’s limit of twenty-one.²⁰⁵ For William (Bill) Cowley, a scholarship student originally from a working class background in Middlesbrough, it was only when exposed to I.C.S.

²⁰² London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940’, report on R. H. Belcher, written by J. G. Barrington-Ward, Esq., M.A., Supervisor of I.C.S. Probationers, Oxford, L/SG/7/114.

²⁰³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 1.

²⁰⁴ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters of Sir Francis Caroe: loose notes in preparation for a biography’, MSS F203/78, written notes on his family’s connections with India.

²⁰⁵ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 1.

applicants whilst at Jesus College, Cambridge that he felt the appeal of an Indian career.²⁰⁶

Another important factor is raised by Allan James Vincent Arthur, a probationer accepted into the Punjab Commission through selection in 1937,²⁰⁷ who explains simply that the attraction came down to “my family connections”.²⁰⁸ Many I.C.S. recruits were following a long family history in India, and felt drawn back to the subcontinent because of the happy memories of their childhoods there. As Sir Conrad Corfield, an I.P.S. officer who joined as an I.C.S. probationer in 1920 with the benefit of his war record, writes,

I suppose ‘something in India’ was always a possibility for me. My father had been principal of a school near Amritsar where the sons of Indian Christians were educated. ... I was a year old when I first arrived there, and I did not leave till I was nearly seven. So my earliest memories were shot through with the sound of Indian voices, speaking mainly in Punjabi...²⁰⁹

These happy childhood reminiscences, though, did not lead directly to Corfield’s subsequent career. Although he recalls in his memoir that India was often a topic of conversation once his family moved back to Britain, with “the generally accepted view” being that “only by leading India into nationhood within the Commonwealth could a bridge be built between east and west”, he emphasises that as a schoolboy “it seldom occurred to me that I could ever take a hand in this. Entrance into the I.C.S was only through the most difficult examination that Civil Service Commissioners could devise.”²¹⁰ As he was not a particular academic success, it was only due to the circumstances of post-World War One recruitment that he was able to gain a position in India, as the exam was reduced to six three-hour papers, and his war service was taken into account at interview.²¹¹ At this point, Corfield’s description of his return to India is in terms of a homecoming, a natural step: “so, after twenty years absence, I was on my

²⁰⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 11.

²⁰⁷ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘Open Examination 1937 – provincial allocation and application forms’, IOR/L/SG/7/145.

²⁰⁸ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘Memoir of a District Officer in the Punjab – 1938-47’, by A. J. V. Arthur, M.B.E., D.L., I.C.S. (Rtd), MSS Eur F180/63, p. 1. Arthur’s father was a merchant in Calcutta, where he was born in 1915.

²⁰⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, pp. 8-9.

²¹⁰ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, pp. 9-10.

²¹¹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 10.

way back to India.”²¹² However, his memoir recognises how little real knowledge of the Punjab his childhood had left him with, as on arrival he observed that the heat and dust of May in India made his nostalgia swiftly wear off; he writes “of course I had forgotten that, even in poorer families, English children were seldom kept in the plains the whole summer, so I had never been through a real Indian hot weather.”²¹³ Thus although he shapes the first twenty-five years of his life into a logical narrative of his path from a Punjabi childhood to return to a Punjabi career, with this statement he does recognise the limitations of youthful memory in providing realistic expectations of his adult life in India.

A childhood in India did not necessarily act as a motivating factor to return, either. LeBailly’s uncles actively discouraged him from following in their footsteps as they anticipated the emotional hardship he would suffer if India were to be granted independence.²¹⁴ Despite their recognition of this likelihood, however, the reputation of the Indian empire and of the I.C.S. in particular continues to appear as a strong attraction to applicants, as late as the 1930s. Richard (Dick) Mercer Keene Slater, who was an examination candidate in 1938, passed his probationary year in fifth place, with a reputation as “the very best type of Old Etonian”,²¹⁵ and despite the competition for a posting to the Punjab, was secured by both a family history in the I.C.S. and friendship with Sir Henry Craik who wrote from Simla on 23rd September 1938 to say how he would “be glad to have young Slater in the Punjab”.²¹⁶ Slater writes in his memoir that foreign service appealed to him and

I knew enough about it [the I.C.S.] to realise that it was a fine service and that responsibility came at an early age. Romanticism played little part; it was not until later that I acquired a taste for Kipling – and not a particularly avid one at that. But the Pax Britannica seemed to be an achievement to be proud of. Nobody who helped to preserve it would be wasting his time.²¹⁷

²¹² Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 10.

²¹³ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, P. 12.

²¹⁴ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, p. 1.

²¹⁵ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940’, report on R.M.K. Slater written by S. G. Vesey Fitzgerald, LL.D. I.C.S. Retired, Supervisor of I.C.S. probationers at the School of Oriental Studies, London, dated 8th September 1939, L/SG/7/114.

²¹⁶ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘London exam 1938 – Allocations to Provinces (candidates’ preferences)’, IOR/L/SG/7/163.

²¹⁷ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘District Officer’s Memoirs: R. M. K. Slater, Punjab Commission 1939-47’, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 3. Slater’s father had been in the I.C.S. in

These sentiments are echoed by Slater's contemporary John Martin Fearn, another high-flyer who graduated with a first-class MA in Economics and Modern History before applying for the I.C.S. in 1939.²¹⁸ He spent his probationary year at Worcester College, Oxford and received a report that classed him as "one of the best, if not the best, of his year" and was expected to suit the I.C.S. well due to his characteristics of taking "things with a happy blend of seriousness and humour", being "self-reliant without a trace of conceit" and "naturally sympathetic and considerate of others".²¹⁹ Fearn alludes to the "steel frame of administration and so on", as well as the impressive scale of operations of the I.C.S. as the main attractions of the career.²²⁰

Arthur A. Williams, a probationer in 1932, who later trained Bill Cowley during his probation is described by him in some detail. By 1939, Cowley describes Williams as having "what I came to recognise as the I.C.S. face-lines of responsibility, nose of authority, and eyes deep-set and wrinkled against the sun, looking always ahead to prevent trouble."²²¹ Self-confessedly absorbed in law and order, Cowley writes of Williams that "in pursuit of order he was ruthless and could be vindictive" but that "under a stern exterior he hid a real love for the country, and for the people around him."²²² Explaining his motivations for joining the I.C.S., Williams writes in his memoir that,

The imperial structure held great glamour and attraction for one deeply imbued with a love of history, whilst such ideals as I had were rooted in the conception of orderly and disciplined, but reasonably compassionate, forms of government. The name of the Indian Civil Service was still great and the minimum age for candidature was twenty-one...²²³

Deeply bureaucratic and with firm convictions in the importance of maintaining order above all else, Williams' memoir retains this attitude unwaveringly without the doubts

Madras, but as his parents were divorced he had a very limited relationship with his father and was not encouraged to follow in his footsteps.

²¹⁸ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S. Probationers recruited in 1939', IOR/L/SG/7/173, list of candidates in order of superiority from final examination.

²¹⁹ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940', report on J. M. Fearn written by J. G. Barrington-Ward, Esq., M.A., Supervisor of I.C.S. Probationers, Oxford, L/SG/7/114.

²²⁰ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 1.

²²¹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 31.

²²² London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 31.

²²³ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Indian Civil Service District Officer Recollections', by A. A. Williams, Punjab 1932-1947, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 1. Like Le Bailly, Williams originally intended to apply to the Home Civil Service, and only altered his plans because of the younger age limit for entrance to the I.C.S.

or nuance expressed in some of the other records. Others were more romantically affected by the literature of empire. Caroe noted that,

Really none of my forebears had any Indian experience. But both father and mother brought me up in the pride of what was then regarded as the great imperial heritage of England...I think my introduction to India came by way of Kipling's books, and Flora Annie Steele, a quite considerable Victorian novelist.²²⁴

Andrew P. Hume felt the touch of this romantic imagery in the "colonials" he came across at university, and expresses a consistent "passion" to work in foreign services.²²⁵

Neither family reminiscences and convention, nor imperial pride and literature offered these men much realistic idea of what to expect in their Indian career; indeed, to some extent the recruitment techniques specifically encouraged the romantic and adventuring spirit. Although the probationary year at Oxford or Cambridge was intended to provide a foundation for the young men before they undertook their full district training in India, most record only criticism of how much preparation the course supplied. Ronald Belcher's memory of the year was that "we were taught very little about the current political situation in India, though it necessarily affected the work we were to do there and the policies we were to implement".²²⁶ Indeed, the only beneficial element of the course raised in the memoirs was the fact that British probationers had their first opportunity to meet their Indian contemporaries.²²⁷ It is only with this exposure to Indian colleagues, as well, that the idea of being prematurely retired due to India's imminent independence was raised. In John Fearn's words, "the year at Oxford provided first contact, for me at least, with educated Indians who believed that the end of British rule in their country would come about in the foreseeable future".²²⁸ There is one brief memoir from an Indian contributor in the collection, M. Azim Husain, but his comments are consistent in representing the idea of independence being an event I.C.S. men would experience early in their career as alien. He writes,

It is essential to point out that during 1932-33 when I seriously conceived of joining the I.C.S. the Round Table Conference was in progress in London but it seemed to me and to members of my family, and many friends, that while there would undoubtedly be

²²⁴ London, BL, APAC, Caroe.

²²⁵ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1923-1924', MSS Eur D724/16, letters dated 25th November 1923 and 11th May 1924.

²²⁶ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, p. 3.

²²⁷ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, p. 1.

²²⁸ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, p. 1.

considerable constitutional advance, independence was still a distant prospect... in this pre-World War II era with the Nazis and the Fascists in the ascendant in Europe, the British Raj seemed stable and firm, so there were no second thoughts about becoming a part of the British Indian Administration.²²⁹

This Indian perspective on the Round Table Conferences is in interesting contrast to the British interpretation of events as, set against the doubt and recruitment crisis caused by these events in Britain, Husain suggests that Indian candidates considered the process as a slower and more obstructive one that would not produce imminent gains of any significance, making the I.C.S. still a good option. Husain failed his first attempt at the I.C.S. examination in London in 1935 and passed on a second attempt in 1936, spending his probationary year at University College, Oxford.²³⁰ Originally from Lahore, he was successful in his request to be allocated to his home province.²³¹

The ambivalent position of I.C.S. probationers in the 1920s and 30s is highlighted by these mixed comments; they recognise the concept, and even the desirability, of the transition to independent Indian government, but express as their motivations for applying to the I.C.S. and their impressions from the training much more traditional and romantic images of British India. They see an appeal in the grand ideas of imperial service, respect the history of British colonialism in India, and see an essential value in the role they are to undertake. Conrad Corfield considers his childhood memories in reflecting on his future career, writing

It never occurred to me to be surprised that my father was in charge. He was head of the family and naturally too of the school. Everyone accepted his authority. The fact that he was the only Englishman there had no significance so far as I can remember; but I suppose I absorbed in those early years the idea that leadership was the Englishman's natural function.²³²

In Cowley's words, "the Empire seemed a grand thing then, a real and powerful entity, for which Seeley's *Expansion of Empire* was still the blueprint".²³³ Both statements suggest an empire unchanged from the heyday of the late nineteenth century, and Husain's words support this idea of empire still being a confident force in India. Change does not seem imminent. Indeed, the only indication of the changing face of the service

²²⁹ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 2.

²³⁰ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 2-3.

²³¹ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 2-3.

²³² Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, pp. 8-9.

²³³ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 7.

that the British probationers suggest they encounter is the presence of Indian colleagues in their training.

The British memoirs emphasise how naturally and comfortably the two races got on. Cowley's account asserts firmly his colour-blindness when travelling out to India to start his career, as he writes

The Indian Civil Service had long recruited equal numbers of British and of Indian probationers and certainly my generation was never conscious of anything other than equality amongst us. I remember how astounded and infuriated I was when I first heard British army people referring to Indians as 'wogs'. For us who lived and worked with them, talked the language, often served under them as senior officers, there was personal insult in the term.²³⁴

This emphatic rejection of potential racism perhaps is teleologically applied, as once Cowley was recording his experiences, the empire was already a thing of the past and it would have been increasingly necessary for him to at least be seen to reject the ideas that had gone with it. This would clearly have been important in retaining a post-imperial audience for his account of empire experiences. However, perhaps to a greater extent this excerpt demonstrates the ambivalent attitudes of the late colonial I.C.S. Whilst grounded on an implicit acceptance of the idea that the British had a level of superiority and order to offer India, the late colonial state was adopting measures intended to produce a gradual move toward Indian self-determination. Thus an implicitly racially hierarchical institution claimed to treat and view Indian members with equality and respect. Cowley's statement demonstrates the curious attitude that allowed late colonial civil servants to reconcile their position in empire with its gradual adoption of more independent rule. His statement attempts to emphasise his modernity of thinking but shows simply how he negotiates the administration's norms by treating the middle class Indians with whom he works with respect whilst not overtly acknowledging the underlying values on which his work in empire is based. The idea of being personally insulted by his colleagues being called 'wogs' suggests how it is not the racism per se that is problematic to him, but rather the failure of the army personnel to whom he refers to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable Indians; those men who were absorbed into the administration, and those it was intended to 'look after'.

²³⁴ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, pp. 28-29.

Several of the men also comment upon how quickly they were accepted by the I.C.S. as figures of authority. John Fearn writes that

High level entry to any service presents problems of acceptance and training. It says much for the tolerance of members of the provincial service, many of them highly experienced magistrates and administrators, that the young I.C.S. entry was cheerfully acknowledged as the senior officer of the not too distant future.²³⁵

Arthur Williams highlights another aspect of this quick acceptance which seems to have reinforced his expectations of colonial rule. He writes,

Great friendliness and tolerance was invariably shown to the newcomer, and it was clear that the paternalistic form of administration, which was the basic feature of British rule, which was accepted as very much the natural order of things, and – certainly in the ‘thirties – was not even thought to be called into question.²³⁶

In both perception and reality, then, there was a sense among these young men of being the cream of an already exclusive institution, with selection for the Punjab being considered both a special honour and a heavy responsibility. There is also a strong sense in these comments of the Punjab retaining its essential colonial character into the war period, without the idea of preparing for independence impinging significantly upon the way the administration was run or on how the I.C.S. thought about its role. In previous moments of crisis for the British, the Punjab had proven exceptional, and the comments seem to suggest that there was little indication that this time should be different. In particular, the 1939 decision of the Unionist party to support the British war effort with domestic peace and foreign deployment of manpower, alongside the apparent insignificance of the Muslim League at this stage, renders the feeling of ‘business as usual’ in the Punjab fairly easy to understand.

Dick Slater’s comments also suggest the continuity in the British way of life in colonial Punjab. He writes of his work under Angus MacDonald,

This training period worried me at times by being more agreeable than I thought it ought to be in time of war. The tensions of Europe seemed infinitely remote. Of course the newspapers carried their quota of war news; recruitment and money-raising drives were underway; we all kept reminding each other that there was a war on. But nobody’s

²³⁵ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, p. 2.

²³⁶ London, BL, APAC, Williams, p. 2.

lifestyle had changed. Christmas week in Lahore followed the traditional pattern of races, polo, dinners and dances.²³⁷

The rigid social structure described by Collingham and Gilmour appears from this account to have survived into the final years of British India, cushioned by the security of the Unionist ministry in the Punjab. Indeed, Slater's impression of the event is recorded in his words "it was fascinating to witness what was perhaps the last comprehensive celebration of tribal rites by the ruling race, with all the old pomp and circumstance, the ceremonial surrounding the Governor – Guards of Honour, Police Bands, the whole panoply of the British *Raj*".²³⁸ He indicates his feeling that the continuity was essential for morale, which was suffering under the pressure of long-term doubts about the future, heavy workloads and lack of leave allowed during the war years. Williams also highlights the sense of continuity he noticed on arrival in the Punjab, writing

The background then was still that of the great days of the *Raj*, with the great annual military parade of the Garrison on proclamation day (January 1st), the round of formal social calls and parties and the stately ceremonial of a governor's visit. Munich caused some little unease but Europe was far away, and peace had been preserved.²³⁹

To an extent, then, the ability to think of Indian independence as a definite aim driven by an indefinite timetable, was an effect of inertia in the Anglo-Indian community. By maintaining such strong "tribal rites", the society cushioned itself against the ups and downs of the country in which they were living. Above all, however, this experience of the late 1930s and the beginning of the war reflected the turbulence of previous decades and the work that had gone into finding a settlement to retain negotiated power for British and Indian alike, and in securing some faith in Britain in the continued importance of a British role through the I.C.S; and demonstrates the particularity of the Punjabi experience of these years. Despite the long-term doubts which survived throughout this period, the stability of the situation at the end of the 1930s is reflected in the relative complacency of the young men starting their careers at this point.

²³⁷ London, BL, APAC, Slater, p. 9.

²³⁸ London, BL, APAC, Slater, p. 10.

²³⁹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, p. 10.

World War II and the Punjabi reputation

The atmosphere and workload of World War II, unstinting without the relief of home leave or new recruits to spread the work, was to prove a trying time, but in relative terms the Punjab was the smoothest-running and least problematic province throughout the war period, as all-India level correspondence demonstrates. In this final section, I will suggest the change of role experienced by the I.C.S. during the war, their feelings about the conflict that often felt very distant from their own everyday life, but above all the very real sense in which Punjab was a model of success during these years; relatively peaceful, with a cooperative Ministry and vital to the Indian contributions toward Britain's war effort. On 2nd April 1939, Lord Linlithgow sent out a Viceroy's Circular requesting reports from all provinces on their state of preparedness for war. Governor Sir Henry Craik's response, sent 6th April 1939, presages the cooperative relationship that would shape the war years in Punjab. He writes:

You also asked me in your letter if I felt able to give you any indication as to the probable attitude of my Ministry in the event of an international conflict. As regards this, I think I need only say that so long as the present Ministry is in power I am confident that we can rely on their cooperating to the fullest possible extent. In particular, I am certain that they will do everything possible to stimulate recruitment to the armed forces.²⁴⁰

In terms of concerns about the upcoming conflict, Craik points to the problem of manpower, writing:

My recollection is that during the Great War the civil administration in the Punjab (and I imagine elsewhere) was very short-handed owing to the fact that we had to let a large number of our younger British officers in all departments go off on military or semi-military duty. The proportion of British officers in all civil departments is, of course, now much smaller than it was then, and I think we shall have to resist applications to be allowed to join the Defence services.²⁴¹

In the event, only two officers were released from the Punjab for war service, Colin MacPherson and Thomas Tull.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Provincial Reports on Preparedness for War', IOR/L/PJ/7/2579, letter from Sd. H. D. Craik, Government House, Lahore to Lord Linlithgow, dated 6th April 1939.

²⁴¹ London, BL, APAC, 'Provincial Reports on Preparedness for War', IOR/L/PJ/7/2579, letter from Sd. H. D. Craik, Government House, Lahore to Lord Linlithgow, dated 6th April 1939.

²⁴² London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 99.

On an all-India level, the outbreak of war initiated a turbulent period in the British attempt to maintain control of India. As Menon indicates, “the Congress was not long in framing its policy. On 11th August [1939] its working committee passed a resolution declaring that it was opposed to any imperialist war and that it was determined to resist any attempt to impose a war on India.”²⁴³ This resolution included a refusal to accept the idea of Indian troops being used abroad.²⁴⁴ The ‘Quit India’ movement of the war years created substantial and ongoing problems for the British administration. As Vyvyan Brendon describes, during 1942, “rioters attacked police stations, public buildings, trains and railway installations.”²⁴⁵ Hundreds were killed in police and military fire, and the 1943 Bengal famine caused an estimated three million deaths.²⁴⁶ The major threat specifically to India came from the Japanese and a not insignificant minority of Indians fought alongside the Japanese as part of the Indian National Army, with the slogan ‘Asia for the Asiatics’.²⁴⁷ With their hand forced, the British government had to offer some firm promise of real progress toward independence to be made after the war ended. The 1942 mission of Sir Stafford Cripps, promising post-war dominion status, was to some extent the counterpart of the 1917 promise of self-government.²⁴⁸ What was not as evidently foreseeable at this point was the possibility of partition post-war. The 1940 Lahore Resolution²⁴⁹ had introduced the concept of Pakistan as a Muslim League demand but Yasmin Khan emphasises the extent to which this was not a definite demand which can be seen to have foreseen the eventual solution:

The Lahore Resolution, passed at the annual Muslim League meeting on 23rd March 1940 and identified by Pakistanis as the foundation stone for their state, is not much of a guide. It pinpointed the Muslim desire for a more loosely federated state structure, calling for a collection of independent states with autonomy and sovereignty. There was a lack of knowledge or concern about Pakistan’s actual territorial limits.²⁴⁹

Certainly, in the Punjab throughout the war years, the concept of Pakistan had little significance to everyday life and was not something that I.C.S. administrators saw as a major concern.

²⁴³ Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 58.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁴⁵ Vyvyan Brendon, *Children of the Raj* (London: Phoenix, 2006), p. 247.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁴⁸ Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 60.

²⁴⁹ Khan, *The Great Partition*, p. 43.

In contrast to this all-India picture of bare British control, as Craik had predicted early in 1939, the Unionist Ministry in Punjab came out in support of the war effort:

In the non-Congress provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, although the respective Prime Ministers, Fazlul Huq and Sikander Hyat Khan, had recently become members of the Muslim League, the Ministries remained independent of the League. In fact, both Prime Ministers publicly announced that the manpower and resources of their respective provinces would be placed unhesitatingly at the disposal of Great Britain and her allies.²⁵⁰

The quarterly surveys of the constitutional and political position of British India provide a constant impression throughout the war years of the stability and reliability of the Punjab as compared to other parts of India. The report for May to July 1942 opens with the summary that “Sir Sikander has still further strengthened his position by concessions to the Sikhs and the traders, and the Unionist Party appears at present to be as secure as ever”,²⁵¹ while the subsequent report supports this confidence with the conclusion:

There is little to record about the Ministry in this province. The pact with the Sikhs has strengthened the Ministry’s position. Of all provinces, the Punjab has suffered least from the Congress rebellion; such disturbances as have occurred have been firmly handled.²⁵²

Indeed, the Congress is described in the May to July report as being so significantly internally divided as to prevent it causing many difficulties.²⁵³

Although not troubled by the ‘Quit India’ movement to the same extent as elsewhere in India, 1942 nonetheless marked the nadir of the war experience in the Punjab. This was partly because of the fall of Singapore and the threat this suggested of a possible encroachment of the war into India itself. For Punjab, specifically, however, the biggest blow was the sudden death of Premier Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, and this is described in the report for November 1942 to January 1943 in the following terms:

²⁵⁰ Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 59.

²⁵¹ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st May-31st July 1942.

²⁵² London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st August-31st October 1942.

²⁵³ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st May-31st July 1942.

The Ministry sustained a staggering and wholly unexpected blow when Sir Sikander Hyat Khan died on the night of December 26th. To him must be given the chief credit for the success with which the experiment of provincial autonomy has worked in the Punjab.²⁵⁴

The report suggests ongoing confidence with the comment that “the stability of the Unionist Party was shown by the rapidity with which a new Ministry was formed.”,²⁵⁵ this time under Malik Khizr Hyat Khan. Although the report does mention the concern that Khan did not have the same stature or experience as his predecessor,²⁵⁶ there was nonetheless a fair level of continuity and stability despite the loss. There are a greater number of comments in subsequent reports about the increasing pressure from the Muslim League, but the report for November 1943 to January 1944 concludes,

The stability of the Unionist Ministry is unshaken. Though it has been assailed by the orthodox Muslim Leaguers, with the Nawab of Mamdot at their head, it remains, after another session, in unchallenged possession of the political field, and enjoys in the province the great prestige born of unity and prosperity... The premier is proving himself a fit successor to Sikander in preserving his independence of the high command of the Muslim League while giving Jinnah no opportunity for a successful quarrel with him.²⁵⁷

Although this stance continues to be reiterated, the presence of Jinnah is noted more and more, and in the subsequent report the writer warns, despite praise for the Ministry, “yet it would be more unwise to minimise the continuing threat.”²⁵⁸

The picture painted of the last years of the war is of the increasingly pressing threat from the Muslim League, but of the Unionist ministry managing to fend off the propaganda of the League to a substantial extent. As late as February to April 1945, the report was able to indicate that,

The Ministry fared satisfactorily in the budget session: and its continued stability has been in contrast to the tumble of Ministries elsewhere. Within the Assembly the Muslim League gained no more support... Malik Khizr Hyat Khan seemed to have grown in

²⁵⁴ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st November 1942-31st January 1943.

²⁵⁵ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st November 1942-31st January 1943.

²⁵⁶ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st November 1942-31st January 1943.

²⁵⁷ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st November 1943-31st January 1944.

²⁵⁸ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st February – 30th April 1944.

stature as a parliamentary tactician; and the Leaguers were repeatedly worsted by him in debate.²⁵⁹

The closing reports of the file are of election campaigning in advance of the 1946 elections, and at this point it is notable that Punjab is in transition to gaining all-India attention for instability rather than the security noted throughout the war years:

The electoral contest in the Punjab has been fiercer and perhaps more weighty in its consequences than in any other province. It has attracted attention not only within but also without the Punjab; and the leaders of all-India parties have found time to visit the province and to give their respective adherents assistance. League pressure has intensified, especially in Muslim areas; an element of fanaticism has been imparted by the speeches of *moulvis* and of other religious leaders; and electoral expenditure by the League is reported everywhere to be lavish.²⁶⁰

Clearly then, in the latter stages of the war, the cracks were quite evident in what had been a secure regime during wartime, but the Punjabi I.C.S. had quite justifiably throughout the war been able to have confidence in the provincial ministry and remain focussed on their training and on newly significant tasks like price control.

Ronald Belcher's comments are fairly representative of the Punjabi I.C.S. officers' observations of the unfolding position of the Punjab Ministry during the war years. He writes that they "heard with horror and anxiety but with no direct involvement of the atrocities, sabotage of essential communications, attacks on police stations and so on carried out as part of the Congress 'rebellion'."²⁶¹ In contrast, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan in particular receives consistent praise from the I.C.S. in the memoirs and Belcher emphasises that Khan's position was a finely balanced one, reliant on him making a "tactical obeisance to the slogan of Pakistan", and that "the public debate between the two was continuous, but Sir Sikander's political standing allowed him to hold his own, and to prevent Jinnah appealing successfully over his head to the Punjabi Muslims for their support."²⁶² Although Belcher writes that "his [Sir Sikander Hyat Khan's] unexpected death in December 1942 dramatically changed the situation", with his successor, Malik Khizr Hayat Khan, not proving to have "the same political stature or

²⁵⁹ London, BL, APAC, 'Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946', IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st February – 30th April 1945.

²⁶⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India, 1942-1946', IOR/L/PJ/7/1816, report dated 1st August-31st October 1945.

²⁶¹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 43-44.

²⁶² London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 43-44.

dexterity”, he claims not to have been convinced at this point by the atmosphere he describes, that “it began to be said that the days of the Unionist Government were numbered.”²⁶³ Rather, he concludes that “Pakistan itself we found it hard to envisage as a viable proposition in those days, or to take as intended as more than a political slogan and a bargaining weapon in negotiations with the Congress and the British.”²⁶⁴ This statement suggests the extent to which Punjabi I.C.S. officers felt a genuine level of underlying security in this period. Rather than seeing in the Pakistan debate signs of the imminent partition, he writes the discussion off as a run-of-the-mill disturbance, part of a normal hustling for influence which the British administration needed to bear in mind at district level but not take seriously as indicative of a more permanent upset to Britain’s position. The other memoirs’ reflections mark a commonality with Belcher’s conclusion, highlighting the debates that were going on but emphasising that stability was being maintained. For example, Corfield writes that:

The political situation was also in confusion. The Congress had already refused to consider any solution short of complete independence and the Muslim League had declared for partition. But the Punjab still had a stable government under the steady influence of Glancy and with the cooperation of his Muslim, Sikh and Hindu ministers.²⁶⁵

The impact of war on Britain was a long way from the everyday lives of the probationers once they reached the Punjab. Husain, who was undertaking judicial training in Ferozepur in January 1940, remembers that his preoccupation with local problems meant that he was only dimly aware of World War Two.²⁶⁶ For the British men who feared for the safety of their relatives at home, there is slightly more engagement with the war effort. The letters of Sir Clarmont P. Skrine, I.C.S. since 1912, and serving in 1939-40 as resident to the Punjab states, include those written to his mother in 1940, at which point he actually encouraged her to move out to the Punjab for her safety.²⁶⁷ He writes in frustration,

If only I could get home quickly and bring you out myself! But it’s impossible. I could probably get leave for a month, not more, and if only that Musso[lini] hadn’t come into

²⁶³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 43-44.

²⁶⁴ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 43-44.

²⁶⁵ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, pp. 123-124.

²⁶⁶ London, BL, APAC, Husain, pp. 17-20.

²⁶⁷ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, “Letters from C. P. Skrine to his mother 1940-41”, MSS Eur F154/25, letter dated 24th June 1940.

the war, the air service would probably still be in operation and I could have done it. As it is, it would take me anything up to five weeks getting home ... and two months to get back again with you. Isn't it awful being so cut off?²⁶⁸

Later that year, the postal service to and from Europe became so limited that the collection of Skrine's correspondence with his mother contains a gap of almost an entire year between August 1940 and June 1941.²⁶⁹ A letter from Andrew Hume, written in January 1942, emphasises this problem, recording that "I know from our official business that there has been great congestion in the telegram correspondence due to a variety of reasons since Japan entered the war..." and that "we long for news of you, a bundle of papers with a London Illustrated came within the last few days, but no letter for some time now and at Christmas time especially the silence is hard..."²⁷⁰ The fears that are the focus of Skrine's letters are entirely for his mother and he describes the situation in the Punjab in a letter to his aunt, writing

Out here we have our troubles and anxieties, and there's plenty of work for all of us, but we live in such pre-war conditions and safety that we feel quite ashamed of not being able to share your dangers and burdens and privations at home. Thank god that India, in spite of fifth column activities and political dissensions and much stupidity on *both* sides, Indian and British, is quiet on the whole and definitely anti-Nazi even where it is least pro-British. I don't think India is going to be the Achilles' heel of the empire that the Nazis thought it was going to be.²⁷¹

Ronald Belcher's memoir comments upon army recruitment during his training period, writing of 1940 that "already the involvement in the Middle East campaigns of the Indian Army had affected the Rawalpindi district from which recruitment had always been high".²⁷² He adds that the Unionist Government in Punjab "with its pro-British and pro-war effort attitude effectively insulated us from the political developments elsewhere in India".²⁷³ Sir Clarmont Skrine reiterates this special status of the Punjab, writing

Punjab is the province that counts in war-time, and the Punjab (except for a small but vocal minority of Congressites) is solid behind Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Unionist

²⁶⁸ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, letter dated 24th June 1940.

²⁶⁹ London, BL, APAC, Skrine.

²⁷⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, January 1942-December 1943', MSS Eur D724/11, letter dated 4th January 1942.

²⁷¹ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, letter to Aunt Ethel dated 18th August 1940 (italics author's own).

²⁷² London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 34-35.

²⁷³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, p. 43.

Premier, who made a splendid fighting speech yesterday on behalf of whole-hearted cooperation in the war, without any thought of bargaining. As 60% of the Indian Army is recruited from the Punjab his words carried weight.²⁷⁴

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan is praised as the root of Punjabi security in most of the memoirs, and his death is consistently seen as the turning point of the war. Patrick Brendon, a probationer from 1937, records his memories of a funeral which united the province, writing “British officials and Indians of all communities joined in his funeral procession which passed through the streets of Lahore more or less without police or military protection.”²⁷⁵

For the younger probationers who had joined the I.C.S. on the brink of war and were still undergoing training during the war years, there was a sense of the triviality of their training period in comparison with the war effort. Bill Cowley left for the Punjab in October 1939 and explains:

It had been decided that trained administrators were more urgently required there than in the army. This book may seem too much concerned, during a time of war, with a background of peace. Yet there were times when we envied our army friends the companionship in danger of their comrades in arms.²⁷⁶

Indeed, there were mixed feelings about the value of the work they were undertaking as probationers in comparison with the war effort. In particular, the peacetime atmosphere of India is brought up in several memoirs as an uncomfortable contrast. The decision not to release I.C.S. men for army service meant that choice was removed for the young probationers, but there is still a sense of guilt in their recollections of the period. Cowley recalls in his memoir the decision being announced:

A letter went out to all I.C.S. officers (some of whom during the Great War had been released to the army, and had distinguished themselves), stressing the fact that no one could be released this time, that the work we were doing was far more important than anything we could do in the armed forces, and that it would be essential to have a reserve of fully trained officers when the war was over.²⁷⁷

He remembers spending hot weather afternoons in the Club, commenting “my life seemed sybaritic – but I had to live it as it was...”²⁷⁸ and “our civic training seemed

²⁷⁴ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, letter dated 28th August 1939 (italics author’s own).

²⁷⁵ Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies, Brendon collection, p. 2.

²⁷⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. i.

²⁷⁷ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 39.

²⁷⁸ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 48.

unreal in the aftermath of Dunkirk, with frequent air raids on the north-east coast”.²⁷⁹ He recalls the two officers in the Punjab who were released for active service, Colin MacPherson and Thomas Tull, and contrasts their laudable actions with his own role as a civil defence officer.²⁸⁰ He and a colleague took a Staff Officers’ Course in Calcutta and he commented on it that “it was a very thorough three-week course, but compared with the real work being done at home it seemed rather like being taught to tie knots in the way some Indian schoolmasters used – by little drawings on a blackboard”.²⁸¹

Dick Slater goes so far in his memoir as to question his motives for joining the I.C.S. just before the outbreak of war, wondering if he could have subconsciously “regarded India as a haven from the holocaust that was about to sweep Europe?”²⁸² Ronald Belcher, in his first posting as Assistant Commissioner at Gurdaspur remembers how the threat to India did not seem very real from the perspective of the district, adding to the guilt and anxiety. He writes of the time,

On me, and I suppose on all of us trainees, thoughts of such things as the nightly danger to families in London – from whom news began through increasing disruption of sea communications to come more and more slowly and erratically – painted a demoralising contrast with the lack of immediate purpose or relevance of our training operations.²⁸³

These fears, particularly in the early stages of the war, are reiterated in Sir Clarmont Skrine’s letters as in the memoirs. He wrote in a letter from May 1940, “these initial victories of the enemy are terrifying I must say, and my fears darling are chiefly centred on *you* – you in poor staggering France – how will a French collapse affect *you*? I wish I knew”.²⁸⁴ The feeling above all in these fears is of being cut off by the lack of contact and immense distance from events in Europe.

In remembering their Indian careers, these men looked back over the 1920s and 1930s from the vantage point not only of knowing what was to happen in the 1940s, but specifically from having witnessed events which must have made the everyday work of the previous years pale into relative insignificance. In approaching the memories recounted, then, it is necessary to consider that the lens through which the 1920s and

²⁷⁹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 55.

²⁸⁰ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 99.

²⁸¹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, p. 99.

²⁸² London, BL, APAC, Slater, p. 3.

²⁸³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, p. 20.

²⁸⁴ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, letter dated 21st May 1940 (italics author’s own).

1930s are being viewed is one that was substantially distorted by the experience of living through one of the twentieth century's most tragic atrocities. One memoir that highlights this effect is that of Sir James Penny, whose career in the Punjab spanned both world wars, ending with his retirement in 1945.²⁸⁵ Departing from India on 15th April 1946, Penny had no involvement with the independence and partition, and his record of the war years seems to have been written in much more detail as a result. One incident of violence he recalls in particular detail, to a much greater extent than any of the other memoirs. In August 1939, he returned to Lahore after a short period of leave. He records that the marching and drilling of communal groups and armies was becoming a significant problem, and that the Khaksars were planning to defy a ban on marches through the city. He advised a show of force to counteract the threat, including having the military on standby, and then writes of the actual day,

Before long we heard that the march had indeed begun, and Sikander called me to his room in the Secretariat. With him were Malik Khizr Hyat Khan, Tiwana, and the I. G. police, and the D. I. G. (C. I. D.) and Anderson and perhaps a few others. There was a little sporadic conversation but for the most part a tense silence. We sat – and waited. At last the door was flung open, and in came the D.C. hot foot from the scene of action, blood trickling from a scratch on his face. His first words were – “the S.P. was right and I was wrong” – and he went on to describe how the Khaksars had refused to abandon their march, and had tried to force their way through the police, who had been forced to fire.²⁸⁶

The result was that four policeman were killed, with 31 Khaksar casualties and 63 injured.²⁸⁷ This is only a very short excerpt from Penny's detailed account, but demonstrates that part of the reason that this incident was so memorable was that it was one where he had taken responsibility for a violent episode, resulting in deaths on both sides. He concludes of the incident that,

It had been a testing day for the whole administrative set-up, and an agonising time for Sikander, but afterwards things quieted down, and we had little more trouble with private armies. As for the Khaksar movement, it simmered on for some months till in June further arrests had to be made. Then there was peace.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Cambridge, CSAS, Penny.

²⁸⁶ Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, pp. 191-192.

²⁸⁷ Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, p. 192.

²⁸⁸ Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, p. 192.

The thorough detail of his account suggests that the war years were also a more significant memory for Penny because they were not placed in contrast against the much more extensive and brutal violence that the I.C.S. men involved in independence and partition witnessed. Even under the relatively peaceful conditions of the Punjab, there were continual issues with communal armies in the early stages of the war, and food crises as a result of natural disasters and hoarding. The fact that Penny gives more space and precedence to this incident is not indicative of other officers not having similar experiences, although his seniority at this stage placed him in a responsible advisory position within the ministry, but simply that the importance of these experiences held more weight for him as an I.C.S. man who had not then experienced the far more extensively violent period of partition. For other officers, the tasks of the war years were able to fade with time and in relation to subsequent experiences.

Indeed, we can contrast Penny's account directly with some comments made about the same incidents by Arthur Williams. He also recalls the organisation of communal armies as one of the first responses to the wartime atmosphere, as he writes here:

The outbreak of war in 1939 came as a shock to the European community; to the Indian it offered two wholly different opportunities. In the Rawalpindi countryside, the tradition of military service was strong; military pensions from the first world war amounted to about six times the land revenue; and this new war brought many men flocking to exist. In the city the ambitious and troublesome began the organisation of private armies, to roam the streets ostensibly as social and religious organisations but in reality as gangs of hooligans.²⁸⁹

However, the significance of these problems is something he stresses to a much lesser degree, continuing without a detailed explanation of how this situation was overcome, to emphasise instead what he felt to be the main roles undertaken in wartime:

With the cleansing of the mosques there came a long period of freedom from civil disorder, and attention could be concentrated on other problems created by the war... The most important of these was the unfamiliar task of price control and suppression of hoarding. As soon as war had been declared traders raised the prices of almost all commodities to inflated heights and sought to justify their behaviour by professing scarcity in supply of the articles themselves – a scarcity artificially created by private hoarding. Until the government could pass appropriate legislation creating the

²⁸⁹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, p. 10.

machinery of control and conferring the necessary powers on its local officers it was left to the latter to use their ingenuity in adapting to an economic situation powers really designed for use against turbulent criminals.²⁹⁰

The frustration of new problems, unsupported by up-to-date legislation with which to combat them, is indicative of Williams' in particular, but also the I.C.S.'s in general, bureaucratic mode of thinking, and commitment to carrying out the word of the law in a precise way.

Ronald Belcher emphasises how the disproportionate role of the Punjab in providing troops for the war also created new work for the province's district officers in this period. He writes:

It became necessary in order to maintain the morale of the servicemen now overseas to take special steps to look after their families at home. It began now to be apprehended that the Germans' advance through South Russia would bring them within bombing range of North West India and in consequence action needed to be taken against air raids. And the increasing food procurement in India for war purposes and the loss of rice supplies from Burma – began to create scarcities in the country and cause food prices to increase so much and so quickly that government was forced to take urgent steps to intervene in the business of purchase and distribution of supplies.²⁹¹

These issues, above all, formed the everyday workload of the wartime I.C.S. officer in the Punjab. The logistical challenge of controlling prices and supply of food had several elements. As Penny explains, the essence of the problem lay in shortages caused by the demands of the war, including “the requirements of the armed forces, and, before long, the Bengal famine, not to mention quite a serious famine in the south-east Punjab”,²⁹² which necessitated the launch of a “‘Grow more food’ campaign which was my particular headache for the rest of my service.”²⁹³ Apart from this limit in supply, though, the fear of hoarding was compounded by what Williams claims was a great increase in corruption.²⁹⁴ The measures undertaken for its control in this period were, then, an extension of the level of previous intervention and included the establishment of a special unit of the police to investigate cases of suspected corruption.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁰ London, BL, APAC, Williams, p. 11.

²⁹¹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 34-35.

²⁹² Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, p. 202.

²⁹³ Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, p. 202.

²⁹⁴ London, BL, APAC, Williams, p. 16.

²⁹⁵ London, BL, APAC, Williams, p. 17.

The combination of these new tasks made the workload of the district officer a heavy one during the war years. Slater emphasises the change in pace that was necessary, writing:

Finally a comment on the pace of District work in wartime. The picture of a D.O. spending half a day under a pipal tree engaged in a Socratic dialogue with the villagers is an attractive one,²⁹⁶ but it bears no relation to my own experience. One had to keep moving. Obviously, to trot smartly through a village shouting ‘*Khush ho? Razi ho?*’²⁹⁷ to the assembled throng without waiting for an answer would be an absurdity; but tours had to be intensively programmed and I recall occasions when the usual exchanges about crops, crime, recruitment, supplies, savings and so on, were conducted from the saddle. Regrettable, but with the enormous wartime increase in the workload, inevitable.²⁹⁸

This was compounded by the lack of new recruits and subsequent extra pressure on the existing officers. Penny explains an added element of this issue, with Punjab Commission officers sometimes being lost as well, as

The demand often came from the Government of India, who, if they wanted an I.C.S. man had of course to get him from one or other of the provinces. Once they took a man from us with a solemn undertaking to return him at the end of a year. When the time came they asked for an extension, and we refused. Then they got the Viceroy to write a personal letter to the Governor, which by convention could not be refused, and we had to give in. The Government of India must have had compelling reasons for its action, but it made it impossible for a provincial government to plan far ahead. However, one good thing was that the Secretary of State had sent us a good quota of recruits in the last year or two. By the end of World War II the 1938 batch were holding charge of districts.²⁹⁹

Slater was one of these pre-war recruits to whom Penny refers, and the steep learning curve of his training, alongside his heavy wartime responsibilities, demonstrate how much more quickly he and others of his generation had to step up to expectations in order to make up for a lack of new recruits after 1939.

²⁹⁶ An image presumably spread by the energetic parables of F. L. Brayne, a familiar character to this group of probationers, as described by Clive Dewey.

²⁹⁷ Approximately translated as: ‘Are you happy? Are you content / pleased?’

²⁹⁸ London, BL, APAC, Slater, p. 36.

Indeed, one of Sir Malcolm Darling’s observations about the weakening of the I.C.S. in this period was that without the time or money available for extensive touring of the districts, “throughout the tour one had the feeling of an administration in only the loosest touch with the people and served by officials, many of whom, but not all, paid far more attention to the demands of Government than to the needs of the people.” Darling, *At Freedom’s Door*, p. 285.

²⁹⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, p. 194.

Conclusion

The 1935 Government of India Act was a notable success in the Punjab where, throughout the late 1930s and war years, the Unionist Ministry provided a secure administration, supported British interests in the province and abroad, and provided a bulwark against the progress of the Muslim League. Indeed, Ian Talbot's work highlights how despite communal rioting in the early 1920s and calls for a separate Muslim state the Punjab remained peaceful throughout the 1930s and early 1940s,³⁰⁰ allowing the doubts created by 1919 to settle into a new routine created by the negotiated working conditions of provincial autonomy. Notably the Punjabi law student Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali's 1933 pamphlet 'Now or Never', which drew up a scheme for an independent Muslim state, was essentially ignored,³⁰¹ and it was only in the mid-1940s that Jinnah's canny manipulation of the symbolism rather than the specifics of the two nation theory started to achieve a mass popular following.³⁰² The impression that comes across in many accounts that the rise of the Muslim League and power of the call to arms was a sudden one gains significant credence from these indicators. It is not quite accurate. The seeds of growth of Muslim League influence can be seen not only despite, but in some ways because of, the extent of Unionist success. Jalal argues that "hanging on to the Ministry was to cost the Khizr coalition dear; the demands for men and food which the war imposed upon the Punjab, the rationing and price controls they entailed, meant that the coalition was inevitably tarred with the brush of unpopular governmental intervention."³⁰³

Moreover, the structure of the Unionist coalition, prompted by pragmatism, was ground which the League could – and did – successfully take over by the middle of the 1940s:

The Unionist 'party' itself was a ramshackle coalition of opportunist politicians, without much organisation or funds, or indeed discipline, of its own. Switching from Unionist to League required no structural change in Punjab politics, let alone a change in the

³⁰⁰ Talbot, *Freedom's Cry*, 1996).

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁰² Ibid., pp. 7-10.

³⁰³ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, p. 88.

ideological creed of the converts. Above all it did not presuppose any radical alteration in the balance of power in the localities.³⁰⁴

Throughout the war, there was a slow drip-drip of League conversions in the provincial assembly,³⁰⁵ and after the League broke with Khizr in May 1944, it then began a more serious drive into rural Punjab.³⁰⁶ The seeds of League control can thus be seen in the peace and stability of the pragmatic coalition of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, but despite this, the achievement of the coalition, and convincing solidity it maintained should not be underestimated:

In March 1945, by which time the A.I.M.L. had hoped to have triumphed in Lahore, the Unionist Ministry may have been bent but it was still unbroken. The League's session for 1945 scheduled to be held in Lahore had to be postponed since holding it there would simply have advertised Jinnah's weakness in the province that mattered most to him – if the League had failed to win Punjabis at the top, there was little evidence as yet that it had succeeded in mobilising the base.³⁰⁷

Both Talbot and Jalal indicate the extent to which the events of 1946-7 seemed unlikely during the war period.

Another risk in reference to the 1930s and 1940s is to assume that the British administration was gradually giving up and anticipating an imminent loss of control. Although events like the 1919 Amritsar massacre, and the ongoing discussions surrounding constitutional change, did cause a step-change in Anglo-Indian thinking about their future role, these incidents of anxiety were interspersed with long periods of inertia in which new *modus operandi* were developed and to a large extent accepted. Ronald Hyam suggests that the problems encountered in empire during the 1910s and 1920s prompted realistic and robust solutions to steady Britain's colonies up for the longer term.³⁰⁸ Thus the work of empire in the 1930s was not, he argues, that of an institution being run down for demobilisation: rather it was still in the midst of working toward a future in which the problems of the Edwardian era had been solved in order to maintain the broader status quo.³⁰⁹ From the perspective of the postcolonial era, it is

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 94.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 95.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 98.

³⁰⁸ Ronald Hyam, 'The British Empire in the Edwardian Era', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV – The Twentieth Century*, edited by Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, CBE, D. Litt, FBA (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 47-63.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

easy to consider the early 1940s as the prequel to independence and partition, and to look for evidence of a gradual decline, and yet it is also over-simplistic. Work in empire was still continuing in this period, and the memoirs considered are of young men training up to be the administrators of the future. Change was imminent, but not *inevitably* so, and it certainly did not necessarily feel it.

Hutchins suggests how the ‘illusion of permanence’ retained a grip in these years, despite the steps made toward a transfer of power:

The Empire, seemingly so stable, was in reality growing ever more fragile; the principles by which the Empire was governed, seemingly so self-evident, were often based on partial impressions and suggested by accidental occurrences. The certainty of a permanent Empire in these years, however, seemed to increase in proportion to its fragility, and to serve for many people as a defence and retreat from reason long after the course of events had proved its impossibility.³¹⁰

The solutions propounded to the I.C.S. recruitment crisis of the early 1930s involved shoring up the image of empire with outdated ideals and appeals that emphasised the romantic and adventurous elements of life in India which were the stuff of childhood stories. There is thus little difference between the thinking of the men in this study recruited to the Punjabi I.C.S. in the 1910s and 1920s, and those successful after the changes made to recruitment in 1936. There was no question of appealing to young men for progressive attitudes toward preparing for a transfer of power; the literature and talks provided to potential applicants stressed continuity, the essential role it fell to British men to advise and support the transition to democracy. The last generation of the I.C.S. in Punjab are not worth studying because they were different, but because they were largely the same as previous generations: despite new times, and new tasks, their commitment to the ideals of empire remained essentially strong. It could not be otherwise when this was the basis of the appeal made by I.C.S. recruitment, and the training given within a service which emphasised and relished its independence, self-importance and *esprit de corps*. This last generation, by 1945, had been instilled with the attitudes and collective memories of a service which had looked change in the eye and reinforced their own position and stability through cautious negotiation, and re-envisioning of the I.C.S. role for increasingly democratic times. The calm that settled in the Punjab during the 1930s and 1940s reinforced the convictions of the service about

³¹⁰ Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, p. xii.

their own role and the needs of the people they served. All of these ideas were about to face a much more substantial challenge. As Talbot indicates,

There were relatively few instances of communal violence in Amritsar during the 1937-46 period of ascendancy by the cross-community Unionist Party in the Punjab. The resignation of the Unionist Coalition Government on 2nd March 1947 ushered in a time of unprecedented violence.³¹¹

Punjab was now to be exceptional as the province of violence and instability, and young I.C.S. officers were to find their role under new pressures, and, above all, new doubt.

³¹¹ Ian Talbot, 'Violence, Migration and Resettlement: The Case of Amritsar', in *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial and Post-colonial Migration*, edited by Ian Talbot and Shinder Thandi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 81.

Chapter two

The ethics of control: the descent into violence, 1945-1947

The relatively controlled conditions of wartime Punjab were already showing signs of strain by 1945, following the death of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan in 1942 and subsequent growth in Muslim League activity in the province. The elections of 1946 proved indicative of the change in the Punjabi balance of power: the Muslim League secured the most seats (71) but not an absolute majority.³¹² In the quarterly reports on the British constitutional and political position between November 1945 and April 1946, it is recorded that “the electoral contest in the Punjab was felt to be the most crucial, as it was one of the most vigorously fought, in India.”³¹³ In contrast to the relative security of the wartime Unionist government, the 1946 elections produced a finely-balanced coalition. The report concludes,

The election results ended in a very uneasy situation, which does not promise political stability... There was great bitterness among the Muslim League members that they as the largest party were not able to form a Ministry, and this resentment is concentrated against the Premier. The alliance which has resulted in the formation of the Coalition Ministry is unstable, and once the Akalis, who are the linchpin of the coalition, withdraw their support, the whole formation will fall to pieces.³¹⁴

This alteration in the political security of the Punjab was of course to become increasingly apparent within the districts, but the reflections made in the memoirs during this period suggest the risk of exaggerating the transition made in the post-war period; or at least of applying teleological reasoning within the context of the memoir, as there is no definite evidence in 1946 of any sense of denouement in colonial rule. The mid-1940s were a period of gradual undermining of the Unionist position, and increasingly popular appeal of Muslim League symbolism,³¹⁵ and the violence of 1946-

³¹² Carter, Lionel, ed., *Punjab Politics – 1st January 1944-3rd March 1947 Last Years of the Ministries: Governor’s Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2006), p. 173, document 60, Letter from Glancy to Wavell, dated 28th February 1946. Full results are: Muslim League 75 seats, Congress 51 seats, Unionists 21 seats, Panthic Sikhs 21 seats, and Independents 7 seats.

³¹³ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position of British India: Reports for November 1945-April 1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816.

³¹⁴ London, BL, APAC, ‘Quarterly Surveys of the Political and Constitutional Position of British India: Reports for November 1945-April 1946’, IOR/L/PJ/7/1816.

³¹⁵ Carter, ed., *Punjab Politics – 1st January 1944-3rd March 1947 Last Years of the Ministries: Governor’s Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents*, p. 87, document 18, Notes by Glancy on position of key members of the Punjab Ministry, dated 10th July 1944. Glancy notes at this point that the Premier Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana is under particular pressure from the Muslim League, writing

47 does not appear to have been interpreted in terms of an irretrievable loss of control but rather was often understood as part of the pattern of the province's history.³¹⁶

Looking back on his return from home leave in May 1945, Ronald Belcher's reflection on the period was that "the curtain was going up on a new act of the drama of India's constitutional progress, with all parties now looking steadily at their objectives without the distraction of uncertainty about the outcome of the war",³¹⁷ although he does admit that "these developments had not as yet acquired reality and importance for us".³¹⁸ Written twenty years after the event, without the assistance of notes or letters, this idea of a dramatic change in the post-war months suggests the need to attempt to make sense of the period, but does not reflect what was rather a gradual increase in concern about the pressure upon the Unionist coalition during the final years of the war. Although it had withstood Muslim League lobbying through until 1945, the increasing visibility of the League was very much on the radar of the British administration. Sir Conrad Corfield's memoir draws together the international situation in the post-war period in understanding the developments within Punjab. He wrote that "the pressure was building up", commenting upon the recognition in the Atlantic Charter of "the right of all people to choose their own form of government", the expectations coming from the US and change of government to a Labour administration whose "views on colonialism differed little from Roosevelt's", concluding from these indicators that "there was clearly little time left."³¹⁹ This ability to apply all of the external developments upon the trajectory of India's future is evidently a result of analysis after the event. Indeed, as late as July 1946, recruitment to the I.C.S. was still continuing, with a Cabinet minute of the 31st July recording that fifty-four European candidates had accepted offers of employment. It was not until 14th August 1946 that the decision was made to cancel

that "Khizar has been through a very rough time of it during the last few months thanks to the wanton attack which Jinnah has seen fit to launch against the Unionist Party. When Jinnah established himself in Lahore last winter and, disowning his past assurances, set to work with his agents to undermine the solidarity of the Unionists, it became apparent that the issue would soon be joined in earnest."

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 300, document 107, Letter from Jenkins to Wavell, dated 13th-14th November 1946. Jenkins provides a detailed description of several recent attacks, which he puts down to the effects of post-war "uneasiness".

³¹⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 58.

³¹⁸ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 58.

³¹⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 139.

these offers.³²⁰ Both in London and Delhi, any anticipation of the imminence of British departure from India was proving slow to effect policy decisions.

The apparent recognitions of sweeping change in global politics and their impact on all-India negotiations tend not to extend in the memoirs to any serious acceptance of a gradual change in the internal Punjabi situation. Patrick Brendon wrote about his period in Gurgaon between 1946 and 1947 that he was able to make arrangements during touring “so as to visit the best places for shooting” as “life was as peaceful as I had ever known it in India. Everyone was prosperous after a series of good harvests; crime was under control; there were no agitations or movements; the district staff were free of any serious scandals.”³²¹ The picture that thus emerges is a more nuanced one, of gradual change and growing uneasiness which was not consistently recognisable throughout the province, and did not produce an impression of violence of a scale that could not be understood within the parameters of previous experience. Rather, the men make reference to district history and apparent patterns in communal activity in explaining and categorising what they witnessed. In Brendon’s comments lies more evidence of a sense of denouement from the pressures of wartime work than of an awareness at this point, in 1946, of unfolding change within the subcontinent.

Brendon reflects in his memoir on the impression left by American soldiers in the district during the final years of the war, explaining how they had killed two local women during hunting trips, shot peacocks despite local sensibilities about the birds, and openly engaged in relationships with Anglo-Indian women.³²² Reflecting the awareness of international pressure on the British to decolonise, his conclusion about these incidents was that “the people realised that they were different from the British and thought them less desirable... It was at least gratifying to find that the Indians preferred the British on the spot to the Americans on the spot despite all the American criticism of what the British had done in India.”³²³ He contrasts this American irresponsibility with his own role in enforcing “season and licence” in reference to

³²⁰ Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 – Volume VIII The Interim Government 3rd July-1st November 1946* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1979), pp. 150-151, document 94: Cabinet – India and Burma Committee I.B. (46) 3rd Meeting, minutes for meeting held on 31st July 1946 at the Cabinet Office, minute 2, L/S&G/7/263: f 72.

³²¹ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 22.

³²² Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 6. Anglo-Indian in this case refers to mixed-race women.

³²³ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 6.

shooting, and in following up the deaths of the two local women by arranging for the women's families to receive financial compensation.³²⁴ These comments demonstrate the two values of the I.C.S. which will be considered in this chapter. The first is the bureaucratic handling of the everyday local state, with maintenance of control and adherence to the word of the law as founding principles of the service. While comments like those of Belcher and Corfield above accentuate the development of sudden and dramatic state change in the central government, the memoirs emphasise that at the level of local administration, control and respect were maintained for longer due to the status and image of the service. The second issue is the evidence that, despite the gradual changes adopted in the Punjab, there was a continued belief among these men in the necessity of the work they were undertaking and no sense of a moral necessity for the transfer of power.

The bureaucratic mindset is at the heart of I.C.S. accounts of the final two years of British colonialism in Punjab, and is part of the justification for the ethical 'need' for empire. With their focus on law and order, and maintenance of records, the increasingly violent and uncontrollable nature of the period served to confirm the *raison d'être* of I.C.S. officers rather than challenge their belief in the system, as their gradual withdrawal is presented in this narrative as a prompt for the resurgence in natural Indian inclination toward violence and communal factionalism. Despite the aspect of adventure used in propagandising about empire in the 1930s, the essence of the character of applicants to the civil service examination was a bureaucratic one: the examination, after all, was for entry to any of the civil services, so the candidates were applying for an administrative career first, and India second. In this chapter, I will consider how this administrative ethic played out under the fast-altering conditions of the mid-1940s, suggesting how despite the circumstances, the belief in the ethics of rule remained consistent. The first section will use accounts of violence, rioting and destruction of property to demonstrate how I.C.S. men brought a bureaucratic mentality to all aspects of their work, attempting to quantify and record what they saw as patterns of communal activity within their district, and seeking to control disorder with recourse to the legal framework.

³²⁴ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 6.

A significant aspect of many of memoirs is of criticisms made of poor communication between central government and district level administration, and of a sense of betrayal by the acts of politicians, which left the civil service to execute undesirable policies on the ground. This idea of the administrators doing their jobs to the best of their ability, but undermined by central political decisions will be considered in the second section. In part, this separation of their own actions from those of central government can be understood as a way of negating their own guilt and memories of violent situations where they were unable to enforce a satisfactory outcome, but there is also an element of separating off the civil service ethic from the political actions of those at the centre, valourising the I.C.S. *esprit de corps*. Considering the detail and frankness of the correspondence between Punjab's governors and local officers, this was not necessarily an issue within the Indian Government, but rather about the failure of the India Office in Britain to appreciate conditions on the ground. Finally, section three will consider how arguments for the Indian need for a paternalistic state continued to hold sway in the 1940s, as the I.C.S. still maintained doubts about the preparedness of the two new nations for democracy and independence. Rather than accepting the ideology that India had 'come of age', the memoirs suggest the final generation of British I.C.S. officers continued to hold a real conviction in the ethical need for Indians to have British administration and law and order. These attitudes did not only survive into the 1940s but are at the heart of the narrative of events that the men constructed when writing their memoirs in the 1960s and 70s, and as such contributed to the image of Indians not just in this context but long after the men had retired to Britain.

Violence and bureaucracy: administering the riot in 1946-47 Punjab

The emphasis upon maintenance of law and order as the core of I.C.S. work is reflected in the terms of description used by the men when writing about the descent into violence of 1946 and 1947. In several of the memoirs, those men directly involved in attempting to control violence provide long and detailed accounts of their actions; explaining the situations fully, documenting their role and justifying state intervention through the letter of the law. The difficulty of the I.C.S. position was usually a lack of manpower in tackling riot situations, necessarily tempering the kind of action that could be taken. Indeed, what emerges from the accounts of specific incidents is a sense of a

carefully orchestrated choreography where arrests were made to satisfy both the need for recognition of those involved in protests and as a demonstration of ostensible state activity. John Fearn served as Sub-Divisional Officer in Kasur between November 1944 and March 1946,³²⁵ and then took on temporary charge of the district of Lahore for his final year in the Punjab, about which he remembered a sense of “unremitting tension”.³²⁶ He only became involved in controlling large-scale protests in the final weeks before his post-war leave, granted in March 1947. Having handed over charge of Lahore district to his colleague, John Eustace, on 21st January 1947, he returned to support Eustace in tackling a civil disobedience campaign begun by the Muslim League. His description of events offers an idea of the careful balancing act of legality and force, imagery of power and enactment of it. He writes in his memoir that,

I recall that for a week or more it was a regular afternoon ploy to force a confrontation by ‘marching on Government House’. This could not be allowed (if it had been the marchers would have had to think of something even more objectionable) and accordingly a strong force of police were drawn up across the Mall to block the direct route to the Governor’s official residence.³²⁷

Presumably limited by manpower in terms of applying force, this tactical selection of a visible police presence marks an important demonstration of the intent and ability to control events.

Fearn suggests however, that in reality the use of force would not have been an option: as the marchers numbered several thousand, “the sheer weight of their numbers could probably have broken through the police line.”³²⁸ In this instance, though, his assessment of the events suggests that a carefully orchestrated performance of both power and protest suited both sides. He writes that breaking through the police line “was not the object of the organisers”.³²⁹ Instead, he writes:

Confrontation having been achieved, there followed a session of noisy bargaining over the numbers of marchers to be arrested, one side pointing to the practical problems of handling some hundreds of prisoners and offering to arrest half a dozen and the other protesting that the march would be thought ineffective and face would be lost if a substantial number did not suffer the rigours of police custody. Generally we

³²⁵ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 5.

³²⁶ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

³²⁷ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

³²⁸ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

³²⁹ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

compromised on 20 or 30. Those chosen for sacrifice were duly arrested, honour was satisfied and the marchers dispersed only to reassemble and repeat the performance the following day.³³⁰

The image he provides of state action against these protests is one of compromise and cooperation in producing an outcome satisfactory to all concerned, defined by the parameters of a limited recourse to force. His interpretation also undermines the seriousness of the protest being made, as his depiction simplifies the demands of those involved and suggests tactical game-playing on both sides.

Allan Arthur's detailed accounts of his attempts to maintain control of Multan district during the Kisan agitation of November 1946 and subsequent Muslim League campaigns of January to March 1947 demonstrate a similar balancing act, and suggest further tensions behind the question of using force. In a letter to his parents written on 28th January 1947, he describes his "first experience of dealing with mobs" as "not a very pleasant one", explaining "naturally, I am not armed but I am now wearing a tin hat!"³³¹ The lack of violence used in dealing with riot situations is a decision that he explains not in moral but in tactical terms "as I am sure that the use of force will only make the trouble worse."³³² He writes that

Our difficulty here is that the District has a large Muslim majority and in fact Multan is the stronghold of the League and Pakistan in the Punjab. It is no easy matter to control crowds without using force, but so far all has gone well and no serious incident has occurred. There has been trouble in the only districts where force has been used and this was in districts where Muslims were in a minority. We would have had the whole district up in arms if we had used force to disperse crowds and processions.³³³

Arthur's concern is that of a man planning how best to regain effective law and order through the prism of viewing his district in terms of its apparent communal history. His handing-over note upon leaving the district in August 1947 is prefaced with the comment that "Multan city has always been notorious for communal ill-feeling and has been the scene of serious communal riots in the past. The last really bad conflagration was in 1922, when Mr. Emerson (later Sir Herbert Emerson, Governor of the Punjab)

³³⁰ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

³³¹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 27, part 6 (B) – 'Period in Charge of a District: Multan'.

³³² London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 27, part 6 (B) – 'Period in Charge of a District: Multan'.

³³³ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 27, part 6 (B) – 'Period in Charge of a District: Multan'.

was D.C.”³³⁴ It is this fundamental belief in the continuity of a communal history to the district and accordingly the natural predisposition of those he was governing to become embroiled in communal violence that leads Arthur to conclude in his January 1947 letter that ongoing vigilance and tactical care is essential in order to prevent this kind of inevitable descent into conflict. He writes that “the slightest thing may give a communal tinge to the whole business and then we shall have a communal riot of no mean proportions on our hands.”³³⁵

Arthur’s descriptions of the detail of everyday actions in response to demonstrations and marches suggest above all an organisational challenge on an enormous scale. Writing about the increase in protests, often becoming violent, he describes the actions of 5th March 1947 in the following terms. Having anticipated a Hindu and Sikh procession in the afternoon, and made policing arrangements for this, he was surprised by a student procession beginning at 11.00am. He describes the procession as having “a hostile and aggressive attitude”, writing that “the shouting of *Quaid-i-Azam Murdabad*³³⁶ proved to be too much for the Muslim on-lookers outside the Bohar gate and they attacked the procession.”³³⁷ In the face of subsequent rioting across the city, Arthur “issued orders that a magistrate should proceed at once to each of the three city police stations”, “contacted the military authorities on the telephone and asked for immediate assistance”, and from his base at Haram Gate Police Station “informed the civil surgeon to make preparations for receiving injured persons in the Civil Hospital.”³³⁸ As the situation slipped beyond police control, he “issued an order under section 12 of the Public Safety Ordinance prohibiting meetings, processions, the gathering of five or more persons, and the carrying of arms within the Municipal limits of Multan” and “issued an order under section 144 Cr.P.C., imposing a curfew throughout the same area from 6.00pm to 7.00am.”³³⁹ In the three hours during which

³³⁴ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 28-29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³³⁵ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 27, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³³⁶ *Quaid-i-Azam* was a term used to refer to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, meaning approximately ‘Great Leader’, thus the phrase can be roughly translated as ‘Down with Jinnah’.

³³⁷ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 28-29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³³⁸ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 28-29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³³⁹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 28-29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

the riot was taking place, Arthur remained at Haram Gate Police Station and sent patrols out to gather reinforcements, publicise his orders, close the courts, and defend vulnerable and valuable areas like the Treasury and flour mills.³⁴⁰ Rather than showing the District Officer as the mounted hero of the hour, the detail of this account demonstrates the bureaucratic role and powers of the I.C.S. officer; coordinating the situation from behind the line and providing the legal basis for the actions of troops and police in responding to rioters.

In a rather distasteful diary entry Arthur quotes from the 27th March 1947, he reinforces this sense of the I.C.S. district officer as bureaucrat and tactician, at a distance from the horror of the violence itself. He recorded that

It has been most interesting planning the campaign, and I have had a good deal to do with this as I have all the local knowledge. At the moment under the new Acts I have enormous powers and am practically a dictator. In fact, we are right back in the good old days of one hundred years ago and ‘Jenkins and his boys’ have taken the place of ‘the Lawrences and their young men’.³⁴¹

Despite the imminence of the partition and end of his Punjabi career, this statement suggests Arthur’s continued commitment to and conviction in the legend and romantic idealism of the Punjab Commission, as well as the core concept of *esprit de corps* in defining I.C.S. identity. Rather than seeing in the events of March 1947 a denouement of empire, he wrote as the riots subsided that “the first excitement is now over and we now have to get down to the rather dull business of clearing up the mess.”³⁴² Moreover, the comments suggest an extraordinary light-heartedness, a sense that the suffering of those around him is somehow unreal and that the situation presents itself to him more in terms of the tactical challenge – almost as a game. Reflecting on 5th March 1947 in another letter to his parents, he wrote that “it is sad that we should have had such a serious riot when we got through the Muslim League agitation with very little trouble and no serious incident.”³⁴³ With violence in Lahore and Amritsar also at a peak, Arthur wrote about his colleague and old friend there, “poor old James Fraser – it is comic to

³⁴⁰ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 28-29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴¹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 30, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴² London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 30, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴³ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

think that he and I should be in charge of Amritsar and Multan at this critical juncture.”³⁴⁴ His conclusion to the comments is that “Multan has been notorious for communal riots in the past but no riot has ever reached double figures before this one! What a shambles! Still, S.93 Rule may restore the situation.”³⁴⁵ Although there is an appreciation here of events spiralling out of control during early March, rather than recognising the tragedy of what was going on around him, Arthur’s comments are focussed on professional failure, the techniques he will use to restore control, and companionship with his friend and colleague.

On leaving India, Arthur was able to coolly describe the district of Multan during his service as “most interesting” as it “presents many problems of administration and the D.C. never has a dull moment, as it is only at rare intervals that he is not dealing with some agitation or other.”³⁴⁶ Indeed, despite the violence and loss of life over which he presided, he concludes his handing-over note with the statement that “I shall always look back with pleasure to the nine months which I have spent in this district.”³⁴⁷ This is not in any way a result of overlooking what had happened; he records in detail the numbers of lives lost as 194 (136 of which were within the city itself), and injuries (183), and carefully quantifies the damage done by looting and arson as worth Rs. 12 lakhs within the city and Rs. 2 lakhs in the surrounding countryside.³⁴⁸ His survey of the effects of the violence is full and thorough in every aspect except that of the emotional effects, or potential shaking of his convictions that might reasonably be expected. The presentation of his closing reports is that of a routine piece of administration, calculated and quantified, but not apparently felt in any real way as reflecting negatively upon the regime itself. In the wake of the violence, Arthur presided over and recorded the arrest of 2,227 people and imposed collective fines of Rs. 10 lakhs within the city and Rs. 3.5 lakhs in the surrounding rural area. He bemoans the fact that “altogether, only Rs. 2 lakhs were recovered” but explains that this “enabled compensation to be paid to the

³⁴⁴ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴⁵ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 29, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴⁶ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 31, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴⁷ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 31, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁴⁸ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 30, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

relatives of all those killed in the riots.”³⁴⁹ The image of I.C.S. attitudes that emerges is of efficiency and maintained standards but without any sense of guilt for what had occurred; indeed, almost a sense of unreality in appreciating the impact of death and brutality in human terms. Rather than showing a human face of I.C.S. district administration, growing in liberalism with the changing times, the brusque efficiency of Arthur’s reports indicate the continuity in attitudes towards the people governed and an unshaken conviction in the value and righteousness of the work undertaken.

Gopal Das Khosla’s book *Stern Reckoning* provides an account of the violence and refugeeism of 1947 using evidence from the 1948 Government of India Fact Finding Organisation.³⁵⁰ He gives a detailed report of the rioting in Multan on 5th March, providing much consistent information with Arthur’s report but with notable additions. Khosla’s stance is largely to see the Hindus and Sikhs as victims of Muslim aggression; notably, in contrast to Arthur’s account of the Hindu and Sikh protestors’ slogans being too offensive for the Muslims present to be able to restrain themselves, Khosla describes the start of the riot in the following terms,

The Hindu and Sikh students of the local schools and colleges took out a procession to protest against the shooting of peaceful students in Lahore. A mob of Muslims armed with *lathis*, daggers and spears and shouting ‘*Leyke rahenge Pakistan, Pakistan zindabad*’³⁵¹ attacked the procession near Bohar Gate and inflicted injuries on several students.³⁵²

As well as considering the riot to be much more a result of Muslim League activity, Khosla gives a far more detailed account of the people killed, young women abducted and damage inflicted than Arthur’s memoirs provide. Finally, Khosla makes a suggestion of state failings, claiming that,

The police took no steps to quell these disturbances which were wholly one sided. At least one Sub-Inspector of Police was seen shooting at unoffending Hindus and Sikhs. An Army officer arrested him but he was released on the orders of the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police. The military finally brought the

³⁴⁹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 30, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

³⁵⁰ Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. viii.

³⁵¹ Approximate translation: ‘We shall not rest until we get Pakistan, long live Pakistan.’

³⁵² Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, pp. 104-105.

situation under control in the city of Multan on March 7th, but, in the meantime, the rural areas were ablaze and looting and burning of villages started on a large scale.³⁵³

The contradictions between the two accounts are difficult to settle at a distance, but some important implications can be drawn from them. Arthur receives mention as having ordered the release of the accused Police Officer, but his bureaucratic role and lack of personal presence at the forefront of the situation suggest that he cannot have had full knowledge of what did or did not happen. The implications of his reliance upon a network of informants and lower level administrators will be considered in the next chapter. Moreover, whatever the truth in Khosla's depiction of non-Muslim victimisation, the greater detail of the human element of horror and brutality in the killing shows how much Arthur skims over when he records the statistics and remarks on how "interesting" the assignment was.

One final aspect of the I.C.S. reaction to violence is apparent in the work and memories of Arthur Williams, the self-confessed unshaken believer in paternalistic and orderly government. Working as secretary to the medical and local departments of the Punjab Government, he was involved in drafting and presenting for approval a quick succession of new acts and amendments in 1946 and 47. Just as Allan Arthur's response to the incidents in Multan district is to look for viable legislation for use in legally quelling public gatherings and their development into violence, Williams stresses the need for new administrative powers to assist the district officer in regaining control. There was a continued development of state measures throughout early 1947, despite the imminence of British departure. As Ian Talbot explains,

On 19th March the Punjab Disturbed Areas Act came into force. All the districts of the Rawalpindi and Multan division, the city and cantonment of Lahore, Amritsar, Sialkot, Jullundur, Ludhiana and Hoshiapur were declared disturbed areas under this act. Officials were given wide powers for curbing riots and a mandatory death penalty was imposed for murder, attempted murder, kidnapping and arson. The Government also continued its traditional policy of the imposition of collective fines...³⁵⁴

In the preamble to the act, its purpose is explained as being "to make better provision for the suppression of disorder and for the restoration and maintenance of public order

³⁵³ Ibid., pp. 104-105.

³⁵⁴ Talbot, 'The 1947 Violence in the Punjab', p. 7.

in the disturbed areas of the Punjab.”³⁵⁵ These pieces of legislation demonstrate an ongoing bureaucratic effort not only to respond to the situation with which district officers were faced, but to do so within a legal framework, following the proper processes and attempting to produce a sustainable solution. Khosla’s accounts of the violence indicate, however, that these bureaucratic measures were proving inadequate to deal with the enormity of the situation. Indeed, he comments about the March violence in Rawalpindi that “the British Deputy Commissioner was apathetic. Perhaps he did not possess the ability to cope with the extraordinary situation.”³⁵⁶

Arthur Williams was involved as secretary in producing a subsequent piece of legislation for the recovery of damaged areas, and his explanatory notes in the act provide a good insight into the thinking of the Punjabi I.C.S. at this point. He wrote that

Experience in Amritsar and elsewhere has shown that where as a result of rioting extensive damage to buildings and property takes place in urban areas, the ordinary powers of urban local authorities to deal with the situation are unsatisfactory. There is no adequate power to deal with dangerous or damaged buildings summarily... The Act accordingly enables the Punjab Government to make emergency changes in the laws regulating the administration of urban areas and to provide in an orderly way for the custody and disposal of debris and salvaged property.³⁵⁷

The emphasis on maintenance of order through the letter of the law survived to this point, May 1947, despite the ongoing upheaval and challenges to the administration. It was the bureaucratic details that remained the apposite issue in the I.C.S. mind: thus even when order was breaking down, it was the ability to record, quantify and legally justify action that was the subject of feverish discussion and effort.

Several of the memoirs identify a certain point which struck them as decisive in demonstrating that Punjab was now spiralling permanently out of their control. Arthur Williams refers to the point at which he realised that “it could be little more than a paper exercise to try and deal with the immense human and financial problems in the dying days of the Province.”³⁵⁸ Williams seems to have reached this conclusion in June 1947

³⁵⁵ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘The Punjab Special Tribunals Act 1947 and Punjab Disturbed Areas Act 1947’, IOR/L/PJ/7/5519.

³⁵⁶ Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p.106.

³⁵⁷ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, ‘Punjab Damaged Areas Act, May to July 1947’, IOR/L/PJ/7/12303.

³⁵⁸ London, BL, APAC, Williams, pp. 19-20.

when he wrote that “normal legislation did not suffice, and I went to Amritsar to try to appreciate the physical difficulties.”³⁵⁹ This comment suggests how divorced he, as a member of the central provincial government, was from the rioting itself and he records his shock on seeing Amritsar after many months of rioting, writing “it was one of the most eerie experiences I have known to walk about in a huge Indian city of over half-a-million inhabitants, through street after street of smouldering ashes and demolished houses, with every door and shutter closed, and to see no human beings save the police guides and hear no noise save the drip of water from a broken pipe or the collapse of another charred roof timber.”³⁶⁰ Indeed, for him, the final death knoll of the British state was the partition of the Punjabi police who executed the legislation he had been involved in creating.³⁶¹ At this point, he observed the failure of the British capacity to provide justice, suggesting one of the key tenets of the mythology of the I.C.S. role. Explaining how normal administration went on throughout the first half of 1947, he describes in his memoir the task of recording petitions by murderers sentenced to death, writing that “the petitioners – for whom there was almost invariably nothing to be said – could perhaps feel unjustly treated; the thousands of mass murderers of the troubles could never properly be brought to book; and even when one could be caught red-handed it was not unknown for him to be released on bail at once by a co-religionist on the judiciary bench.”³⁶² There is a question raised here about how far the state had ever had the extent of control Williams suggests, and this will be discussed in chapter three, but the very fact of Williams’ description of this phenomenon in his memoir suggests how significant the idea of British justice was to the ideology and mythology of the I.C.S. and that the sense of failure to carry it out marked the turning point in state control for officers.

As Ian Talbot writes, despite all the measures taken in trying to regain law and order in the Punjab, “there was endemic communal violence in Lahore and Amritsar from March 1947 onwards.”³⁶³ For Ronald Belcher, it was not so much this descent itself but rather the loss of ability to administrate and record which marked the end of the I.C.S. role. He writes in his memoir that “no count was possible of those who died in the migrations

³⁵⁹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, pp. 19-20.

³⁶⁰ London, BL, APAC, Williams, pp. 19-20.

³⁶¹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, pp. 19-20.

³⁶² London, BL, APAC, Williams, pp. 19-20.

³⁶³ Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, p. 7.

and slaughters; the most likely total by the time, many weeks later, when quiet ultimately descended was judged to be in the region of half a million.”³⁶⁴ This failure of the state to keep a measure of the population is emblematic of its collapse. This kind of statistic-keeping, as evidenced by Allan Arthur’s detailed provision of figures throughout the conflict in Multan, was vital to the performance of statehood. Indeed, it was in these actions that the Punjabi I.C.S. men saw the value of their role: as bureaucrats providing in their districts a legal framework, consistency, justice and maintenance of records that was seen as completely alien to the nature of the people they governed. The reality of their ability to exercise such a level of control is a question for the next chapter, but what these accounts suggest here is above all the value I.C.S. probationers still placed in the role they played, even in the final months before departure. Rioting and loss of life does not seem to have posed the challenge to their beliefs that could perhaps be thought reasonable: rather, their continued efforts to control allocation of resources, track and record incidents, and administer punishments and fines reinforced their sense of their own importance and of their inheritance of a long-standing tradition of governance. It was only once they felt their ability to perform these administrative functions had been compromised that they lost confidence in the regime and recognised the necessity of their own departure. Even at this point, it was not in their own efforts and role that they saw a problem, and *esprit de corps* within the Punjab Commission retained its potency more than ever at this stage.

Centre –v- Periphery: negating guilt through bureaucratic detachment

A major theme of the memoirs is a sense of having been badly treated themselves: betrayed by the British Government’s decision to make a quick withdrawal, and underappreciated by the new administrations that they claim to have been willing to serve. There are several aspects of this overall feeling of bitterness, in particular the emphasis put upon poor communications between centre and district in this period: although loyalty to one’s colleagues on the ground is paramount, and many of the memoirs feature praise for the Punjab’s governors during the 1930s and 1940s, there is no corresponding tribute to the Government of India in New Delhi. Rather, the actions

³⁶⁴ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 79-82.

of the central government are frequently criticised, with the impression given that these men were left to implement decisions in which they had no input and about which they were told very little. The fast-changing timetable for withdrawal is an example of the untenable pressure that central decisions put upon provincial administration; it is only in a note written on 5th June 1947 that Sir Evan Jenkins records having been informed of the possibility of independence being granted on the 15th August.³⁶⁵ On the ground, the men record their anxiety to complete the job in hand, and sense of having been forced to leave the project of colonial government unfinished. This is perhaps unsurprising considering that this group of men were still young and most had not long completed their training. The feeling is not unique to the memoirs of the youngest men, however, but extends as part of the surviving sense of *esprit de corps*, emphasising the values of the I.C.S. as a steady and responsible unit, set against the irresponsibility of politicians both in India and back in Britain.

Alex Von Tunzelmann's anatomy of partition suggests that the showmanship of Mountbatten allowed 1947 to be portrayed in Britain as a grand success, writing that, "thanks to his [Mountbatten's] gift for public relations, the end of Empire was presented as the purpose of Empire – India was as a well-nurtured and fattened chick, raised to fly from the imperial nest while Britain, the indulgent parent, looked on with pride."³⁶⁶ The reality is that this was a much more long-standing mythology than simply a creation of the final months. The idea that India was being prepared for self-government was a part of the ideology of the *Raj* from the late nineteenth century, and yet the representation of 1947 as a happy result for everyone was one that totally alienated the I.C.S. men involved in it. In these memoirs, the men revolt against the idea through their rejection of the assertion that Indians had 'come of age', emphasising instead what they saw as the innately backward nature of the people they had worked with, and referring to the timing of the withdrawal as a mistaken centralised decision with which they were required to cooperate. Having returned from the Punjab, Penderel Moon recorded his shock at the lack of international awareness of the violence surrounding partition,

³⁶⁵ Lionel Carter, ed., *Punjab Politics – 1st June-14th August 1947 Tragedy: Governor's Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007), p. 53, document 7, Note by Jenkins given to Abell. The note sets out to draft a timetable as, as Jenkins suggests, "if we are to complete within a period of 71 days the very complicated measures necessary to settle and give effect to the partition of the Punjab, we must be clear about our time-table."

³⁶⁶ Alex Von Tunzelmann, *Indian Summer: The Secret History of the End of an Empire* (London: Pocket Books, 2008), p. 6.

writing “these melancholy events attracted attention at the time, but they were so local in their effects that they have quickly faded from the world’s memory.”³⁶⁷

The idea that the British back ‘at home’ lacked any real understanding or appreciation of the situation in their empire was an established element of the I.C.S. identity and assertion of their expertise. In Sir Edward Blunt’s 1937 book on the service, he made particular reference to how ignorant the average Briton was of I.C.S. work and Indian conditions.³⁶⁸ He wrote,

For the average man in a British street is profoundly ignorant of India. He knows that it lies somewhere east of Suez, because Kipling has told him so. He has heard of Lucknow, because Tennyson wrote a poem about the Residency. He imagines India to be populated chiefly by Rajas, nabobs, baboos, pundits, sepoy and coolies – because all these Indian words have passed into his own language. But I have had to explain the location of the United Provinces to a British elector by the statement that ‘it lies about the middle of the broad bit, up at the top of the map’. I have heard another say that a Pathan was ‘a sort of large snake’, because he pronounced the name ‘Paythan’, and confused it with ‘python’. A third has asked me whether a pagoda was not an Indian tree – having presumably heard of the practice of shaking it. A fourth (of the gentler sex) told me that Mr. Gandhi ‘was a positive dear, but *so* troublesome’ – which is an inadequate description of Mr. Gandhi. India, it is said, is outside the sphere of party politics.³⁶⁹

This kind of laughable error allowed the I.C.S. to reinforce their status as experts, and validate their own professional culture. However, post-1945, the pressure to de-colonise India brought it briefly under the spotlight of British politics, and the subsequent return ‘home’ of colonial officials involved a collapse of identity and value in the face of a British culture which lacked interest in, or knowledge of, the work they had done. The result was extreme bitterness and a tendency to rely even more heavily upon the *esprit de corps* of the organisation which had previously given them so much status.

It is not only the British government which is criticised for failing to understand the lot of district officers in India, but equally the Government of India in Delhi. Philip Woodruff suggests the distance between centre and province, writing “to the Deputy

³⁶⁷ Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), p. 7.

³⁶⁸ Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 6.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Commissioner, engaged in a battle to keep hold on his district and prevent people killing each other, utterances from London or Delhi seemed often enough fantastically unreal; this contrast between tactical and strategic aims is one reason why the men on the spot sometimes appeared hostile to the declared policy of his country.”³⁷⁰ A letter written by Dick Slater to his mother on 19th May 1946 indicates the aggrieved feeling that distance was exacerbated by a failure to communicate central activities down to the district level. On tour over the date that the Cabinet (Pethick-Lawrence) Mission was anticipated to have announced its conclusions, he found himself unable to get any news of the decisions made. He comments in the letter, “so here I am sitting in a rest house near the Indus while the rest of the world is presumably humming with constitutional back-chat about matters which to me are of very much more than academic interest, both as a district officer and more personally as a potential reject of the I.C.S.”³⁷¹ This passage anticipates the shock of return to Britain, for Slater presumes in mid-1946 that there was far more widespread interest in the developments of decolonisation than was the case. Above all, however, the emphasis of a divorce between central decisions and district enactment allows the Punjabi I.C.S. to distance itself from the discussions which produced the partition, and subsequently its violent consequences. These kind of criticisms of the working practices of the centre as contrasted with the Punjab itself allow validation of the I.C.S. ethic, as the elements of their role which are most emphasised are not about power to decide, but rather responsibility in carrying out orders and maintaining discipline and justice to the best of their ability.

Bill Cowley’s conclusions about the partition decision overtly segregate district administration from central government, claiming that “it was murder. This precipitate decision by the Labour Government which Wavell had refused to carry out, cost over a million lives.”³⁷² Cowley makes an important – and common – separation between members of the administration who served the Punjab’s best interests and those he considers to have failed to do so. He mentions Wavell’s plan of granting independence province by province as a sensible and workable one, and later in the passage comments that “the Governor, Sir Evan Jenkins, gave repeated warnings of the danger.”³⁷³ Allan Arthur writes similarly of Sir Evan Jenkins that “he had been the paragon of District

³⁷⁰ Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India*, p. 19.

³⁷¹ London, BL, APAC, Slater, p. 33.

³⁷² London, BL, APAC, Cowley, pp. 174-175.

³⁷³ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, pp. 174-175.

Officers in his time... We were fortunate to have a strong Governor in the difficult days to come.”³⁷⁴ Dick Slater praises the work of Jenkins, describing him in the final days before independence as “quite unruffled by a province-wide turmoil which nobody could have done more to control.”³⁷⁵ These qualities of reliability, unflappability and good local knowledge in I.C.S colleagues are contrasted with central government as Cowley writes that “the stress from Delhi was on getting out and leaving the new Governments to clear up the mess.”³⁷⁶ Equally, Wavell’s successor Mountbatten receives moderate criticism as Cowley writes, “I have the greatest admiration for Mountbatten as a supreme commander. No doubt as Governor General of the new independent India he was a success. But for Punjab and Pakistan he was a disaster.”³⁷⁷ These men thus set out a consistent distinction between the colleagues factored into the sense of *esprit de corps* in the I.C.S. – those on the ground in Punjab, and Wavell as the honourable Viceroy – and those who, whether irresponsible or ill-informed, sacrificed the Punjab in favour of a national agreement.

The men’s trust in Sir Evan Jenkins is vindicated by his consistent representation of the problems facing district administrators in his letters to Wavell, and subsequently Mountbatten. A letter written to Wavell on 31st August 1946 demonstrates this in its thorough account of the concerns of Deputy Commissioners in the Punjab:

The attitude of the average British official in the Indian Civil Service or the Indian Police must be clearly understood. He will do his work, and, if assured of support, will deal with any emergency that does not involve taking sides. But he will not lend himself to any policy which he believes to be immoral and unjust. Provided that the Punjab is left to itself, and there is no outside dictation, he may stand firm; but if His Majesty’s Government promotes, or acquiesces to any systematic suppression of our large Muslim population, he will not. The failure of His Majesty’s Government to allow premature retirement before 1947, and to announce compensation terms, is an unsettling factor. Before the present trouble arose many British officials were justifiably worried about their future – it is not easy for a married man of, say, 30-35, with a family, to make a

³⁷⁴ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, p. 24.

³⁷⁵ London, BL, APAC, Slater, pp. 31-32.

³⁷⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, pp. 174-175.

³⁷⁷ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, pp. 174-175.

fresh start – and there is no better method of keeping men in service than to make it clear to them that they can leave when they like on good terms...³⁷⁸

This summary both demonstrates Jenkins' understanding of the officers within his province and is prescient of the problems these men were to encounter on their return to Britain. He is unflinching in representing to Wavell also the extent of district-level disenchantment with central policy, continuing:

The average British officer at present has little confidence in His Majesty's Government. He does not understand what the present policy is intended to achieve, but he suspects that His Majesty's Government will drift into a communal alliance with the Congress and that he will be expected to do His Majesty's Government's dirty work. Unless this suspicion is removed we cannot expect wholehearted co-operation from our British Officers, and many of them will apply to leave their services as soon as possible.³⁷⁹

As well as representing their position and interests, Jenkins provides in a letter written in June 1947 specific defences of one of the officers, Patrick Brendon. The incident suggests how the attitudes of district officers in this period were shaped by criticisms that were being directed at them. On 14th June 1947, Jenkins responded to a letter from Mountbatten questioning rumours about Patrick Brendon with the following rebuttal:

Brendon has had to deal with tribal fighting spread over an area of perhaps 1000 square miles, with resources which were the best we could give him but which are in my judgment inadequate. Gurgaon is admittedly out of hand, but I cannot blame Brendon for that. I doubt if the results would have been very different with any Deputy Commissioner in-charge.³⁸⁰

As well as indicating the impossibility of maintaining any serious level of control at this point, Jenkins makes a further interesting denial, writing that "as regards Brendon's personality and manners, I always treat with considerable reserve stories about British officers 'gloating' over casualties, pointing out that disturbances are only a foretaste of

³⁷⁸ Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 – Volume VIII The Interim Government 3rd July-1st November 1946* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1979), pp. 376-377, document 233: Letter and enclosure from Sir E. Jenkins (Punjab) to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, dated 31st August 1946, sourced from Wavell Papers, Political Series, June-December 1946, pp. 158-64.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377, document 233: Letter and enclosure from Sir E. Jenkins (Punjab) to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, dated 31st August 1946, sourced from Wavell Papers, Political Series, June-December 1946, pp. 158-64.

³⁸⁰ Carter, *Punjab Politics – 1st June-14th August 1947 Tragedy: Governor's Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents*, p. 73, document 22: Letter from Jenkins to Mountbatten, dated 14th June 1947.

what will happen later on, and the like.”³⁸¹ Such an attitude cannot be certainly proven, especially as Brendon himself provides no reference to the criticisms, expressing only a sense of despair at the possibility of maintaining control.³⁸² However, considering Allan Arthur’s attitude to Indian deaths merely in terms of statistics, and the general tone of the memoirs in their belief that Punjabis were not prepared for independence, the attitude rings true.

The criticisms of I.C.S. officers were more widespread than this particular incident, with another example only two days after the letter about Brendon. In this instance, Jenkins wrote to Mountbatten to refute allegations made in an article from the newspaper *Tribune*.³⁸³ The extract relates to the ongoing rioting in the Punjab, and claims that:

The trouble was prevalent the most where there were the British officers in charge and divisions under the control of either Hindu or Muslim officers were comparatively quiet...The British were no longer interested because they were leaving. This probably explained why some officers asked the victims who came to them for help to go to him (Nehru) and Sardar Patel for help. They were not desirous of shouldering any further responsibility and many had become callous.³⁸⁴

These indications of the counter-narrative to British I.C.S. claims of control and benevolence are important in understanding the group mentality of the Punjab I.C.S.; both in terms of uniting against criticism, and that even before they left the Punjab, these men had become isolated by their actions in response to partition violence. The needs of self-defence against such accusations are thus one of the shaping forces of the united narrative produced in the memoirs.

A key tenet of the narrative of events produced by members of the Punjab Commission is to negate the idea that the need for partition was in any way prompted by a loss of control on the ground, emphasising instead that central decisions created the conditions whereby district influence was lost. Cowley writes that “there are some members of the Punjabi I.C.S. who think it was correct, that the situation had deteriorated so much, the authority of district officers been so undermined by politicians, that we could not have

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73, document 22: Letter from Jenkins to Mountbatten, dated 14th June 1947.

³⁸² Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 60.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82, Enclosure to document 27, Letter from Jenkins to Mountbatten, dated 16th June 1947.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82, Enclosure to document 27, Letter from Jenkins to Mountbatten, dated 16th 1947.

prevented catastrophe by staying longer. The majority share my view that it was a disastrous error.”³⁸⁵ As well as implicitly identifying the source of district problems in the destabilising effects of independence talks, Cowley suggests that nonetheless district administrators were continuing to effectively dispense their duties. This perspective corresponds with Allan Arthur’s interpretation of events in Multan; seeing the riots and rising death rate not as evidence of irretrievable state collapse but as an extreme example of the kind of communal disturbance he considered to be in the nature of the region. Cowley’s comments put the blame for instability on “politicians”, creating an important separation of the bureaucratic ethic as responsible, stable and consistent, as set against the mercurial, irresponsible actions of elected officials. Arthur’s recollections of his final weeks of service equally support the idea that the districts were still functioning in 1947, writing that “on the whole, Indian subordinates remained extraordinarily loyal right up till [sic] the time when power was handed over”.³⁸⁶ The *esprit de corps* for which the I.C.S. was famous continued to be influential in producing a memoir narrative of events several decades later, and the effect produced is a validation of the I.C.S. as an organisation, preserving its image and distancing civil servants from both responsibility for central government decisions and accusations of inadequate behaviour on their own part.

There is an aspect in the parting reflections of the memoir writers, particularly those younger men who had only joined the I.C.S. in 1938-39 of frustration at the personal loss involved in the premature termination of a high-status career. The early war years had been their training period so that by the mid-1940s, they were just reaching senior positions, having accelerated through the training due to the lack of new recruits and added workload of the war period. Allan Arthur expresses the frustration of having to leave behind this work, just as it was becoming familiar, writing “having taken so much trouble over these projects, I naturally want to see them through”.³⁸⁷ Quite aside from the historic circumstances, for these young men, the high-status career for which they were just completing the training was now being dissolved. This personal loss was of equal pertinence in shaping their memory of events, and is significant to the continuation and dissemination of the mythology of the I.C.S. The difficult transition

³⁸⁵ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 174-175.

³⁸⁶ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 32.

³⁸⁷ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 23.

post-1947, as will be considered in chapter four, accentuated the need for these young men to retain as part of their identity a sense of value from their role in the Punjab. Describing the peremptory removal from the Punjabi colonial environment, Cowley suggests that a “sense of exile persisted for many”.³⁸⁸ The inability to take any role in Punjab post-1947 is clear from the criticism levelled at the men.³⁸⁹ In re-claiming their image from the mythology of 1947, these I.C.S. memoirs emphasise the bureaucratic ethic of their role, disassociating themselves from responsibility for violence and bolstering the image of the I.C.S. man as the steady local expert. To achieve this, the accounts reject the idea that by 1947 the subcontinent was ready for independence, advocating instead the ongoing moral necessity for paternalistic government and the preparedness and capacity of the I.C.S. to provide it.

Justifying paternalism: images of India in the late colonial mind

At the heart of I.C.S. men’s justifications of the ethical need for, and value of, colonial rule, lies a fundamental acceptance of the idea that Indians were not capable of self-government and benefited from the imposition of external rule. John Darwin suggests that as the process of decolonisation took place, there was necessarily a contiguous process of mythologizing to present the loss of empire in the best possible light and adapt imperial mentalities for new times. He writes, “decolonisation became not a symptom of defeat and decline but a crowning achievement of British rule ... [it] was presented as a white man’s burden, a trust honourably discharged and then deliberately and systemically wound up. Here was Whig history large as life and twice as shameless.”³⁹⁰ The account conveyed by I.C.S. memoirs suggests a more nuanced picture, as these men do not accept that 1947 was the moment of this ‘coming of age’ of Indian statehood, but instead see in the violence of partition a combination of central government errors and fecklessness, and proof of Indian unpreparedness for the responsibilities of self-government.

³⁸⁸ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 177.

³⁸⁹ Carter, *Punjab Politics – 1st June-14th August 1947 Tragedy: Governor’s Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* p. 75, document 23, Letter from Jenkins to Mountbatten, dated 15th June 1947. Jenkins informs Mountbatten that under the circumstances, “it seems doubtful if many of the British officials will wish to stay.”

³⁹⁰ John Darwin, ‘British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12, 2 (1984), pp. 188-189.

I.C.S. recruitment during the 1930s had sought to calm anxieties created by non-cooperation and the subsequent Round Table negotiations by emphasising the vital role still to be played by British civilians, and the expectation that this would continue to be essential for many years to come. William Gould gives the example of one of the senior members of the I.C.S. who became involved in the new recruitment strategies, demonstrating the nature of the talks given. He writes,

Maurice Hallett, Governor of Bihar, delivered a lecture in February 1937, in which he talked in highly paternalistic terms of how the main appeal of the I.C.S. was that ‘one had many types of men to study... the astute native politician, the troublesome agitator, the religious fanatic, or the simple-minded aboriginal peasant – all of whom were strange and interesting.’ Despite Congress critiques and eventual provincial autonomy, the colonial depiction of Indian exoticism remained fairly consistent. In a rear guard effort to prevent what it perceived as potential decline in quality of recruits, the India Office therefore re-established the sense of I.C.S. aloofness in the face of India’s ‘unruly’ subject populations.³⁹¹

Moreover, as Gould observes, “that such an effort should appear in the late 1930s, in the aftermath of a period of constitutional reform and accelerating Indianisation was not surprising, given the powerful and long-standing colonial notions of racial and moral distance.”³⁹² It is a mistake to imagine that the final generation of I.C.S. probationers were in some way more progressive in their attitudes than their predecessors, both due to the fact that they had purposely selected a career with a basis in a racially-defined ideology, and to the manner in which they had been attracted to that career through imagery of adventure and exoticism.

The concept of distinct ‘types’ of Indians providing an interesting backdrop to an I.C.S. career pervades the memoirs in the terms used to understand and describe the people Punjabi I.C.S. officers came into contact with. W. F. G. Le Bailly’s description of administering compensation to flood victims in Shahpur district in September 1928 offers an example of the way Indians placed in a position of power were expected by these men to attempt to abuse it. He wrote about the incident,

We are going to have a system of grain tickets and money is going to be given for repair of houses. Of course all the local leading lights wanted cash to be distributed, obviously

³⁹¹ Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, p. 27.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

because it will go into their pockets, most of the really poor being in their debt. A rather typical attitude of the future leaders of Indian responsible self-government.³⁹³

As well as landowners being presented as inherently corrupt, intelligence in Indians tended to be interpreted in terms of wily manipulativenness, as Dick Slater demonstrates in a passage describing the vulnerability of Dera Ghazi Khan to Muslim League activity. He wrote:

As a wilderness the district had in the past attracted holy men intent on mortifying the flesh, and though their successors were mostly scoundrels, an aura of Islamic purity remained. This, coupled with the gullibility of a generally backward people, made the district a worthwhile target.³⁹⁴

The adjunct of the manipulative religious or political leader is of course the generalised idea of the Indian populace as essentially naïve and credulous, in need of protection. Dick Slater pointedly describes himself within his memoir as both “liberal” and “humanist”, and yet this characterisation is belied by his fundamental understanding of the people with whom he worked.

Ronald Belcher reinforces in his memoir the idea not only that the general Punjabi populace *needed* I.C.S. support and protection, but that they actually *desired* it. He explains an incident which occurred in April/May 1947,³⁹⁵ whilst he was on tour during a posting as Colonisation Officer in Haveli Project near Multan city. He describes being approached by a group of ‘tribal’ people whom he suggests had “actively supported the British Indian regime”.³⁹⁶ Aware of the imminence of the transfer of power, Belcher describes the men asking him “could I not go to London and tell the King what bad advice he was listening to, and beg him not to desert subjects as loyal to him as they had been all their lives?”³⁹⁷ Expressing his distress over the incident, Belcher comments that “these people and their anxieties were now, however, of less immediate importance for

³⁹³ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, pp. 9-10.

³⁹⁴ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 28-29.

³⁹⁵ Writing without the benefit of diaries or letters from the time, Belcher’s references to dates are all approximate.

³⁹⁶ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 74-75.

³⁹⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 74-75.

Darling’s account of his final tour provides a similar case, claiming that “Among those who wanted us to stay were both young and old, rich and poor, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh... in another chance encounter much further south it was an ordinary workman who said: ‘When you go, no one will care what will happen to us.’ In every province one caught the same refrain, summed up best perhaps in the words of a sagacious Sikh: ‘You should keep a hand on our heads, as a father does with a child who cannot yet look after himself.’” Darling, *At Freedom’s Door*, p. 279.

the maintenance of peace and order than the civil services and the army”.³⁹⁸ Indeed, the sense from his extensive account of the meeting recalls a Kipling-esque ideal of the district officer as middle man between the government and the needs of his people: able to “speak on behalf of these tribesmen in the corridors of power” as, “while representing India to policy makers in Government House he is also suffused with that more deeply ingrained ‘knowledge of the native’”.³⁹⁹ In highlighting the incident, Belcher emphasises how external pressures have broken down his role and lost the people of his district the advocate they need. The priority of the I.C.S. at this point, he suggests, has become purely the maintenance of law and order, with a corollary loss of other aspects of the district officer role and of the influence invested in the position of collaborator.

A third ‘type’ of Indian found referred to in the memoirs is the ‘acceptable’ Indian. Bill Cowley gives one example of this character, in describing the loss of his bearer upon departure from Punjab. He writes:

He was to be with me all my service, and give me complete freedom from all domestic worries, whilst always I was conscious of his sympathy and support in other matters. One of the hardest things in losing India was to lose Madar Bakhsh, but at least I was able to get him a safe and sure post, and corresponded with him until his death in 1974.⁴⁰⁰

This example of the loyal servant, serving his interests in the background, suggests the sense of custodianship the I.C.S. officers feel as their responsibility in dealing with Indian subordinates. On his departure, the emphasis is upon Cowley’s responsibility of care: of the necessity of providing for the man as his charge. Williams’ departing reflections relate the terms of Cowley’s description to the population at large, reflecting the image of the district officer which Belcher’s experiences indicate. He writes that

My greatest impression, admittedly derived from an experience mainly of rural charges, was that the Indian had a strong preference, and even craving, for an even-handed paternalistic government. The government existed to protect him and deal with the disorders of man and of nature, and the government’s local officer was there to be his *mah-bap*, his mother and father. It was therefore the bounden duty of the district officer to be accessible and all-knowing – and the one quality helped to lead to the other.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁸ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 74-75.

³⁹⁹ Peter Morey, *Fictions of India: Narrative and Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2000), p. 1.

⁴⁰⁰ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 36.

⁴⁰¹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 8.

Williams' conviction that a paternalistic state was the most suitable for India runs throughout his memoir, including in his initial attraction to the I.C.S. career. What is notable from the other memoirs, however, is that their overt personal testimony is a representation of themselves as generally 'liberal' and 'humanist', with a commitment to Indian independence, and yet at the point of describing their feelings upon departure from the subcontinent, ostensible differences between the men collapse and there is a much stronger unity of message.

For all of the men, working in Punjab during the 1930s and 1940s required an acceptance of Indian colleagues within the I.C.S. and also as part of the Punjab Ministry. Sir Edward Blunt set out in his 1937 handbook on the I.C.S. that "in August 1917, His Majesty's government declared that 'the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration' was an integral part of their policy."⁴⁰² Tracing this as a policy instituted from 1833 onward, Blunt emphasises that by 1937, "Indians have governed provinces, have filled the posts of executive councillor and minister. Indian members of the I.C.S., provincial civil servants on attaining 'listed' rank, have served with distinction as commissioners, secretaries, heads of department, and high court judges..."⁴⁰³ Blunt's book was intended to prepare I.C.S. applicants for this change of environment, and men like Arthur Williams now faced new working conditions as they served under Indians in the Punjab Ministry. Despite this emphasis on the ability of Indian administrators to serve alongside the British element of the I.C.S. as equals, however, the overall aim of the book is to reassure British applicants that their role had in no way been supplanted. It is this fine line that is drawn in the memoirs in terms of their acceptance of Indian colleagues, but continued belief in a particular value to be imparted by 'Britishness'.

In Dick Slater's memoir, he outlines the relationship between himself and an Indian politician in Dera Ghazi Khan, providing a contrast in his language between the way he describes this middle class, anglicised Indian, as opposed to the general population. He describes Mohd Khan as "a charming and intelligent man with an attractive wife and small children about the same age as ours",⁴⁰⁴ using terms which emphasise the man as

⁴⁰² Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 53.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁰⁴ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 28-29.

an equal and disassociate him from the characteristics usually indicated by the racial marker of being Indian. When required to arrest Khan due to suspicion of involvement with the Muslim League, he explains how he carried out the order with “dismay”, joining Khan for a glass of whisky before handing him over to the police.⁴⁰⁵ Friendship with these individual ‘acceptable’ Indians does not interfere with Slater’s ideas about Indians in general, as Khan is carefully marked out as an equal. However, in accepting the idea of ongoing need for British officers in the I.C.S., all of these men implicitly contradict their apparent ease with Indian colleagues as equals. Philip Woodruff describes how despite individual effective working relationships, these general attitudes remained pervasive, writing “deep in the minds of the commissioners ... there must have been a feeling of distrust for Indians, a belief that they were not straight-forward, that they could never take the place of English district officers.”⁴⁰⁶ However ‘acceptable’ the anglicised, educated, middle class Indian, the basis of the recruitment policies through which British I.C.S. men had been attracted assumed that they must always be a secondary choice to a British officer, always backed up by a British element in the service.

In their interpretation of the violence of 1947, the I.C.S. men promote in their memoirs a sense of affirmation for all that the colonial state had stood for. The basis for a paternalistic system of government lay in part in the idea of a mass of Indians who needed protection and appreciated a strong hand. Allan Arthur took from his training under Angus MacDonald the conclusion that “the more roughly you seem to treat the Indian the more popular you seem to grow, at least that is what one might understand from MacDonald’s example!!”,⁴⁰⁷ feeling confident to conclude in the midst of training that, “in spite of the work, it is a grand job and one well worth doing. The longer one spends here, the more one realises how efficient and beneficent the British administration is, and what an immense amount India owes to the British.”⁴⁰⁸ The second basis of believe in paternalism, however, arose from a conviction in Indian primitive religiosity, and the inevitability of communal conflict. Blunt’s 1937 guide warned that:

⁴⁰⁵ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁰⁶ Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India*, p. 171.

⁴⁰⁷ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁸ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 5.

The age-old antagonism between Hindus and Mohammedans is an ever-present source of anxiety to the district officer. A communal riot may come about in many ways... And though riots of so serious a kind may be relatively rare, yet wherever Hindus and Mohammedans live together in the same place, they may break out at any moment.⁴⁰⁹

This belief in the primitive nature of Indian society had several aspects. Sir Francis Toker's published memoir includes several reports on the events in Punjab in 1947 from army officers on the ground. In one example, bestial imagery is used to explain communal violence:

Sikh savagery was appalling. Long after the victim was dead they would slash and slash away at the body, carving it up. They, and many Hindus, were like dogs that had taken to killing sheep – just an insensate, devilish lust to wallow in the blood of helpless creatures.⁴¹⁰

In Francis Hutchins' interpretation of the British "illusion of permanence", he describes the attitude that "Indian childishness was a racial quality which did not promise an advance toward maturity"; thereby limiting the expectation that India "would ever develop further or be in a position to dispense with the services provided by the parent nation."⁴¹¹

Gyanendra Pandey emphasises how the focus on violence and disorder reinforced the idea of the need for the colonial state's controlling role.⁴¹² He suggests that colonialist histories have neglected this dominance of the concept of 'the state', arguing that "it was the new, colonial state that stood out in contrast to the primitive, pre-political, one might even say proto-historic character of the local society."⁴¹³ Indeed, throughout the departing I.C.S. comments runs an underlying presumption that with state collapse, the kind of violence seen at partition became inevitable. Pandey argues that the consequence of this discourse was a legacy in terms of the way the subcontinent was characterised post-47. He writes that "at the level of nations / peoples, and myths about nations / peoples, partition, coming at the end of colonial rule in South Asia, seems to have established as truth an illusion that colonialism had long believed in and fostered – that the people(s) of the subcontinent were a zealously, not to say, uniquely religious

⁴⁰⁹ Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 112.

⁴¹⁰ Sir Francis Toker, *While Memory Serves* (London: Cassell, 1950), p. 495. Italics author's own.

⁴¹¹ Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, pp. 77-78.

⁴¹² Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 53.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

people...”⁴¹⁴ The memoirs offered a context in which ex-I.C.S. men were able to flesh out what they represent as a striking contrast between peace and cooperation under a powerful colonial state, and indigenous chaos and violence once that steadying hand was removed. Said describes this characterisation, recording an imagery which remains apparent in these accounts written in the 1960s: “they are a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves. Their great moments were in the past; they are useful in the modern world only because the powerful and up-to-date empires have effectively brought them out of the wretchedness of their decline and turned them into rehabilitated residents of productive colonies.”⁴¹⁵ The dichotomy between occident and orient in this representation was a conceptual framework within which these men continued to work. Thus, although a language of acceptance is used in reference to Indian colleagues and friends, this does not interfere with attitudes toward the overall readiness of Indians for self-rule. Rather than seeing in the partition violence any critique of the departing state, the I.C.S. memoirs demonstrate how this was taken as the ultimate confirmation of a conceptualisation of Indians which saw them as fundamentally suited to colonial government.

Conclusion

Retiring in 1975, Allan Arthur became increasingly involved in local government, serving as High Sheriff of Essex and later as Deputy Lieutenant. Describing some of these duties, he writes in his memoir:

I had served on Margaretting Parish Council for a number of years and was elected to Chelmsford District Council in May 1973 and re-elected in 1976. For the past year, I have been Vice-Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Housing Committee and take over as Chairman of the Council in May 1977. I am also a member of the Board of Visitors of H.M. Prison, Chelmsford, and of the Local Review Committee of the Parole

⁴¹⁴ Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, p. 176.

⁴¹⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), p. 35.

Board, and a Governor of Brentwood and Chigwell Schools. Indeed my retirement is just like being a District Officer again.⁴¹⁶

Arthur Williams also provides a brief account of his subsequent career, explaining how in 1958 he was offered a post as Bursar and Fellow at Queen's College, Oxford; he was still in this position by the time of writing his memoirs in December 1976.⁴¹⁷ Both men were able to find a resting place which suited their adherence to the bureaucratic ethic, to their love of detail, organisation and paperwork. As Arthur's reflection on the similarity of his retirement to his first career highlights, the I.C.S. role was above all an administrative one; not the independent adventure that the men sometimes refer to in terms of Punjab's colonial beginnings, but a careful, steady job of record-keeping and form-stamping. These men were not in the firing line of partition violence, but at their desks applying the appropriate ordinance; not faced with the reality of events, but focussed on the principles of governance, and permissions and paperwork involved. Violence was something to quantify, categorise and fit within a historical perspective which rendered it understandable and controllable.

In all three sections of this chapter, we have seen how the bureaucratic ideals of the I.C.S. allowed these men to see ongoing value in the work they were doing in 1940s Punjab, and to conclude that departure in 1947 was premature. Faced with outbreaks of violence, the priority of men like Allan Arthur was to have fully enumerated the costs of damage and kept up-to-date figures of casualties so that compensation could be calculated and provided. The importance Arthur judged this work to have allows him to declare in his memoir that the period of rioting over which he presided in Multan had been concluded successfully; indeed, that he had enjoyed the logistical challenges of the campaign. In explaining what had happened to the Punjab in retrospect, two issues were vital: the irresponsibility of government actors in New Delhi and London, and the apparently natural inclinations toward violence of Indian people, allowed by British departure to continue unrestrained. The men reject the publicised ideal that India had been prepared by 1947 for independent rule and had now 'come of age'. Instead, they emphasise their own local knowledge and expertise as set against the decisions of central policy makers. In Arthur Williams' words,

⁴¹⁶ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 32, part 11 – 'Brief History of Career after 1947'.

⁴¹⁷ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22: 'Afterwards – Subsequent Career'.

much fine talk is made of the recognition of rights, of self-determination and of the evils of autocratic and alien rule, but when responsibilities for life and welfare have been assumed and exercised over a long period of years it is futile and irrelevant to harp on the rights and wrongs of that assumption, and the responsibilities become a trust not to be discarded unless there is a successor at least as well able to maintain it.⁴¹⁸

From the perspective of his own district, he feels able to conclude in 1976 that “it is in the highest degree doubtful if the Muslim peasant wanted the British to leave”.⁴¹⁹ In his implicit belief in the idea of India’s masses as a simple peasantry in need of the protection of the local officer, and the reassurance of paternalistic certainty, Williams reinforces the concept of India’s ‘types’. The idea of Indians falling into categories such as ‘wily intellectuals’ and ‘simple peasants’ overtly appeals to the bureaucratic nature of these men, anxious to categorise and count the people they met into administrative blocks; indeed, the concept of Indian society falling into this facile representation was part of the recruitment strategies of the 1930s.⁴²⁰

The valourisation of I.C.S. ideals in these memoir sources produces several effects. The men use detailed descriptions of their own actions in administrating their districts under the strains of the mid-1940s, both to demonstrate the sense that they did as much as was possible under the circumstances and to emphasise their belief that the partition decision was not necessitated by the breakdown of control at district level. On the contrary, they seek to present the decision as entirely a political one, driven by politicians and coped with by civil servants, their expertise ignored. This emphasis upon local knowledge reinforces a Kipling-esque conception of the district officer’s role as a middle man able to represent his region’s interests to an ever-changing and inexperienced series of politicians. Indeed, the closer to partition the memoir accounts get, the more they attempt to disassociate the I.C.S. from the wider picture of the British state, as well as distancing themselves from the violence in the Punjab by reiterating ideas of Indian primitiveness. In sum, the core values of the I.C.S., and the *esprit de corps* of the organisation are preserved by this separation of political decisions from civil service activity. This allows the survival of the I.C.S. networks and sense of community in a way that will be discussed in chapter four, but also makes possible a selective validation of the Punjabi

⁴¹⁸ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 21.

⁴¹⁹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 21.

Darling’s account expresses a similar concern, that a largely illiterate population cannot possibly be suited to the government of a modern democracy: Darling, *At Freedom’s Door*, p. 288.

⁴²⁰ Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, p. 27.

colonial state, whereby those 'experts' providing administration and order at district level are portrayed as vital and effective up to the moment of their premature departure. This depiction of the bureaucratic elite is the basis of both their surviving self-image and their validation of their work in empire.

Chapter Three

The limits of control: the transfer of power, 1947

The previous chapter suggested how Punjabi I.C.S. men continued to see value in their role right into 1947 (indeed, beyond) and identified the bureaucratic tasks which these men saw as being the final bastion of their control. This chapter will challenge their claims to have experienced a sudden dissipation of control in 1947, by suggesting how compromise and negotiation had always been vital to operation of the local state. A performed state role was a necessary corollary to the fact that British India was never a settler colony, and with its small numbers of permanent British staff necessarily relied heavily upon not only Indian manpower in the army, policing and civil services, but above all upon local networks of power to put into effect the edicts of a fairly shallow pool of top level bureaucrats. Ronald Belcher's memoir provides an example of the depiction of a sudden descent from control, particularly with the breakdown of infrastructure, as he writes "the slide into general disorder was rapid as the rumours or harder news grew of the murderous attacks on Muslims in East Punjab; our constant efforts to prevent retaliatory attacks on our non-Muslims were only partly and patchily successful."⁴²¹ He emphasises how by around March 1947, "it soon began to be apparent that one's authority in such matters, even with direct subordinates, could only be relied upon to run as far as one's eye could see."⁴²² This sense of a sudden and terminal decline into disorder in 1947 is contrasted with an assumption of state control, held in the hands of British officers, which they suggest had lasted throughout the early 1940s. It is this emphasis upon 1947 as a turning point in the nature of the state in Punjab which this chapter will seek to break down. In terms of the state structure post-independence, the Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) retained much in common with the I.C.S. This chapter will focus on the pre-1947 state, challenging imagery presented in the memoirs of an omniscient and omnipotent district officer role.

One feature of the Punjab in 1946-47 was the breakdown of communications and ubiquity of rumour. Belcher's comments indicate the power of rumour in escalating violence, as reports from elsewhere in the province heightened a sense of fear and

⁴²¹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 83-84.

⁴²² London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 83-84.

injustice. Up-to-date information was scarce at this point. Indeed, Pandey asserts that reports were often “hearsay, now compounded by an emerging narrative on the *pattern* of attacks and the deployment and methods of the attackers in this part of the country.”⁴²³ Compounded by physical losses of telegraph wires and transport links, the district officer had less access to central orders and information in the final months.⁴²⁴

Indeed, Ian Talbot describes in one example how

During the closing weeks of British rule, ‘ungraded’ intelligence reports were filtering through to the Punjab governor linking the neighbouring Sikh princely states with plans for a terror campaign in East Punjab. The almost total collapse of the provincial services and their communal polarisation made it nearly impossible for Sir Evan Jenkins to assess the authenticity of such reports.⁴²⁵

Aside from these pressures, there is doubt in some accounts of the extent to which local I.C.S. officers remained committed to their roles at this point. Mushirul Hasan argues that:

The fact is that the administrators were unprepared to risk British lives being lost at a time when their departure from India was all but certain. Quickening their retreat from civil society, they sought the safety of their bungalows and cantonments. While large parts of the country were aflame, they played cricket, listened to music, and read Kipling. For the most part, the small boundary force in Punjab stayed in their barracks, while trainloads of refugees were being butchered.⁴²⁶

There is little evidence to suggest such a complete and deliberate dissipation of the local state in the final months, although many of the memoirs include comments about how demoralised the men felt in dispensing their duties by August 1947. Patrick Brendon’s comments on his time in Gurgaon do suggest how the extent of violence was not accepted or understood immediately by British residents most distanced from the district. Faced with violence in his district, Brendon recalls from early 1947 that

As I left Toam I could see ugly columns of smoke rising from Hindu villages which the Meos were burning in a counter-offensive. I went on to see my wife and child at the Willingdon nursing home. I was very dirty and everyone there looked more than a little perplexed. New Delhi had not by then adjusted itself to communal fighting.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, p. 72.

⁴²⁴ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, pp. 83-84.

⁴²⁵ Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, p. 9.

⁴²⁶ Mushirul Hasan, ‘Partition Narratives’ in *The Partition Omnibus*, by David Page, Anita Inder Singh, Penderel Moon and G. D. Khosla (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. xxii.

⁴²⁷ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 30.

However, this does not suggest the level of intent that Mushirul Hasan argues was implicit in British attitudes, but rather that events moved so quickly and communications were severed in so many places, that the full horror of the situation was not apparent to those on the ground. Indeed, the attitude taken toward violence, as evident in Allan Arthur's memoir account, predisposed the men to consider some level of 'communalism' as a normal part of district life, whilst the nature of the work they undertook often created the distance and isolation from the extent of violence to which Brendon's comments allude. It is these structural continuities in the British colonial state with which this chapter is concerned.

In breaking down the narrative of the state propounded within the memoirs, this chapter will first assess the significance of imagery in the pre-1947 colonial state. Many scholars have pointed to the importance of prestige and performed power in indirect rule,⁴²⁸ and this section will assess the process undergone by late colonial civil servants in learning, upon arrival in the subcontinent, the cultural norms required by this hybrid community in order to be capable of embodying authority in the colonial context. The second section will break down one of the key tenets of the memoir accounts; assumptions of British rule as total up to 1946, and then entirely lost in 1947. Instead, I will suggest how I.C.S. control had always relied upon negotiations with local networks of power, and how the men demonstrate within their memoirs the limitations of their knowledge and ability to act which were an implicit part of the role they describe. The final section will then consider the argument made in the memoirs that there was a power vacuum as the British element of the civil services retreated, with 1947 marking a drastic and long-term change. This concept belies the extent to which I.C.S. ideals and structures were retained by the I.A.S., and also over-simplifies the experience of the local state familiar to most Punjabis. Rather than the I.C.S. district officer holding all the power, and then losing it all at a defined moment in 1947, this chapter will suggest how British civilians only ever skimmed the surface of Punjabi society with their administrative activities, allowing for extensive continuity in the new post-colonial regimes. Arguing for a new perspective on South Asian history through a periodisation which spans the 1930s-60s, Taylor Sherman, William Gould and Sarah Ansari suggest how "whilst the state in South Asia was subject to considerable adjustment in the

⁴²⁸ Taylor C. Sherman, William Gould and Sarah Ansari, 'From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan, 1947-1970', *Modern Asian Studies*, 45, 1 (2011), p. 4.

transition to independence, the rhetorical underpinnings of the postcolonial states were often not so novel and, in many cases, the state's *modus operandi* did not change during this period."⁴²⁹ The possibility of continuity is an anathema to the interpretations made by departing I.C.S. officers in 1947 Punjab, especially as vindications of the potency of colonial state power were at the heart of ethical justifications of its actions, but this chapter will demonstrate how the intricacies of their role led the men to adopt compromise and performance as the cloaks of effective control.

The apprenticeship to power: enacting 'white' control in late colonial Punjab

Returning to the Punjab in 1937 following his probationary period at University College, Oxford, M. Azim Husain was posted as Assistant Commissioner attached to the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore, Mr. F. C. Bourne. Husain travelled to Lahore to report for duty, but found his request for a meeting with Bourne repeatedly blocked, first by the *Chaprasi* whom he describes as having "evaded all enquiries" and then by the Superintendent, who treated him with civility but did not dare "intrude on the 'Sahib'..."⁴³⁰ When he succeeded in getting the meeting he needed the following day, he records how his "arrival was duly announced with warnings, trumpets, and great 'hullabaloo' with the result that the '*Chaprasis*' smiled, salaamed and bowed till their noses touched the floor."⁴³¹ Moreover, when he left the meeting, he was astonished to note that

All the men who had been waiting to see the Deputy Commissioner stood up and salaamed me as if five minutes interview with the Deputy Commissioner had ennobled and hallowed me to the extent of becoming an object of worship. That is not all. When it became known that I was the Assistant Commissioner in Lahore, all the '*Chaprasis*' in the corridors, the licensed petition writers, and the stamp vendors, all 'salaamed' three or four times on each occasion I passed by as if I were the incarnation of God on earth.⁴³²

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴³⁰ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 3-5.

⁴³¹ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 3-5.

⁴³² London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 3-5.

This “ritual of salutation” was a part of his working life which Husain describes himself having to get used to, despite embarrassment and a feeling he recalls that “it revealed to me the depth to which our people have sunk.”⁴³³

Husain drew two conclusions from his experience of becoming part of the I.C.S. administrative structure. His first was “what awe our people have of the white skin!”, and secondly he observed “what tremendous importance is attached to position, meaning thereby position in the administrative machine! And what little respect there is of a human being as such.”⁴³⁴ The fact that Husain himself experienced a transformation from being considered an insolent intruder on his initial arrival in Lahore, to being revered once his status was known, demonstrates the difference between the two statements. The status and ceremony of power was available to him once he was recognised as a member of the I.C.S.; for the other men, a white skin was already an intimation of the prestige of rule. For all of the probationers, however, recognition of their status and enactment of it was as important a part of becoming a district officer as the more ostensible elements of judicial, treasury and settlement training. Ronald Belcher’s first posting was as Assistant Commissioner in Gurdaspur, under Deputy Commissioner W. G. Kennedy, and he describes the experience of accepting salutation and honour as something he found hard to become accustomed to. He lived with Kennedy on his first arrival in Punjab and explains that this was an “admirable way” of being introduced to “the life of a *‘sahib’*, a member of the exclusive British community, and in addition, since I was an Indian Civil Servant, the life of a member of an elite class”.⁴³⁵ Belcher suggests that although there were now many Indian members of the service, it still preserved “much of its original essentially British character”.⁴³⁶

Similarly to Husain, Belcher records fairly extensive first impressions of the working practices of his superiors and the attitude taken to them by subordinates, concluding that “some aspects of my newly acquired membership of this elite jarred on me...”⁴³⁷ These included the experience of orderlies rising to their feet and making “a respectful gesture of salutation every time I walked by”, and “the first experience of automatic submission

⁴³³ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 3-5.

⁴³⁴ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 3-5.

⁴³⁵ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 6.

⁴³⁶ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 6.

⁴³⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 6.

and obedience and sometimes obvious flattery, from subordinates due solely to one's official position, and no doubt often the colour of one's skin..."⁴³⁸ Under the tutelage of his second Deputy Commissioner, E. A. R. Eustace, Belcher felt that he learnt "a lot professionally", but again was disconcerted "to encounter his particular brand of cynical paternalism in relation to our job".⁴³⁹ Whatever his misgivings, however, Belcher came to accept these working practices as part of his daily life, and only reflects back on them in the 1970s. Indeed, he admits in the memoir,

inevitably one became used to such things, and the life of a '*sahib*' was undeniably pleasant; moreover, the features that troubled me – in particular the ready if not always unquestioned acceptance of all one's suggestions or orders – certainly made easier the performance of administrative duties that for an I.C.S. officer were usually heavy and insistent.⁴⁴⁰

For Ronald Belcher, the importance and high demands of the workload undertaken validated the system used. Above all, for the Punjabi I.C.S. as a whole, there was a necessity of accepting the working standards imparted in their training to fulfil the performative aspect of indirect rule and maintain the image of the cadre overall.

The other memoirs reflect similarly on the apprenticeship to power that they underwent upon their arrival in the Punjab. Bill Cowley lived with Arthur Williams at Rawalpindi during his first posting and records Williams' wife Marjorie "lectur[ing] me on points of social etiquette", and being "horrified when I went to tea with a *naib-tahsildar*, a very junior Indian revenue official", as this was "absolutely not done".⁴⁴¹ This kind of social deportment was equally important to the maintenance of the sense of distance between the I.C.S. and lower levels of the administration, and social elitism which was central to the service's image. This presentation of the I.C.S. had its roots in the Victorian *Raj* as E. M. Collingham's work suggests; she writes that, "once power was firmly in their hands with the transferral of Indian government from the Company to the Crown, they legitimised their rule by re-casting themselves as the embodiment of racial superiority, pre-ordained to rule over the Indians, trapped as they were within their racially-inferior bodies."⁴⁴² Indeed, from the late nineteenth century onward, the requirement of a

⁴³⁸ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 7.

⁴³⁹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁰ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 6.

⁴⁴¹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 35.

⁴⁴² E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 8.

successful performance of ‘whiteness’ included distance from Indian habits and culture, to the extent that “instead of responding with pleasure or interest to what was unfamiliar serious-minded Englishmen now reacted against it, and clung firmly to their own standards of conduct, thus producing an actual accentuation of English morality.”⁴⁴³ Thus as Francis de Caro and Rosan Jordan argue in an article which highlights the use of the *sola topi* as a status symbol, “Anglo-India was a colonial sub-culture, and the British in India, though temporary sojourners, saw themselves as somewhat different from other Englishmen, as having been conditioned by this Indian experience.”⁴⁴⁴

Rather than altering substantially in the period between formalisation of British rule in the 1860s and its transfer to Indian and Pakistani independence in 1947, there was quite significant stagnation created by the small, professional nature of the British community and restrictive social norms. Philip Woodruff suggests how, fundamentally, the small size of the British state dictated the style of rule it would use; explaining that there were only ever one or two soldiers available per six thousand Indians, he writes that force was not really an option and what came into play instead was “*hikmatamali*, a judicious mix of finesse and tactful management with a hint of force in the background.”⁴⁴⁵ Thus he emphasises that “district life changed much less between 1820 and 1940 than is generally supposed.”⁴⁴⁶ Indeed, Ronald Belcher’s comments about the nature of the service suggest how even with increasing Indianisation, the standards of the service were simply extended to these Indian officers rather being altered. Several of the men draw into their experiences of 1947 a sense of Punjab’s history and reputation in writing about their role. Belcher writes that “it was a time when individual character came to count for more and official status for less – perhaps once again a time for the romantic individualists of earlier Punjab history”...⁴⁴⁷ In chapter two, we saw how the tasks and character of these men was overwhelmingly bureaucratic, even under the pressure of violence within their districts. Belcher’s reflection is lent some credence by the breakdown of communications networks in 1947, and the isolation this imposed upon the men, but their behaviour and adherence to core I.C.S. duties and values is the most striking element of their accounts. Embodiment of power meant, to some extent, a

⁴⁴³ Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, p. 29.

⁴⁴⁴ Francis de Caro and Rosan A. Jordan, ‘The Wrong Topi: Personal Narratives, Ritual, and the Sun Helmet as a Symbol’, *Western Folklore*, 43, 4 (1984), p. 241.

⁴⁴⁵ Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India*, p. 179.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁴⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 74-75.

limitation of the capacity for the individualism which Belcher's memoir describes as the reputation of the Punjabi service.

The training period had taught these men not only the administrative skills required to effectively run their districts, but also the basis by which they could maintain their status despite isolation: unity of message and deportment. Thus as we saw in chapter two, I.C.S. officers maintained a concern to act within the letter of the law and in accordance with orders, and above all retained loyalty to their cadre and its unified narrative in the face of changing conditions. In contrast to what Belcher portrays as increasing individualism in running the districts in 1947, the I.C.S. officers acted cohesively according to their training. As Collingham suggests, "the reduction of the officials' bodies to symbols meant that retaining one's dignity and keeping to protocol became all that mattered."⁴⁴⁸ The mythology of the Punjab was an implicit part of the cadre's identity and sense of status; being embedded in a portrayal of British continuity of rule was all part of the imagery of power. Patrick Brendon reflected on his experiences in Gurgaon in 1946 that he "grew more and more to admire the men of the Victorian age who had built the machine so well that it continued to function, however haltingly, despite all the strains of the 1940s."⁴⁴⁹ Precedent and history were vital underlying factors in shaping the late colonial civil servant's ability to act.

When turning their minds back to the Punjab as they wrote their memoirs, several of the men note how the extent of continuity in professional and social lives had surprised them in the late 1930s. The recruitment process had taken as implicit the changing role of the I.C.S. man, even as it emphasised his importance, and yet the British Punjab of the 1930s and 40s maintained a lifestyle which harked back to the 'great days' of the Victorian *Raj*. Ronald Belcher compared his first impressions with Rudyard Kipling's novels, writing "*Plain Tales from the Hills* draws a vivid and amusing picture of the hill station society of his day with all its snobbery and artificiality and scandal; I was astonished to find out how much of his description still rang true of the British social life I found in Dalhousie and other hill stations I later visited..."⁴⁵⁰ Dick Slater spent his first Christmas in the Punjab in Lahore, attending "races, polo, dinners and dances" and,

⁴⁴⁸ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 132.

⁴⁴⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁰ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 19

looking back in his memoir, comments “it was fascinating to witness what was perhaps the last comprehensive celebration of tribal rites by the ruling race, with all the old pomp and circumstance...”⁴⁵¹ With the detachment of hindsight, and of having spent a second career with the Foreign Office in many different countries, Slater reaches the conclusion that:

It would not have helped the cause to ring down a curtain of austerity at that time. On the contrary there were strong psychological arguments for maintaining the outward manifestations of power and affluence.⁴⁵²

By the time of writing his memoir, Slater recognises not only continuity of practice in the Punjab of the 1940s, but the potency of this performance.

Sir Conrad Corfield arrived first in the Punjab in the aftermath of World War I and observed the importance of ceremonial trappings of power on a number of occasions. In one instance, he was present at the visit of the Prince of Wales to India and remembers in his memoir that “at one enormous gathering outside the Delhi city walls he decided to arrive on horseback in exactly the same kit as every young British officer wore when out for his early morning ride.”⁴⁵³ The effect failed to impress, suggesting the importance of providing an image of authority for the reception of Indian observers. As Collingham argues, “whether acting as a symbolic representative of the values of the British government in India, or in his office or *cutcherry*, exercising power and authority on the ground, the British administrator was expected to maintain that ‘credible performance of haughtiness and mastery’ which was necessary to sustain dominance.”⁴⁵⁴ The pomp and ceremony to be expected of a royal visit was not simply self-indulgence: rather it was a matter of conforming to an Indian idea of power which allowed the British to continue to be taken seriously as rulers. Corfield also recalls in his memoir how performance created a disproportionate level of effectiveness, struck in retrospect by how this ability came to an end during the course of his career. He recalls of an incident in 1920 that his superior officer was able to quell a demonstration without recourse to military or police support, writing

The D.C. descended into the street and walked slowly towards the massed throng. He gazed thoughtfully from face to face of its leaders, as though to mark well the features

⁴⁵¹ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁵² London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 10.

⁴⁵³ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 24.

⁴⁵⁴ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 141.

of each and bear them in mind. No word was spoken as he stood alone in the middle of the street under the hissing paraffin lamps, contemplating those who defied the *Raj*. One by one the crowd began to melt, until only a sprinkling of onlookers remained.⁴⁵⁵

Reflecting on this period in retrospect, Corfield recognises the performance that was so vital to British rule; the impression given of local expert knowledge and hands-on administration, and also begins to see how contingent this kind of prestige was upon the will of those to be governed and the ability to offer favours in return for cooperation.

In all the memoirs, then, is some account of the men's first impressions of a society where the level of continuity and importance of hierarchy was striking. It was a society within which they had to learn quick lessons and pick up what George Orwell described in his essay 'Shooting an Elephant' as the "mask" of the "conventionalised figure of a *sahib*".⁴⁵⁶ The experience of adopting the style of leadership required involved immersion in a myth of Punjabi historical individualism, of the mounted district officer riding between villages, dispensing justice and acting as advocate for the needs and wishes of the people of his district. Indeed, this ideal had obviously formed part of the initial appeal of the I.C.S., and particularly of the Punjab, for these men. The recruitment process of the 1930s had prepared the men for the differences in their role; for paperwork, observation of Indian 'types' and a more advisory position. It did not, perhaps, give as much of an indication of the demands involved in maintaining the I.C.S.'s famous *esprit de corps*; not individualism and personal power, but fraternity, conformity and adherence to the norms of a society far more conservative and old-fashioned than that they had left behind. The recruitment of Indian officers did not interfere with the imagery of power, as they were adopted into it once their status was known, as long as they upheld the required behaviours. Despite changing circumstances, then, the I.C.S. continued to believe in a myth of itself at district level. Blunt's 1937 book on the service retains the language of romanticism in describing the role prospective candidates would undertake. He writes:

There are only some 250 district officers in British India. Each is in charge of an area which averages 4500 square miles: the average area of an English county is about 1000 square miles. Each is responsible for the collection and custody of hundreds of thousands of rupees of public money. Each is responsible for the welfare of a

⁴⁵⁵ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 16.

⁴⁵⁶ George Orwell, 'Shooting an Elephant', in *Collected Essays*, by George Orwell (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), pp. 19-20.

population averaging about a million... It is possible, by a description of a district officer's duties, to convey to an English reader some idea of what he does. But it is much more difficult to convey an idea of what he is, and of what he means to the people.⁴⁵⁷

The I.C.S. probationer of the late 1930s was still being led to believe not only in the power and importance of his own performance of power, but in the reality of responsibility and control that went with it.

'Power' to 'powerlessness': mythologizing the British empire

In narrativising their departure from the Punjab in 1947, ex-I.C.S. officers seek to emphasise two stages. The first was evident in chapter two, in the extensive descriptions given of the continued ability of district officers to act, as demonstrated through their ongoing maintenance of record-keeping, law enforcement and revenue collection. The point at which they ceased to be able to perform these duties is then noted as the loss of power, the disintegration of their previous omnipotence within the district. The transfer of power throws into relief this long-standing mythology of the extent of power held in the hands of I.C.S. officers, the idea still promulgated in Blunt's book that "whatever the trouble may be, the district officer must see to it...He may divide the work, but he cannot divide the responsibility. That is his."⁴⁵⁸ On the contrary, as David Page argues, this kind of individual control was entirely unrealistic. Page writes,

No imperial power could run a country of India's size without the help of local agents, and in the British case, the absence of intensive European settlement and the relative paucity of European personnel made it very necessary for the imperial power to recruit to its service those who already possessed an established position in society, whether on account of their personal wisdom, their economic influence or their authority as social or religious leaders.⁴⁵⁹

Despite their assertions of their continued ability to act out the required role, dissipating only once the transfer of power had been announced, the memoir accounts in fact offer various examples of the way in which 'power' was enacted through collaboration and

⁴⁵⁷ Blunt, *The I.C.S.*, p. 118.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁴⁵⁹ Page, 'The Prelude to Partition', p. 7.

dispersed through the inability of district officers to ‘be everywhere’ and ‘see everything’ in the way the mythology claimed.

Working in Gurgaon when the independence decision and date was announced, Patrick Brendon noted that moment as an ending of his ability to act. He recorded that after the initial announcement of 30th June 1948 as the deadline for withdrawal, “everyone began to look ahead to the day when the British would go...”⁴⁶⁰ He explains in more detail the actual implications of this for his control on the ground, demonstrating the implicit reliance of the British state upon reciprocal collaborative arrangements with local holders of power. He writes:

In the old days it had been normal in times of trouble to take stern action against village officials, arms licensees and the like who did not cooperate. This was effective because nobody wanted to lose his privileges. Once the date had been fixed for the departure of the British, privileges held under the British rule ceased to mean anything. Nobody in his senses was going to give useful information to help maintain law and order if by doing so he might incur the displeasure of the future rulers of the country.⁴⁶¹

Brendon’s conclusion that “it had become useless to be stern” demonstrates that the performance of rule discussed in the previous section was only effective so long as it was backed up by collaborative power structures: that the idea of the omniscient district officer relied upon him having favours to offer those who would act as his ‘eyes’ around the district; and that the apparent omnipotence of the local I.C.S. was an effect created by maintaining reciprocal arrangements with those in powerful positions within each village or *tahsil*. In the Punjab, huge investment in the canal colonies meant that the British had substantial favours to hand out, and were able to successfully use collaboration as the basis of rule.⁴⁶² Thus in an example from Ronald Belcher’s memoir, he refers to a ‘tribal’ group he came across near Multan “who were officially recognised by the British administration and relied on to help keep the wheels of administration turning smoothly.”⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 24.

⁴⁶¹ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 51.

⁴⁶² Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*, p. 240.

⁴⁶³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 74-75.

William Gould's work on corruption and networks of power in Uttar Pradesh suggests how these arrangements worked, with the performative aspect of the state disguising a much more pragmatic state presence. Gould describes how,

In ruling India, British administrators relied upon legitimising ideologies such as the idea of the rule of law. Yet below the ostentatious trappings of imperial power, local officials also depended upon informal alliances, networks and connections, to buttress the civil service's own organisational weaknesses...⁴⁶⁴

In contrast, then, with the idea of the district officer as a powerful individual figure, personally identifiable as 'the state' within his district, Gould suggests that "for most Indians, the state was the 'street corner' bureaucrat, the village headman or *tahsildar*, *patwari*, or *Lakhpal* or field level official in the irrigation department..."⁴⁶⁵ Ian Talbot describes how the state in the Punjab involved a complex hierarchy in which the British I.C.S. figureheads were by far in the minority compared with these local power-holders. He writes,

In the final five decades of British rule, the I.C.S. numbered little more than a thousand men. Each had a cadre of subordinates, however, from Deputy Collectors to lowly police constables, nearly all of whom were Indian. The middle and lower ranks were far more numerous than their superiors. In the 1930s between 200,000 and 300,000 police could be found working in the service of the state. Thousands more served as low-ranking judges and provincial civil service men. In theory, the structural organisation of these services, with their strict chain of command, provided little room for the exercise of individual initiative. In practice, however, middle and low ranking officers had significant scope for independent action in their everyday activities.⁴⁶⁶

This hierarchy allowed for – indeed, relied upon – a diffusion of power and responsibility between different levels of the administration, and Talbot emphasises how "this network was loosely knit: vulnerable, negotiated and occasionally irrational. It was constituted not so much by discrete institutions as by the everyday actions of individuals."⁴⁶⁷

The reliance upon local agents introduced a variable in terms of individual interests and loyalties. In Allan Arthur's accounts of his last months in Multan, he indicates how reliance on Indian servicemen in the army and policing politicised local government

⁴⁶⁴ Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, p. 42.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁶ Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

decisions and limited his recourse to action. Arthur describes Multan as “the strong-hold of the Muslim League and Pakistan in the Punjab” with a Muslim majority of approximately 75%, “and practically all these persons were in sympathy with the Muslim League aspirations.”⁴⁶⁸ Although partly limited by numbers of troops, he also notes that of his “comparatively small Police force... most were in sympathy with the agitation...”⁴⁶⁹ With only one battalion of “Hindu troops” responsible for security throughout Multan,⁴⁷⁰ Arthur’s capacity to direct military action against outbreaks of violence was significantly limited both in terms of manpower, as seen in chapter two, and in the fact that lower ranks of the administrative hierarchy that were ostensibly under I.C.S. ‘control’ were never reliably so. Conceptions of Indian liability to communalism created a predisposition in these I.C.S. officers to distrust people they felt to be driven by communal motives and to separate ‘types’ of Indians according to these theories.

Indeed, Arthur Williams ponders in his memoir whether theories of communalism were relied on too extensively and allowed to dominate decision-making to an undue extent. Suggesting that “almost obsessive delicacy was observed to see that differences in native customs, creeds and civilisation were preserved and protected”, Williams claims:

Communalism was allowed to govern every aspect of life, and where official and national institutions were concerned it became a fundamental and inviolable principle; Indian army units were recruited on a communal basis, the security services were organised with strict regard to communal proportions, and electoral constituencies were drawn on communal lines. We may have been excellent administrators, but we were very bad politicians.⁴⁷¹

For Williams, this scrupulousness meant that existing social structures were reinforced, leading to a situation where the violence of partition became an inevitability. The reverse of Williams’ view, of course, was of British interpretations of Indian society being enforced by this kind of administrative exercise; in John Gallagher and Anil Seal’s words, “they kept Indians satisfactorily divided inside a set of local societies,

⁴⁶⁸ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 26-27, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

⁴⁶⁹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 26-27, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

⁴⁷⁰ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 26-27, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

⁴⁷¹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 21.

occupied with the scrabble for resources around the parish pump.”⁴⁷² The adherence to structural conceptions of Indian religion and caste, however, had a corollary effect on British ‘power’ in the subcontinent; as Gallagher and Seal argue:

But in return the British had to acquiesce in arrangements where strong local intermediaries blocked them from meddling too much in their affairs. In practice they had to wink at the existence of an administrative underworld, where the play of local faction settled the distribution of resources and the resolution of conflicts, without much reference to the *Raj* or its book of rules ...the rhetoric of their pro-consuls disguised a ground-floor reality where they governed in name but Indians ruled in practice.⁴⁷³

One of the core principles of the I.C.S. was their claims to be dispensing justice and bringing British standards of law to the subcontinent. Certainly by 1947, this capacity was compromised by the imminence of the transfer of power. Ian Talbot describes how “despite the naming and shaming by citizens’ fact-finding committees, few of those involved in the March disturbances were brought to justice”,⁴⁷⁴ explaining that “political circumstances however obstructed accountability... in the light of their impending departure.”⁴⁷⁵ The reliability and transparency of colonial justice pre-1947, however, was part of the myth of I.C.S. control. M. Azim Husain notes in his memoir the reflections prompted by his first experiences as a third class magistrate.⁴⁷⁶ His initial impression is the need to “strike the golden mean”, by which he indicates he means that

If the story of the police is disbelieved and the public is favoured there is a grave danger of undermining the authority of the police which in the long run may have bad effects. On the other hand if the police are favoured they may begin to tyrannise over the public which is equally undesirable. The object is to keep the authority of the police on terms of perfect equality with the litigants whether they are the complainants or the accused.⁴⁷⁷

The process of justice is above all, then, a balancing act to maintain the effectiveness of the state and policing alongside a performance of unprejudiced legality.

After delivering his first judgement on 18th January 1938 and although convinced of the guilt of the accused, he noted a series of issues with carrying out the trial. First, Husain

⁴⁷² Gallagher and Seal, ‘Britain and India between the wars’, p. 390.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p. 390.

⁴⁷⁴ Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷⁶ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 5.

⁴⁷⁷ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 7.

recorded that “the witnesses are brought forth not to state the truth within their knowledge but to show that so-and-so can bring so many men to come and tell lies for him.” He notes secondly the poor quality of defence provided for the accused, and thirdly the complexity created by the fact that the crime he is passing judgement upon was prompted by “extreme poverty and destitution”. Finally, he records his first experience of a personal appeal, writing:

A friend of my brother ‘came to see me’ on behalf of the accused. I dismissed him with as much tact as I was capable of by saying ‘I can say nothing at the moment; I will see what the case has to say for itself.’ Such appeals to be dishonest are accepted as an integral part of the ordinary scheme of things therefore no one ever thinks twice before making them. Many men in authority accept them unless they have been approached already by the other party.⁴⁷⁸

Throughout the process of hearing the case, then, Husain’s control of events was contingent upon understanding and dealing tactfully with a system of misrepresentation, bribery and compromise. Husain was privileged in a sense by his fluency in local language and dialect; for British probationers, the relationship with the court clerk introduced a further barrier between the official and the many layers of ambiguity in the court system.

Dependence on a court reader or servant for translation or local advice risked compromising the image of the colonial state, but it was evidently impossible for newcomers to the Punjab to ‘know’ their huge districts as fully as they reputedly did. The reliance upon rumour in their understanding of events is also part of this issue: within their districts, officials were isolated and potentially vulnerable, hence the importance of adherence to the norms of the British community. Dick Slater recalls an incident in his memoir which demonstrates the subtlety of this balancing act. Young British men joining the I.C.S. were potentially vulnerable to exploitation by the people they were expected to be governing because of their lack of local knowledge, hence the importance of quickly adapting to and being seen to be part of the Anglo-Indian community. He recalls an incident when on tour in Dera Ghazi Khan, where he accepted an invitation from a local landowner, only to be approached by his head *Chaprasi* with a warning that accepting the invitation was not an appropriate course of action. Having been prompted, Slater “made enquiries, found that my prospective host had a dubious

⁴⁷⁸ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 7-8.

reputation and got out of it.”⁴⁷⁹ He realised, however, that accepting advice from his servant compromised his claims as a power-holder, concluding,

But once let it be known that your *Chaprasi* is in a position to monitor invitations and the scope for abuse was obvious. Indeed one of the abiding problems of the District Officer was how to obtain advice from subordinate staff without appearing to depend on it. The relationship between a magistrate and his court reader was particularly difficult in this way.⁴⁸⁰

The parachuting of young men into control of large and very foreign administrative positions in the subcontinent necessitated some compromise of the role the I.C.S. claimed for itself: no young probationer, new to the Punjab and ostensibly ‘in control’ of a population of thousands of people whose culture was alien to him, could possibly operate without the advice and guidance of those Indians closest to him.

At the furthest extreme, Ian Talbot highlights how “Chandavarkar has suggested that in significant arenas the colonial state wilfully (and even negligently) restricted its scope.”⁴⁸¹ With reference to incidents during World War II and in particular the Bengal famine of 1943, Talbot suggests how Chandavarkar portrays the late colonial state as “often inefficient and obstructionist.”⁴⁸² William Gould indicates that there were certainly deliberate decisions to overlook elements of ineffectiveness and bad practice within the colonial state, but suggests in one example how “the difficulties in uncovering and punishing government servants who broke ‘rules’, was to an extent based on pragmatism.”⁴⁸³ In a system operated cheaply and with a minimum number of officials, the ability to control every level of the administration was severely compromised. Thus Gould argues that “pragmatism equally dictated at times that representing certain forms of rule breaking as ‘petty’, and ‘customary’ allowed the *Raj* to go about its business undisturbed, to protect the interests of its principle allies, and to maintain an image of stability, control, and legitimacy.”⁴⁸⁴ The carefully constructed fallacy of a strong and interventionist state breaks down with any analysis of the day-to-day working of the colonial state, as the extent of the role claimed to be under the jurisdiction of I.C.S. officials was clearly beyond the capacity of an individual. W. F. G.

⁴⁷⁹ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 35.

⁴⁸⁰ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 35.

⁴⁸¹ Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*, p. 3.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁸³ Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India*, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

LeBailly gives one example of the way that aspects of administration technically within the remit of the I.C.S. could nonetheless be overlooked. He describes how,

Excise was nominally the responsibility of Deputy Commissioners but few of them knew anything about excise or interested themselves in the subject after they had passed their departmental examinations (which we all had to undergo in our first two years or so) nor were the Provincial Service Officers any better informed.⁴⁸⁵ In consequence the entire service was in the hands of the local Excise Inspectors (one to each district) and their few subordinates. In the past selected inspectors were from time to time promoted to the Provincial (or Punjab) civil service which would have provided D.C.s with expert advice in districts where the subject was of importance but in my time no such promotions were made in spite of my repeated representations – so that hopes of promotion were no longer a spur to a greater degree of integrity.⁴⁸⁶

His inference is of ongoing, systemic corruption being tolerated as part of the working local state, due to the impossibility of higher level officials managing to get a grasp on the issues involved in every aspect of work within their remit.

Once the decision to transfer power had been announced, there was evidently some dissipation of control from I.C.S. hands. LeBailly recalls how the ‘Special Branch’ and C.I.D. in Lahore took on a role as an Intelligence Service, thereby extending the work placed in police hands and leading him to “feel that the old I.C.S. was being side-tracked into old-fashioned and comparatively unimportant work”.⁴⁸⁷ In their representations of their work, however, I.C.S. officers consistently exaggerate the power that was held in their hands prior to 1947. Rather than the performance of statehood described in section one reflecting a realistic impression of I.C.S. control, it was instead a method of maintaining the image of a cadre which spread itself very thin, and thus relied in the districts upon localised networks of information and control through which to carry out their role. The men are inclined to present a narrative of total power, of the district officer as lord of all he surveyed, responsible for thousands of people within his district; this ‘power’ was far more nuanced, however, and at all times had been contingent upon the exchange of favours and benefits in return for cooperation of local elites. Moreover, above all, in their everyday activities, I.C.S. men were not screened off from Indian colleagues but relied upon careful recourse to local advice in order to be

⁴⁸⁶ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 32.

⁴⁸⁷ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, pp. 22-23.

able to make decisions about their work and behaviour. In this way, seepage of ‘power’ from I.C.S. hands was far from exceptional, but was rather the norm in terms of operating practices of the late colonial state.

The ‘power vacuum’: continuity across the transfer of power

With their withdrawal from Punjab in August 1947, the image presented by I.C.S. memoir writers is one of state collapse, of a power vacuum filled with rumour and anarchy. Ronald Belcher provides an example of his impression of the period in West Punjab, writing that,

Almost all the British I.C.S. officers had left at independence, as had ... all the non-Muslim senior Indian officers, so that a number of districts were in the hands of relatively inexperienced men, some only recently appointed to them. And the Muslim officers from India who had opted for service in Pakistan were mostly still en route, many held up for long periods by the very violence and disruption they were so desperately needed to cope with... So for the critical days and weeks the administration was simply overwhelmed.⁴⁸⁸

This idea of the state collapsing once the Deputy Commissioner role was not filled both validates the I.C.S. image and the colonial state as a whole. Patrick Brendon echoes the same sense of collapse, writing of his departure with his family in June 1947, that “the civil administration was by this time completely paralysed and I knew that it was pointless to attempt to restore it in the name of the dying British Raj.”⁴⁸⁹ The attitude expressed reached right to the top of the colonial hierarchy, as Mushirul Hasan records, “‘We have lost,’ wrote Wavell, ‘nearly all power to control events; we are simply running on the momentum of our previous prestige.’”⁴⁹⁰

The other side of this issue is that of handing over to Indian or Pakistani officers, as part of new independent states. Underlying these statements is a presumption about the nature of the state which produces a narrative of a working pre-1947 paternalistic style of government, handing over in the case of India to an inoperative democratic and secular post-independence state. In addition to the element of these men’s own status

⁴⁸⁸ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 79-82.

⁴⁸⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Brendon, p. 60.

⁴⁹⁰ Hasan, ‘Partition Narratives’, p. xxii.

altering so that they were personally less able to operate with authority, this ‘power vacuum’ idea essentially suggests a misconception about the power the colonial state had held; a misconception which is drawn out as a sharp distinction between effective colonial and ineffective independent government. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat suggest that this romanticisation of the power held by ‘the state’ is a more general tendency. They write,

There is little doubt that a mythology of the coherence, knowledge, and rationalities of the (ideal) state exists, thrives, and empowers many otherwise widely discrepant practices. This myth is carefully cultivated inside the bureaucracy and among political figures as the state’s own myth of itself and is constantly enacted through grand state spectacles, stamps, architecture, hierarchies of rank, systems of etiquette, and procedures within the vast expanse of the bureaucracy...⁴⁹¹

Blom Hansen and Stepputat emphasise as well that this performative aspect of state activity is not merely a process undergone for the benefit of those to be ruled, but is as important for internal consumption, as “a daily, routinised reassurance of the importance and power of the state that actually serves to strengthen the sense of a unified stateness of dispersed forms of government...”⁴⁹² The previous sections have sought to demonstrate the integral and indeed vital part played by performance and imagery in the late colonial state, and that image secured an ongoing potency within the ideas of the bureaucrats themselves; writing in the 1970s, the retired I.C.S. officers remain convinced by the myth of the state that they had been involved in reproducing.

Taylor Sherman proposes a more nuanced picture of state change in 1947, suggesting above all that continuity of state practices was the norm in most areas. Post-1947, Sherman emphasises how the image of the early post-colonial state became wrapped up in the same ideals ex-I.C.S. officers propound in relation to the late colonial state, arguing that “historians of the first decades of independence have tended to assume that the early postcolonial state was stable, and that it owed this strength to its colonial inheritance.”⁴⁹³ An ongoing image was thus created of stable late colonial and early post-colonial rule, with the period in between representing a total crisis, with state

⁴⁹¹ Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, ‘Introduction – States of Imagination’, in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, ed. by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹³ Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India*, p. 3.

control entirely dissipated. This resulted from the structure of the colonial state being adaptive to local pressures; not dictated by central demands but flexible in the face of changing local circumstances. Sherman writes that:

Taken as a whole, the state tended to react to events: it was vulnerable to popular pressures; the colonial state's coercive policies were inconsistent, and their implementation was patchy. The centre only exercised intermittent control over the lower ranks of state actors. Individual officers alternately obstructed the centre's plans and overstepped its orders in implementing them. Battles over the shape of the state therefore tended to take place on the ground rather than in provincial assemblies or cabinet meetings.⁴⁹⁴

This locally negotiated aspect of the state allowed significant continuity of practice post-1947. The reliance upon local networks of power that we noted in section two demonstrates how replacement of the top level of colonial administration was not as decisive a change as the memoirs seek to suggest.

Thus, it is essential to recognise that the colonial state had always operated through multiple levels, with power dispersed and contingent. The overall picture of a state 'vacuum', of power seeping away into chaos in mid-1947, is misleading as it suggests that much more power was held in the hands of colonial administrators than ever really was. Rather, the dispersal of power was an intensification of a previously generalised trend and although this was of vital importance to the men's personal prestige, it does not realistically indicate a collapse of power *per se* in the way that they infer. To postulate that the change in their own status implied a power vacuum is to exaggerate the position of the working colonial state: by doing so, the surviving image in these memoirs is of an institution with security and power beyond the reality. The need to prop up the image of the late colonial state within their memoirs draws in part on the men's position as aggrieved experts, as few of them were encouraged to stay on to serve the new independent regimes. Ronald Belcher recalls one his final duties being that he, "on August 15th, no permanent incumbent having yet been appointed, to the Commissionership, myself raised the Pakistan flag with appropriate ceremony on the Commissioner's office and residence".⁴⁹⁵ Although the men all write wistfully about the Punjab, and many of them record having considered a further career in the subcontinent,

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁹⁵ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 78-79.

Belcher's experiences are representative as he recalls being put forward for a post-independence Secretariat post in the Department of Refugees and Rehabilitation but explains how he eventually felt unable to take up the job. He writes that "as time went by it appeared that there was some reluctance to see me actually take up the post, and I heard that the new Premier, the Nawab of Mamdot, and his Ministers regarded me with some disfavour on account of the part I had played in ordering the use of force to restrain Muslims in the Multan division from attacking non-Muslims."⁴⁹⁶ Belcher attended a meeting with the head of the department and concluded from the encounter that he, "far from urging me to stay, seemed only, so far as he said anything at all, to wish to confirm that I wanted to go. In this way my service came to an end."⁴⁹⁷

It is difficult to imagine that British members of the I.C.S. could have adapted to a position within the independent Indian or Pakistani regimes, or that this would have fitted within the world-view which had initially led them to apply for work in the subcontinent. However, the men who considered 'staying on' are keen to emphasise rejection; that their role had not been appreciated, and the sense that with time, the value of the British administration would be vindicated. This was certainly not the case, as the I.A.S. continued many of the same working practices and the nature of the post-colonial state suggests continuity more than change. The district officer of I.C.S. mythology had only ever been a part of the complex experience of the local state familiar to Punjabis in the early twentieth century. Chapter two suggested how outbreaks of violence at partition are presented in the memoirs as proof of the previous effectiveness of the colonial state. Sir Conrad Corfield's memoir takes this further, by suggesting that examples of stability in the post-colonial states demonstrate the legacy of colonial efforts. He writes that, "personally, I don't think it has been quite wasted: in fact the longer India succeeds in avoiding any further partition the greater the compliment to the unity which the British members of the services and their Indian colleagues helped to create before independence."⁴⁹⁸ The interpretation these men brought to bear upon the events of 1947, then, allowed them to create a narrative of the colonial state and of their own significance which propped up the image of both in perpetuity. This image did not even seem to suffer interruption with the ongoing existence of the two nations, as

⁴⁹⁶ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁹⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁹⁸ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 167.

Corfield continued to emphasise, in the 1970s, that “no other recently independent country has been able to digest the Westminster model for very long.”⁴⁹⁹ The narrative suggests not just one way of validating their first career in empire, but multiple approaches to understanding developments in the subcontinent as vindicating the work of the I.C.S.

Conclusion

Clive Dewey’s study of I.C.S. officials in early twentieth-century Punjab, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*, suggests an image of the I.C.S. as a more varied institution than is commonly thought,⁵⁰⁰ one in which the backgrounds of individual officers led them to approach their work in very different ways and develop varying relationships with the people they served. I would contend two responses to this thesis. First, that although Malcolm Darling and Frank Brayne represented extremes of approach possible within the district, these two very famous cases were the exception to the norm. Anglo-India was famous for its love of eccentrics, for those few who did not conform. This love grew from the basis that in general, the society was deeply conformist in its attitudes and expected standards of behaviour to be adapted by trainees as part of their membership into a small, elite professional society. Moreover, in a society as generally conventional and socially limited as the Anglo-India described in this chapter, differences in personality and temperament were not only accentuated but also of intense interest; the gossipy Anglo-India celebrated its small differences and eccentricities in a way that perhaps makes them appear in retrospect more disproportionately significant. Indeed, it was nonconformity which interested the British in India, just as the strictness and rigorous etiquette of Anglo-India drew the attention of the novelists to be considered in chapter five. The memoirs considered here share some strong common themes rather than demonstrating a great deal of heterogeneity in the men’s attitudes.

My second contention, however, would be to suggest that rather than necessarily contradicting Dewey’s work, the commonality of message in the memoirs is in part symptomatic of the period. Dewey’s work focuses on the early twentieth century, when

⁴⁹⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 179.

⁵⁰⁰ Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*.

British control of India remained fairly secure; indeed, Michael Gorra comments on Malcolm Darling's friend and contemporary E. M. Forster that "both Forster's satire and the sharpness of his opposition got their edge from the fact that he could not imagine the empire ending any time soon."⁵⁰¹ These memoirs are the public outlet of a group of I.C.S. men whose role in empire was conducted against a very different backdrop. Unlike during earlier decades, when job security and independence of action allowed greater freedom for personal projects, the District Commissioner of the late 1930s and 1940s was a more deskbound individual. The pressure of the 1940s acted in the opposite way to the atmosphere of Dewey's period; to flatten out what were in reality quite superficial differences. Fundamentally, all of these men had committed to a paternalistic style of government in empire, and thus to more or less of an extent believed in its values, whatever their other views. With the loss of the career in which their sense of self was invested, as well as the edifice of empire to which they had been committed, it was in these men's own interests to present a united front. The consistency of these memoir sources represents the *esprit de corps* for which the I.C.S. was famous writ large; no longer as a working unity, but now preserved in perpetuity as a social memory of the workings of the now defunct empire. In transferring from an environment with very strict and antiquated social norms to a modern Britain which was moving on from its imperial past at a pace, I.C.S. men lost not only their career but also the recognition and affirmation Anglo-Indian social hierarchy had constantly given to their status. Investing in a shared memory of a now lost society allowed all the members to preserve the sense of importance which many were unable to regain in their subsequent lives back in Britain or elsewhere in empire. Thus, essentially, the period over which these men were recalling their memories of the Punjab was one which had enforced on their minds the commonality in Anglo-Indian society, not the difference. The old world had been the one where they had been most important, so concomitantly it was remembered by them as the most important and happy time in their lives. The resulting social memory allowed them to recuperate a sense of worth from their period of service in the Punjab.

Geoffrey Cubitt's study of memory and history suggests that significant change disrupts the ability to contextualise past memories in contemporary experience. Cubitt suggests

⁵⁰¹ Michael Gorra, *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 28.

how traumatic experiences and sudden losses are rendered difficult to assimilate into a personal narrative because of the complete disruption of the social settings in which memories and identity were formed. He explains how significant change “can bring problems in memory, either by breaking or discrediting the conceptual frameworks that have previously governed people’s autobiographical remembering, or by making a host of memories which had previously guided people in the routines of everyday life suddenly redundant.”⁵⁰² Post-1947, British I.C.S. men were faced with the difficulty of presenting a viable personal narrative following the extreme disruption of withdrawal from the Indian empire. The social norms and ideology in which they had become complicit as members of an administrative elite were entirely alien from the society they found when returning ‘home’ to post-war Britain. Moreover, the frameworks through which Anglo-India celebrated and appreciated its members and their activities now disintegrated: the significance of these men’s status was lost along with the discrediting of the Indian empire. Only within their own community could they achieve recognition, not only through clustering geographically in certain retirement towns or east African colonies, but conceptually by writing and talking about their experiences in the terms used pre-1947: mutually propping up one another’s sense of self through the remembering and celebrating of their record in British India. It is to these post-independence careers and experiences that we now turn.

⁵⁰² Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 111.

Chapter Four

Anachronistic figures in a changing world: post-I.C.S. careers and lives

By the end of 1947, the majority of British civil servants who had served in Punjab had returned ‘home’ to the UK. Concluding his comments on the end of his service, Dick Slater records “finally the trauma of return to an England changed in many respects beyond recognition. It was seven and a half years since I had set sail”.⁵⁰³ This process of ‘coming home’ to a country that no longer seemed familiar, or supportive of the values by which these men had been ordered in their work in the subcontinent, was an essential stage in the development of a cohesive imagery of colonial India. This chapter will consider how the decade after return from India impacted upon the way the ex-civil servants thought about their first career and the administration and country they had served. While some of the men found new careers in Britain and constructed their memoirs through the lens of a post-war and post-imperial society, others found that they could not be satisfied by life at ‘home’ and sought further employment abroad, often in Kenya, Nigeria or Uganda. Andrew Hume’s letters during this period offer a particularly rich example of the kind of reflections on India that life in a different colonial environment prompted. Hume’s I.C.S. career had taken him from a training him in U.P. to a long period spent working for the Government of India in Delhi, controlling food supply between 1936 and 1944. His frequent letters to his parents are preserved in more or less fragmented form between his years at Cambridge in the early 1920s to his time in Kenya from 1951, but provide a consistent record of his post-1947 deliberations about seeking further work in empire, and reflections on that decision.

In these few but valuable accounts, the process of filtering experiences through increasingly distanced memory as well as second careers and contrasting locations is highlighted, allowing the opportunity to see clearly the way memory and subsequent experience alter the way an account of the past is presented. This chapter will thus seek to suggest that working in different colonial and post-colonial environments emphasised to these men the commonality of experience and attitude they shared with other ex-Anglo-Indians and thus promoted a corporate style of writing about India, reinforcing the united narrative of what colonial India had been like. Rather than drifting apart with

⁵⁰³ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 31-32.

subsequent experience, then, I contend that disillusionment with second and third careers redoubled the nostalgia for memories of the Punjab and reinforced the sense of *esprit de corps* amongst ex-civil servants, no longer working together but still part of a wider network of mutual support and common narrative of their past experiences.

Location was of course not the only influence upon the developing narrativisation of their role in empire which these men recorded in the 1960s and 1970s. Thomson's work on Anzac memories in Australia suggests the multiple influences and purposes of a carefully constructed memory of the past. He writes,

We compose our memories to make sense of our past and present lives. 'Composure' is an aptly ambiguous term to describe the process of memory making. In one sense we compose or construct memories using the public languages and meanings of our culture. In another sense we compose memories that help us to feel relatively comfortable with our lives and identities, that give us a feeling of composure.⁵⁰⁴

In addition to the need for ex-civil servants to accept and partially overcome memories of their final years in the subcontinent, and to adapt to a new working environment, the changing public attitudes toward empire formed a backdrop to these men's second careers, whether in colonial Africa or back in the metropole. In chapter two, one of Dick Slater's comments suggested a sense of being part of an imperial network, whereby events in India would be noted and discussed back in Britain. For some, return to Britain thus represented a rude awakening, when they discovered little awareness of, or interest in, the empire in a country which was recovering from war. The element of mistrust of centralised decisions and separation of district officers from colonial government thus gained some credibility for these men under the circumstances of their return to Britain.

In contrast, by the 1960s and 1970s, there was a broadening public discourse on empire history emerging, offering terms through which these men's experiences could gain a hearing. Charles Allen's first collection of imperial nostalgia, *Plain Tales from the Raj*, was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in 1974, and many men and women whose memories of empire had gained little attention or interest before, found themselves approached in this period. The collection of memoirs used in this thesis are the result of archivists actively seeking recorded recollections in the late 1960s and early 1970s, due to increasing

⁵⁰⁴ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 8.

recognition of the unique experiences of this group of people, most of whom were reaching retirement. The tone of Allen's programmes and book is, however, indicative of the kind of reminiscences that were sought. Its cover declares how "enjoyable" and "irresistible" a read it makes, and Antonia Fraser is quoted as declaring that it "takes on where Kipling takes off".⁵⁰⁵ In a Britain which had won a war but lost most of its empire, there was no room for critique of the imperial legacy at this point: sepia-toned nostalgia was the order of the day. The public space for I.C.S. memoirs was thus a constricted one. There was an appetite for romance and celebration, but not for doubt and questioning. Accounts of the lives of those who had worked in empire were welcomed only in such terms as suited public consumption: tales of Tiffin in jungle camps, servant problems and the kind of gossip and anecdote that were familiar from Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills* - as the chosen title makes unambiguously apparent.

The tone in which Allen presented the book, however, was necessarily defined by the kind of material he was able to collect, and was very much in collaboration with ex-Anglo-Indians. Indeed, Allen's own family had an association with India that dated back to 1799 and the introduction is written by ex-I.C.S. officer and author Philip Mason.⁵⁰⁶ It includes the declaration

Charles Allen's pot-pourri from the conversations he recorded with survivors of the Empire ... has come down firmly on the side of being readable rather than pedantic. I am sure this is right. The purpose of his book is to give the general reader some feeling of the flavour of a life that has gone forever.⁵⁰⁷

The book thus comes with a positive mission statement of its wish to avoid academic 'pedantry' in Mason's introduction:

A most distinguished member of my former service once remarked with dry realism, 'no one will ever read anything that I write unless he is paid to.' And some of the recent academic books have been rather like that.⁵⁰⁸

The drive for a 'readable' account of *Raj* lifestyles was, then, from ex-civil servants as much as from the collectors of their comments. The style in which life in India was depicted was both defined by the manner of ex-I.C.S. memoirs and then constricted to

⁵⁰⁵ Allen, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj*, rear cover.

⁵⁰⁶ Mason wrote under the pen-name Woodruff.

⁵⁰⁷ Philip Mason, 'Introduction', in *Plain Tales from the Raj: Images of British India in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Charles Allen (Aylesbury: Macdonald Futura Publishers, 1975), pp. 13-14.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

these terms. By finding a popular audience with their corporate narrative of late colonial India, men and women who had lived there both responded to, and further defined, the parameters of the public appetite for stories of empire.

The tone of Allen's book, and particularly of Mason's introduction, indicate a significant corporate identity to the way memories of India were presented throughout this period. He alerts the reader to the anecdotal style of the book, writing that:

This book would have been less readable if it had been arranged by provinces or periods – although either method would have been more helpful to a historian. Arranged, as it is, by subjects, it has to blur the differences between different parts of India and different periods. And the very fact that Charles Allen was so successful at getting the confidence of the people he talked to has encouraged them, talking at their unbuttoned ease, to utter generalities that they would not have put in writing.⁵⁰⁹

His conclusion in reference to this limitation is, however, that “none the less, I think this book, in which most of the talking is done by people who were actually there, gives a total effect much more like the India we knew than any of the more learned productions I have referred to.”⁵¹⁰ This contemptuous dismissal of academic and historical method in favour of unchallenged discursive account is characteristic of the I.C.S. ideals of action over intellect, and sense of being a community with an identity which outsiders failed to understand.

As Dewey suggests, despite their selection on an intellectual basis, “no-one, in Anglo-India, wanted to be labelled an impractical theorist, an effeminate aesthete or an immoral atheist. ‘Character’ was what counted, not brains.”⁵¹¹ This surviving value is also apparent in the men's memoirs in the way central command is scoffed at in comparison to knowledge gained on the ground. The *esprit de corps* of I.C.S. families and the wider Anglo-Indian community in subsequent decades relied as much on communal disapproval of certain values and ideas as it did on common characteristics. An allergy to academic approaches or general ‘bookishness’ was a badge of membership which survives in the style of presentation of *Raj* memoirs. The other element of this community attitude which Mason highlights in his introduction is an underlying pride and self-righteousness in the colonial administration as it had been in

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

⁵¹¹ Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*, p. 5.

its heyday. In closing his comments, he uses an example of an eccentric and rather undisciplined district officer to “illustrate that humorous, confident, essentially aristocratic aspect of British rule in India which sweetened the whole and might not – one suspects – have been so much in evidence if the officials had been French or German or Japanese.”⁵¹² Continued membership of the strongly bonded ex-I.C.S. community relied upon this intrinsic belief in the essential well-intentioned effectiveness of British rule in India; on the celebration of independent action and eccentricity in just the way Mason demonstrates here.

The evolution of ex-I.C.S. men’s memories of Punjab will be considered in this chapter in three different sections. The first follows on from chapter three to consider the conclusions they reached about India immediately after leaving, described by William Cowley as a lasting “homesickness” for the Punjab.⁵¹³ This section will consider the construct of ‘home’ to suggest the significance of loss of location in defining these men’s sense of collective identity from the first years after 1947. Psychologically, there is a response here akin to refugees forced to leave a familiar place, in which their identity is rooted, and to set up new ties in an unfamiliar location, and this community experience was an essential underlying factor in reinforcing a sense of commonality and need for continued *esprit de corps*. The second section will consider the specific responses to post-war and increasingly post-colonial Britain. These contain a common thread of alienation from a society which voted in a post-war Labour government, and disillusionment with what they saw as declining standards in public culture as well as government. Finally, the third section will use Andrew Hume’s extensive letters to his parents as a case study of the decision many I.C.S. men made to find further work abroad. Not only does he record in detail his decision-making process, but also his own and his wife’s responses to the Kenyan colonial environment. His natural inclination to compare this with his previous experiences in India provides a valuable insight into the way subsequent careers made these men alter their perspective on, and presentation of, their memories of the Punjab. Philip Mason closes his introduction to *Plain Tales from the Raj* by writing “no one who wasn’t there [in India] will ever really understand what it was like...”⁵¹⁴ By considering the experiences of ex-I.C.S. men in the intervening

⁵¹² Mason, ‘Introduction’, in *Plain Tales from the Raj*, p. 19.

⁵¹³ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. i.

⁵¹⁴ Mason, ‘Introduction’, in *Plain Tales from the Raj*, p. 19.

twenty-eight years, this chapter seeks to suggest how it was that by 1975 Mason could claim to be speaking for the ex-Anglo-Indian community when he wrote these words.

‘Homesick’ for the Punjab: departing recollections and growing nostalgia

Bill Cowley left the civil services behind him after his work in the Punjab came to an end but still felt his new life held echoes of the old one. Having set up in farming in Yorkshire, he reflects that “across the years and across the distance I began, as a farmer myself, to feel a closer kinship with those peasant farmers of the Punjab plains and the Himalayan valleys.”⁵¹⁵ He expresses a “terrible longing... to hear the village sounds again – the creak of a bullock cart; mule bells; the peacocks and the jackals calling by the Jumna river. Or to smell the yellow mustard flowers, and the smoke from a cow-dung fire”.⁵¹⁶ This wistfulness and sensual imagery of the Punjab quickly came to define the lexicon of ex-colonials: a group of people who returned to Britain in self-imposed cliques and were noticeable for their exotic habits; a huge irony considering the consistent determination of the British in India to eschew Indian influence. As Bernard Porter describes, “India metamorphosed them; not into Indians, of course (although there are a few exceptions, of Anglo-Indians who took wholeheartedly to Indian lifestyles and cultures); but into a kind of hybrid creature, comfortable in no culture *apart* from this artificial, alien-dominant one.”⁵¹⁷ This was the rub for ex-I.C.S. men. The ‘home’ they had referred to and dreamt of whilst working in the Punjab did not coincide with their imagining of it; partly because Britain had changed, as will be considered in the next section, but also because service in India had changed the men and women who worked there. Thus it was a common reaction among these returnees that Britain did not live up to expectations.⁵¹⁸ The result was a ‘homesickness’ akin to Cowley’s description which comes across in most accounts of the Punjab. The reference to memories of smoke rising from cow-dung fires at dusk is a ubiquitous feature.

⁵¹⁵ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 179.

⁵¹⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 179.

⁵¹⁷ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 42-43. Italics author’s own.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Although it is easy to dismiss this rhetoric of the past, there was genuine loss here: particularly under war conditions, home leave had been rare and the Punjab had formed a true home as well as the location of adult identity and status. Bernard Porter's work suggests two significant features of the colonial experience: first that as few people were involved in the work of empire, particularly in non-settler societies like India, it had little impact at home and meant there was little appreciation of the work undertaken by colonial officials.⁵¹⁹ In turn this meant that on return to Britain, I.C.S. men formed a forgotten minority, with the significance of their role and extent of their responsibilities going unrecognised outside of the strict social codes of Anglo-Indian society. Secondly, Porter suggests that the very remoteness of empire impacted upon the social experiences of civil servants. The society of Anglo-India was a professional one, consisting of army and civilian populations, with some businessmen and missionaries. As the journey out to India was both time-consuming and expensive, few non-professionals made it, and home leave was a rare treat, with the result being that there was little contact between those who worked in empire and non-imperial families.⁵²⁰ Thus the two had little concept of one another's lifestyle, and Anglo-Indians had no cause to question their own cultural quirks.

The remoteness and expense of travel to empire meant that people did not *visit* it; rather they either spent their lives in it or not at all. Those who worked in empire thus had little contact with non-imperial families. As Porter describes,

Neither emigration nor soldiering – the other main reason for people to visit the empire in substantial numbers – was likely to make them feel particularly fond or proud of it. The only exception was the small and closed caste of men who administered the empire, or officered the poor squaddies sent out there. The rest of the population had no need to be enthusiastic about the empire, or even particularly aware of it. So they may not have been.⁵²¹

This isolation created a cultural inertia which intensified the sense of alienation I.C.S. communities felt on return to Britain; not simply due to the change in attitudes in post-war Britain but particularly because of the *lack* of change in Anglo-Indian society. The pressure in this society was to conform to what was considered 'British', as against the Indian values by which they were surrounded. Thus Dane Kennedy's analysis of settler

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

communities in colonial east Africa rings true for early twentieth-century Punjab, when he writes that, “this was the distinguishing feature of the settler culture; not in the cherished values of the settlers’ European heritage, but in the centripetal forces that distorted that heritage by securing it against all change.”⁵²² Collingham describes the effect that isolation and Anglo-Indian ideas of Britishness had upon the Anglo-Indian body, writing

What made the Anglo-Indians appear more British than their compatriots in the metropole was their embodiment of an idea of Britishness which belonged to the nineteenth century. This left the Anglo-Indians with a body which was as socially outdated and archaic as it was politically out of touch.⁵²³

Not only was Britain undergoing fast-paced change in the post-war period, the effect was impressed more deeply upon Anglo-Indians by the contrast between this location and the far more outdated late colonial public sphere. Moreover, the social restriction of living within an imperial class, within which outsiders were a rare appearance, meant that these people were largely unaware of how unique their lifestyle was or of how uninterested the British public were in their empire.

There was little external influence to impress upon the British in India that ‘home’ would not only be not as they remembered but would also not be as they imagined. Above all, as the young and the post-retirement sections of society all returned to Britain, Anglo-India was a society of working people who had no cause to stop and realise the emotional ties they felt to their adopted home. Although retired Anglo-Indians had long had a reputation back in Britain for their nostalgic lifestyles, living self-imposed ghettoised lives in houses filled with Indian furniture, smells and smatterings of Indian languages, this was not a section of the community that was visible to those in the active working years of their lives. It was only on their own retirement that most Anglo-Indians were forced to appreciate how entirely India had become a home to them. As Collingham argues, “the Anglo-Indian’s sense of loss and displacement in Britain forcefully demonstrates to what extent Anglo-India was a self-contained world which developed its own norms and fostered the construction of a distinctive Anglo-Indian body.”⁵²⁴ This demonstration was as much a shock to Anglo-

⁵²² Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 192.

⁵²³ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 165.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Indians themselves as they discovered the compromises in their own identity and sense of 'home'. As Elizabeth Buettner emphasises, "although British-Indians shared some features in common with members of their class in the metropole who lacked overseas backgrounds, they were also set apart upon their return from 'exile' – self-imposed though it was – by distinct imperial experiences and understandings."⁵²⁵ Thus once living back in Britain, many found that "their sense of inclusion within the nation was frequently compromised by outlooks and practices that stemmed from their imperial lifestyle."⁵²⁶ Whilst this discovery was one that had been made by retiring Anglo-Indians throughout the previous two hundred years, the precipitate mid-career alteration for these men, and the limited options for return to the subcontinent, made the transition a more marked and difficult one.

In a passage from Ian Talbot's analysis of the accounts given by partition refugees from Amritsar, he highlights some of the key features of the loss experienced by refugees, writing:

The refugees' reflections bring out the emotional burden of forced migration. There is clear evidence in support of Eisenbruch's theory of the 'cultural bereavement' of refugee populations. The sense of 'unfinished business' and a desire for 'return' is palpable in both published and oral accounts.⁵²⁷

Although it is vital not to compare the suffering of Punjabi refugees forced to permanently flee their homeland in the face of brutal threats to their lives from other members of their previous communities, there are important parallels to be drawn between the 'cultural bereavement' these people experienced and that undergone by Anglo-Indians. The speed with which independence and partition was brought about in 1947 meant that these men and women left either at very short notice with a sense of their contribution going unrecognised, or in some cases simply never returned from a period of home leave granted after World War II.⁵²⁸ The sense of 'unfinished business' is a palpable element of the memoirs, reinforced by the feeling that their efforts had not been appreciated and ended in the failure which was the violent partition. The desire for

⁵²⁵ Buettner, *Empire Families*, p. 2.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵²⁷ Talbot, 'Violence, Migration and Resettlement' in *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial, and Post-Colonial Migration*, edited by Ian Talbot and Shinder Thandi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 92.

⁵²⁸ William Cowley is an example of this phenomenon, having been granted leave following the death of his wife.

return is an equally consistent theme. Whilst British members of the Indian administration did not lose their childhood homes in the same way, the reality was that distance and time had already permanently fractured relationships with relatives at 'home', and above all had compromised the position of Britain as a realistic home at all. Moreover, the tendency for colonial service to run in families meant that some of these men did indeed have treasured childhood memories of the sounds and smells they describe in their memoirs. Thus Elizabeth Buettner suggests that, ideology aside, India remained a comforting home for these individuals, particularly those who had lived in India as children.⁵²⁹ Punjab had a real claim on them and at this point of sudden release, that became very clear.

Bauman's analysis of the concept of 'home' for people who travel extensively suggests that "homesickness means a dream of belonging; to be, for once, of the place, not merely *in*."⁵³⁰ What became apparent in 1947 was that this feeling would not be overcome with return to Britain. Anglo-Indians who had spent their years in the Punjab longing for British 'homes' now discovered that when sent 'home' the longing was simply transferred, with the Punjab becoming the subject of homesickness. Thus, as Bauman suggests, "'home' lingers on the horizon of tourist life as an uncanny mix of shelter and prison."⁵³¹ It had been vital to the creation and maintenance of the Anglo-Indian self whilst working in empire but not only did not fulfil those dreams in 1947, but actually became a trap where their colonial identity no longer commanded recognition and support, and instead they had to adapt to being 'normal' after a career of distinctly abnormal power and reach. As Hutchins explains,

Even the highest of Indian officials felt their social pretensions disallowed in England. The British in India made claims to social rank ignored at home, but drearily mechanical within India itself. Because one's social claims were only respected within India, there was little temptation to return home.⁵³²

These social claims enveloped both the high status of the I.C.S. in a society where dinner parties were ordered according to the civil list, and also the quality of life that India had afforded the British.

⁵²⁹ Buettner, *Empire Families*, p. 65.

⁵³⁰ Bauman, 'From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity', p. 30. Italics author's own.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵³² Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, p. 118.

There was a very practical loss for empire families returning to Britain in that they could no longer afford – or procure in a society of different standards – the huge domestic staff to which they were accustomed, and thus had to adapt to running their own homes. Sir Francis Toker’s memoir describes some of the practical difficulties that faced retiring army officers in his memoir and there are many parallels with I.C.S. officers in terms of the extent to which they were left to build new lives in Britain. Toker writes,

At last the terms were published for the retirement of British officers from the Indian Army. They were fair terms and officers were happy with them. Those who called them generous forgot that many of these men had families, no house to which to go in England, no qualifications at all for civil employment, few or no roots in England and no one to whom to turn for a job. They were, moreover, late in the field against competitors... It is not easy, however hostile or cynical one may be, to agree that a Major of twenty-three years’ service can well find his future career behind a counter, as a grave-digger or peddling wares on the road – the jobs offered to some of them.⁵³³

Arthur Williams had a similarly humiliating experience. Arriving home on a ferry full of “Indian students and trainees being sent to England on courses to equip them to administer their newly independent country”, Williams observed how “on arrival at Tilbury they were welcomed personally by their High Commissioner; the officers of the greatest Imperial Service Britain had known were instructed by an underling on how to register at an Employment Exchange.”⁵³⁴ Sir Conrad Corfield was able to retire in 1947 and concluded that “as it happened I did *not* serve my full time, but the time I did serve was full enough; and I *did* qualify for that wonderful pension my father had spoken of before I came out.”⁵³⁵ However, the reality was that the rates of that pension had not changed in line with inflation and the money the men had to support them and their families back in Britain did not allow them to achieve a quality of life anything like that they had had in India.

The resulting attitude of many who had worked in the Punjab was of never feeling truly able to settle after leaving the subcontinent. This group of people had the travelling lifestyle and draw of India running back through several generations of their families and 1947 was an abrupt ending. Buettner explains that “‘exile’, then, formed part of

⁵³³ Toker, *While Memory Serves*, pp. 261-262.

⁵³⁴ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 20: ‘End of a Career – The Final Year’.

⁵³⁵ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 14.

family lineage ‘from sire to son’ and involved permanent impermanence – repeated comings and goings – between metropole and colony, between ‘home’ and ‘away’.”⁵³⁶ For Bauman, the sensation of being unable to settle is understandable as a lasting reaction to the ‘vagabond’ lifestyle of journeying to and fro without a settled ‘home’. He writes:

Wherever the vagabond goes, he is a stranger; he can never be ‘the native’, the ‘settled one’, one with ‘roots in the soil’ (too fresh is the memory of his arrival- that is, of his being elsewhere before)... Cherishing one’s out-of-placeness is a sensible strategy. It gives all decisions the ‘until-further-notice’ flavour. It allows one to keep the options open. It prevents mortgaging the future. If natives cease to amuse, one can always try to find the more amusing ones.⁵³⁷

This long-term dissatisfaction with every environment experienced after their I.C.S. life was often a push factor for seeking further work abroad, as will be considered in section three. For others, it was simply expressed as a wistful remembering of a treasured past.

Williams, who so proudly advocated the record of the I.C.S. in the Punjab, is a good example of this permanent impermanence and discontent with subsequent careers. In his concluding comments he writes,

With 1947 ended what had been the great days of my own official life. While holding the strongest pro-Muslim sentiments I could have no place in Pakistan, as in the pre-partition troubles I had, as the appropriate government officer, consigned too many Muslim leaders to detention, and in any event it would have been too harrowing to remain.⁵³⁸

This is typical of the sense of rejection and disappointment expressed by ex-civil servants at the region where they had worked no longer holding a place for them, but, moreover, the statement emphasises the idea that the time he spent in the I.C.S. was the peak of his working life, in terms of enjoyment and status but also in the extent to which he felt he was making an impact. This impression is compounded by his description of his subsequent working life. He chose to enter the Colonial Service in 1948, on the basis that it was “the more likely field for making up lost ground.”⁵³⁹ Williams was posted to Nigeria between 1948 and 1952, and then to Singapore until 1957, but both countries became independent, leading him to conclude that “by now I was glad – as once I never

⁵³⁶ Buettner, *Empire Families*, p. 1.

⁵³⁷ Bauman, ‘From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity’, pp. 28-29.

⁵³⁸ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22.

⁵³⁹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22.

thought could have been possible – to leave Government service.”⁵⁴⁰ Taking on the position of bursar at Queen’s College, Oxford, he found a comfortable home at last, but nonetheless finishes his memoir with the words “but, like perhaps all my old colleagues, I still feel that it is to the I.C.S. that I have always belonged”.⁵⁴¹ Disillusioned with his own insignificance and the apparent limitations of his roles both within and beyond government, Williams’ memory of his time in the Punjab as “the great days of my own official life” was accentuated by the intervening period. His stated intention on leaving the Punjab to “make up lost ground” suggests the widespread feeling in this group that societal change had left them behind now that their particular professional niche had disappeared. Anachronistic in views and working practices, these men became a symbol of a Britain that was swiftly disappearing.

For men who were at retirement age, the blow of leaving India was a more clear-cut one, requiring less adaptation to British working practices. Thus, Sir James Penny reflected wistfully about his position in the Punjab on retirement in 1946, but did not express the bitterness of the other accounts. He wrote about his last months, during which he toured India with his wife and daughter,

Outside the Punjab, especially in South India, I felt myself a stranger, and in Ceylon just a globe-trotter. But it was nice to get an idea of the extent and variety of the *Raj*, and the expedition cushioned the fall from Government Service to unemployment... In the end we – all three of us – sailed on her (SS. ‘Otranto’) on the 15th April. And so thirty-five years and four months after I first saw the shores of India, I said goodbye to her forever. But I dream of her still.⁵⁴²

For some of the younger men, the passage of time allows a similar tone to their recollections, despite the much more challenging circumstances under which they left the Punjab. Ronald Belcher reflects that,

These diversions and changes which prevented my following a normal I.C.S. career, and finally brought my service to an abrupt end, were at the time most unwelcome; moreover, as I have related, I felt acutely the sense of futility and despair over the division of the Punjab at partition and its tragic consequences – and the ineffectual part it fell to me to play in those grim days. But by the time my premature retirement came I had learnt a good deal in a short time about human nature in general and about the

⁵⁴⁰ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22.

⁵⁴¹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22.

⁵⁴² Cambridge, CSAS, Penny, pp. 220-221.

realities on which the two new dominions had been founded. In consequence I brought a maturer eye to the work I took up later in my career.⁵⁴³

Continued involvement in the subcontinent had allowed Belcher to use his experiences in a positive way, making his account less infused with the bitterness of some of those who returned to the UK in 1947. He was keen to emphasise, in common with many of the other accounts that, “I greatly liked working with Punjabis, becoming myself something of a Punjabi at heart.”⁵⁴⁴ Despite reflecting quite honestly upon the autocratic nature of his work in the I.C.S. and clearly having found a way to adapt to work within postcolonial India and Pakistan, Belcher retained a residual fondness for the days he spent in the I.C.S. and the work he undertook.

Geoffrey Cubitt suggests the importance of common folklore and shared memories to group identity, writing

“Groups need retrospective knowledge in order to maintain and to communicate the sense of corporate or collective identity on which their continuing coherence ultimately depends. In practice, any durably existing group develops over time a certain body of retrospective information – couched sometimes as a developed narrative, but often as a looser connection of legend and anecdote, folklore and topographical reference – whose significance lies not so much in what it can contribute to the pragmatic performance of the group’s core activities, as in what it says to the groups’ members about the social entity of which they are part – about the group’s origins and aspirations, the experiences that have shaped it, and what it means to be a member of it... Being familiar with it is part of what holds the members of a group together; becoming familiar with it is what is involved in becoming, in the fullest sense, a member of the group in question.”⁵⁴⁵

In the case of the I.C.S., the repetition of consistent anecdotes and representations of the service’s working practices allowed a group of people who scattered quite widely after 1947 to retain the *esprit de corps* which had been considered to be so important to the working administration. Not only did this sense of group identity allow a survival of self-esteem and recognition of pre-1947 status for individuals, it also created a lexicon through which the I.C.S.’s image could be transmitted to a public audience. It is this framework which remains apparent in the memoirs, in common with books like Allen’s *Plain Tales from the Raj*, as a way of retaining the public ear in a society that had

⁵⁴³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 101-103.

⁵⁴⁴ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 178.

⁵⁴⁵ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp.134-135.

undergone substantial change and had rather left behind these particular men and the values they represented.

Mid-war, Clarmont Skrine reflected in a letter to his mother, on exactly this pace of change. Interestingly, at this point, he did not anticipate the substantial effect it would have on his own future, writing:

It's easy for me, perhaps, to philosophise and advise and console – I'm still young in spirit and body if not in years, and I have given no hostages to fortune – but I suppose one ought to reflect on the tremendous break with the past that practically all of our world is experiencing, and on the losses and bereavements, so much more terrible than anything you or I have suffered or are likely to suffer, that are going on every day over half the world. The old world, the old life, are dead and gone and we must just write them off and start afresh.⁵⁴⁶

The passage suggests that he does appreciate on some level the likelihood of this change reaching India, although of course he could not have guessed the violence that would accompany independence. He continues, “true, you will find India much the same as in '34-5 when you were out here; but even here there is no certainty that great changes due directly or indirectly to the war will not affect all of us in time, however thoroughly the empire and America in partnership win this struggle.”⁵⁴⁷ Despite this mention, however, the war at this point was still something ‘out there’ and impact on the Punjab, whilst a distinct possibility, was not yet apparent. Thus he concluded that “in face of these vast, cosmic developments one's own misfortunes sink to insignificance”.⁵⁴⁸ Only five years later, the career he had had was to end and this exile from the Punjab and the working life to which these men had become accustomed, catapulted them into exactly that “tremendous break with the past” that Skrine observed in 1941. The changes wrought on Britain, which had seemed so distant during the previous years of service, suddenly became very much these men's problem, as they had to adapt to living in that new world themselves.

⁵⁴⁶ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, MSS Eur F154/24-25, letter dated 11th June 1941.

⁵⁴⁷ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, MSS Eur F154/24-25, letter dated 11th June 1941.

⁵⁴⁸ London, BL, APAC, Skrine, MSS Eur F154/24-25, letter dated 11th June 1941.

Not in my name: alienation from modern Britain

I arrived home four days after the last V-bomb had landed in England. One had heard so much about the devastation caused by the bombing that I was surprised to find how little the west end of London had really changed. It was not until later that I saw the east end, Coventry and Plymouth.⁵⁴⁹

Following the impact of World War II, ex-I.C.S. men returned to an environment they had part forgotten, and part re-imagined during their time in the Punjab. The change in British life which these men had considered to have the most impact on them whilst still in the Punjab was the voting in of the Attlee administration in 1945, and subsequent alteration of priorities in the post-war environment. Consistent across the memoirs is the separation of their own work in the districts and those they worked with at this level, from the central government both under the Viceroy in Delhi and also back in London. The tendency to blame central government can also be observed in the memoirs and letters to have been extended in this period to the alleged ignorance of the British people in voting in the Labour government, as noted in chapter two. Hume's letters exemplify this trend. Writing from Kenya in 1951, he told his parents about the trouble he was having claiming his full pension, now from the British government rather than the Government of India. He commented,

In one sense I think it is just that the British taxpayer should have the burden of the Bill. He and she are primarily to blame for the government that ran squealing out of India, while Nehru murdered his millions and robbed the rest. I therefore do not feel much compunction in accepting from the British taxpayer the money which, but for his indifference and wilful stupidity the Indian taxpayer ought to be paying me.⁵⁵⁰

Not only does this passage emphasise a vitriolic disgust with the direction of change in Britain and the lack of priority shown toward empire, but also maintains a presumption that the work he had undertaken in India was of benefit to the Indian people; there is no question for him that they "ought" to be paying him his due.

The tone of the letter echoes Skrine's foreboding sense in his wartime letter a decade earlier of changing times – and not for the better. Hume continued his comments, writing:

⁵⁴⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 138.

⁵⁵⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 26th August 1951, written from Nairobi.

It seems to me also more evident than ever, that before long India will cease to pay us any pension at all... Surely in this matter as in many others in this most unhappy twentieth century, it is but a repetition of history... You may think my judgment is warped by these personal pin-pricks; probably it is, but in this dual job of price control and financial work with emphasis on prices of local products and fair returns to local farmers, I have to pay as close attention as possible to world economic trends, and read more than I have ever before of such papers as the Financial Times and The Economist; the general pattern of world economics that emerges is one of increasing madness and folly, and one should add greed.⁵⁵¹

The letter is both a forecast of cataclysmic decline and ringing endorsement of patriarchal networks of control. Societal change, for Hume, represents loosening of standards, irresponsibility and chaos. In a 1949 letter written after Mountbatten had received Nelson's sword of honour, Hume focussed on the loss of India in his criticisms of the British public, writing

I am sorry to see that this perverse and crooked generation has besmirched Lord Nelson's sword of honour, by presenting it to Mountbatten. In this connection it is interesting that Kenneth de Courey's 'observer' recognises that Lord Wavell was replaced as Viceroy because his advice and opinions upon India were little to the liking of the Government, and Mountbatten took his place 'who proved the willing instrument of its policy'. I should think the folly of our elimination from India must be beginning to penetrate into the densest and most conceited skull at home...⁵⁵²

The availability of such a comprehensive collection of letters demonstrates the development of Hume's distaste with the Britain he discovered on return from India, and in particular shows the survival of two themes. The first is the entrenchment of these men's beliefs as they were increasingly challenged and became outdated; Hume is belligerent in his conviction that the system that was disappearing had been superior. The second common theme is the retained defence of those who were 'on side' – local I.C.S. men, the Punjab governor Sir Evan Jenkins and particularly Lord Wavell – as set against potent dislike of all those considered to have 'betrayed' those working on the ground, above all Earl Mountbatten.

⁵⁵¹London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 26th August 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁵²London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 10th July 1949, written from Nairobi.

Sir Conrad Corfield uses more moderate language to express the same point in his memoir as is addressed repeatedly in Hume's letters, namely the replacement of Wavell with Mountbatten on 22nd March 1947. He concludes in the same way that,

The reason for the change obviously was because Lord Wavell was firmly opposed to wrecking the unique achievement of the British *Raj* in creating a unified India: if India wished to split up or could not hold together after we left, the responsibility would be theirs: so the best plan was to hand over gradually to each province along with neighbouring states, retain control at the centre whilst adjustments were being made, and then hand over at the centre.⁵⁵³

Indeed, Corfield was so unhappy with the decision-making process that he left the Punjab before its conclusion out of a desire to have no involvement in the final settlement. His conclusions hold the same tone of conspiracy in their references to the British government, always the enemy of the hard-working district officer, and equally retain pride and support for the "unique achievement" of the Government of India. As Hutchins argues, "men whose lives had been given meaning by the imperial ideology and who were personally strengthened and enabled by it to act effectively in the context in which it developed often preferred to retain the ideology defiantly and to go down fighting, indulging in dire warnings about the future of a world which no longer honoured what they valued."⁵⁵⁴

This attitude contrasts interestingly with the official public presentation of the withdrawal from India. The emphasis was absolutely upon the planned and measured nature of the departure, eliding the extent of the violence in favour of language which accentuated the image of traditionalism and order in the transfer of power. Thus in contrast to the ex-I.C.S. men's fervent dislike of Mountbatten, Wendy Webster describes how

Reports on British newsreels repeatedly invoked Mountbatten's relationship to Queen Victoria, reassuring their audiences that it was under the 'great-grandson of the old Queen-Empress' that 'the transfer of power is completed'. Indian independence was generally portrayed in the British media as a sign of British stability, order and continuity...⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵³ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, pp. 152-153.

⁵⁵⁴ Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, p. 201.

⁵⁵⁵ Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 59-60.

This apparent conspiracy of positive rhetoric about the withdrawal from India must have been galling to the ex-I.C.S. men, whose grief and complex feelings about the violence they had witnessed had no public space provided by this discourse. Webster's description demonstrates indeed the extent to which the culture of romanticisation specifically negated the fact of devastating violence in the Punjab. She writes,

In the week before Independence Day, the Sunday Times portrayed a 'generous Empire' that had given India peace and unity, and was now consummating this gift by the peaceful transference of power. 'It is', the paper affirmed, 'a unique record of service by one nation to another.'⁵⁵⁶

Instead of facing the reality of a hasty and undignified retreat, which had left a legacy of violence and refugeeism, the rhetoric of empire in late 1940s Britain perpetuated its ideals and secured the past in the form of an accepted narrative.

This narrative did however include one of the key facets of the memoirs as discussed in the chapter two: this was the explaining away of partition violence by essentialising violence as the natural, primitive state of inhabitants of the subcontinent. As Webster suggests,

Violence following independence was seen not as the product of a particular historical event – partition – but as an essential characteristic of the East following, regrettably but inevitably, when Britain no longer conferred the benefits of order... Although Indian and Pakistani independence was by far the most violent event in the history of British decolonisation, the reassuring conventional imperial spectacle of 'India's Day of Joy' meant that it continued to be widely regarded as a model of orderly, dignified, and peaceful withdrawal.⁵⁵⁷

This commonality in the presentation of the memoirs and the public culture of Britain in the period of decolonisation raises the difficult question of whether the civil servants adopted the terms they did *in response* to this discourse, or whether the attitudes of so-called 'ex-colonials' gained a hearing in this period. Considering the small numbers of ex-civil servants returning to Britain, and particularly the marginalisation they felt at this point, the latter seems unlikely. Rather, the tone of the media coverage reflects something much deeper in the British psyche; an attachment to a certain, limited, romanticised ideal of empire which had been little challenged by any extensive contact with it. This kind of imperial bombast, taught in schools and read in popular novels,

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

endured right into the 1950s due to both its long history and little effective publicisation of, or hunger for, alternative discourses. This limitation served the need of ex-I.C.S. men to downplay their own sense of involvement and culpability in the violence of partition, but equally allowed no space for a more nuanced dialogue about the end of the *Raj*. The consequence of this for retiring colonials was that they found themselves living in a society which retained a long-standing vague warmth toward empire, but lacked the capacity or interest to recognise either the mistakes of the regime in India or the culture shock of those now released from it.

Post-war Britain: Adjusting to a ‘smaller’ life

The post-war period in Britain presented a further challenge to ex-colonials in its own rapidly changing culture. Elizabeth Buettner illustrates the shock of the return home, explaining that “words such as ‘insignificance’, ‘nobodies’, and ‘lost in the crowd’ illustrate some of the many ways that those returning from India might perceive themselves to have fallen behind in British society, seemingly pushed aside ‘in the busy world of England’.”⁵⁵⁸ Andrew Thompson emphasises how this era of decolonisation paralleled the period of weakening of the hold of hereditary nobility in the UK, making the ‘home’ of 1947 a very different place than in earlier decades.⁵⁵⁹ For Andrew Hume, the changing society he discovered was unambiguously evidence of decline. Shortly after his return to the UK, he wrote to his parents in reference to a history of the East India Company, entitled ‘Commerce and Conquest’, which he had just read. Recounting in the letter how the book was dedicated ‘In admiration to the Soldiers, Administrators, and Merchant adventurers who built up the Indian empire; and in scorn to the politicians, British and Indian, who have destroyed it’ he wrote,

You may judge from this sample that the book is good reading; though I have found it unutterably depressing – to be reminded of great deeds and to be forced to live in an age

⁵⁵⁸ Elizabeth Buettner, ‘From Somebodies to Nobodies: Britons Returning Home from India’ in *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the late Victorian Era to World War II*, edited by Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger (Oxford; New York, NY.: Berg, 2001), p. 224.

⁵⁵⁹ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the mid nineteenth century* (Harlow; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), p. 12.

of worse than mediocrity. I would gladly escape to the wilds of Southern or Northern Rhodesia – but there seems to be *no* escape.⁵⁶⁰

‘Mediocrity’ for Hume appears strongly linked to the new socialist administration and social policies, just as this particular book is “good reading” because it aligns so closely to his own views. When the 1951 election was in progress, another of his letters demonstrates this most emphatically as he wrote, “now we wait for the election. Neither prospect – a Socialist or Conservative majority – carries very much comfort. More socialism would certainly be gloomy in the extreme.”⁵⁶¹

In addition to the principles by which Hume was guided in his conviction in empire and an ‘ordered’ society, this attitude appears to have gained practical confirmation from the lifestyle he and his family experienced in post-war Britain. Writing in February 1949, with all his family in bed with flu, he ranted:

Mr Bevan’s national health service has of course killed the private practitioner already. In the old days one would have had him along and got some bottled remedy, doubtless fairly useless, but soothing to the senses of all concerned. Now no doctor wishes to be bothered with you unless you are a hospital case at death’s door. Mr Bevan’s achievement seems to be that whereas in the former times many could not get medical attention because they could not pay for it, now many more can’t get it, because it isn’t there.⁵⁶²

The demands of a post-war society calling for better standards of living and greater social equality were entirely alien to I.C.S. families adapting to the practical experience of living ‘at home’ - without an army of servants,⁵⁶³ with an income that did not stretch as far, and with the economic exigencies of a country which had overstretched itself.⁵⁶⁴ All of this reinforced a rose-tinted memory of the Punjab and confirmed a sense of decline for these men. As Andrew Thompson describes,

Of course, some sections of society would have felt more keenly the winding down of the empire... Anglo-Indian *memsahibs* struggled with their abrupt departure from India

⁵⁶⁰ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 27th February 1949.

⁵⁶¹ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 30th September 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁶² London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 13th February 1949.

⁵⁶³ Buettner, ‘From Somebodies to Nobodies: Britons Returning Home from India’, pp. 226-227.

⁵⁶⁴ L. J. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2002), p. 64: “Forced to shed more than a billion pounds’ worth of overseas assets during the war, Britain was now the world’s largest debtor, to the tune of around £4.7 billion.”

and the gender constraint reimposed on them by their return; colonial civil servants experienced difficulty in finding new jobs ‘compatible with their real if fragile self-esteem’; and children from colonial families who returned to lives of ‘genteel poverty’ in suburban semis were conscious that they were different from others at school.⁵⁶⁵

Hutchins has argued in reference to the 1930s that “India seemed to offer the prospect of aristocratic security at a time when England itself was falling prey to democratic vulgarity.”⁵⁶⁶ By the 1940s, the contrast between the lifestyles available in India and at ‘home’ had widened more than ever, but now the option was removed.

The language of decline was not, however, unique to ex-colonials. As well as the fading influence of the aristocratic and imperial structure of British life, the replacement of Churchill in 1945 and subsequent period of retrenchment began a long process of questioning exactly what it was that made Britain ‘great’, or indeed, what the national identity consisted of at all. Webster relates how in August 1947, “Robert Stimson reported from Delhi for BBC radio that ‘there have been sixteen or seventeen hours now of excitement and celebration, and all I know is that I’ve never felt happier or prouder to be an Englishman in India.’”⁵⁶⁷ This apparent pride related to the presentation of the withdrawal from India as a planned and honourable part of the service Britain had performed in the region for two hundred years. Even without questioning this message, the fact that after August 1947, Britain no longer held what had long been referred to as her ‘jewel in the crown’, meant that one the core facets of this happiness and pride in national identity was gone. Moreover, the underlying factors of near bankruptcy and the necessity of acting upon the requirements of a much more powerful American ally, meant that the era of the European empires, although not yet over, was clearly slipping away. With it, inevitably, went a sense of Britain having an independent and extensive global reach.

With Churchill’s removal from office went not only the political backing for retention of these international commitments, but more significantly the imagery of Britain in war-time. The confidence of jingoist, blitz-spirit, bulldog Britain was seeping away. What was left in the late 1940s and 1950s was the bill: paying for the war, retreating

⁵⁶⁵ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?*, p. 216.

⁵⁶⁶ Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, p. 199.

⁵⁶⁷ Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965*, p. 60.

from empire and the beginnings of a reassessment of what there was about Britishness to remain proud of. By 1965, Webster describes how

[Churchill's] funeral, as a moment of intense nostalgia, reaffirming a history of national greatness, produced some anxiety about Britain's diminished identity since the Second World War. There was much unfavourable comparison of the present with the past.⁵⁶⁸

It is worth considering that this was not a monolithic attitude, and also that pinning down examples of a national mood is a difficult endeavour. Particularly once rationing came to an end in the mid-1950s, consumerism and buoyancy were just as significant in defining a sense of the national spirit, as far as that is possible. Moreover, although the loss of empire was advancing throughout the post-war years, just as with the representation of 1947, the facts often belied the coverage. As Dominic Sandbrook suggests about the MacMillan era,

Like both his predecessors and his successors, MacMillan was unwilling to choose between the appearances of global power and comprehensive social provision... He had already based his appeal to the Tory party on a promise that Britain would 'stay great'...⁵⁶⁹

Implicit in the appeal of such a statement, however, lies an awareness of generalised fear of decline.

This national loss of confidence became a legacy of self-doubt in the British psyche and is part of a much more general trend. Webster also describes, however, how cinema increasingly picked up on the specific imagery of cultural loss through decolonisation. She suggests that 1960s cinema showed a crisis in masculinity due to loss of empire, feminisation of men's lives and American control.⁵⁷⁰ One particular piece of imperial imagery is an important part of the model for reflecting on empire which ex-I.C.S. men both responded and contributed towards. Webster analyses the ending of *Lawrence of Arabia*, describing how:

The final word of the film is given to the British soldier who chauffeurs Lawrence in a staff car which is taking him in a sailing ship for England – 'home'. From the confines of a British soldier's uniform in the staff car, Lawrence stands up to look at Arab men on camels from whom he is now utterly separated, and who offer him no sign of recognition... Lawrence is shown as terribly diminished by this final word. 'Home'

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 217.

⁵⁶⁹ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2005), p. 92.

⁵⁷⁰ Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965*, p. 206.

signifies his loss of the expansive homosocial world of manly adventure that he has inhabited throughout much of the film, and the route he is taking to containment and immurement in a smaller world.⁵⁷¹

Part of this representation, Webster emphasises in reference to *Guns at Batasi*, is that “like Lawrence, Lauderdale has been betrayed by politicians and generals from home.”⁵⁷² This sense of being diminished by the loss of empire was by the 1960s being represented both as a national effect and one upon the individuals involved. In the late 1940s, with only the loss of India and Pakistan, there was still significant confidence in the maintenance of the African colonies. With the rush of rhetoric which allowed Indian independence to be embraced with little questioning by the British public, the element of *national* loss did not feature to the same extent and thus the individuals involved gained little attention until this rush of media interest in the 1960s.

The loss of recognition and the ‘smallness’ of life at home is exemplified by Fearn’s comments on his life after the I.C.S. He wrote of his second career that:

Later that year [1947] I joined the Home Civil Service via one of the post-war reconstruction competitions and started work as an elderly assistant principal in the Scottish home department in Edinburgh. The early years were frustrating and adjustment from the authority of the combined posts of District Magistrate, Collector and Deputy Commissioner to the subordinate position of a middle-rank civil servant in a minister-dominated system was slow and painful. It was probably not until 1956 that promotion to assistant secretary restored confidence.⁵⁷³

Although eventually attaining a similar status to that held in the Punjab, the immense authority adopted at a young age in empire outweighed any post he was able to take on in Britain. Not only was starting this part of his career as a latecomer a humiliating restriction, the reality that hit him in these years was that empire had offered young men that ‘expansive’ life that Webster describes being represented in *Lawrence of Arabia*. Hume recorded in his letters two other frustrations of his experience of the Home Civil Service. The first reflects a feeling of individual insignificance, as he recorded after the new year holiday that

At St. Andrew’s House I found that the good Scots had hardly got back into their swing after the joys of Hogmanay, and there was not much accumulation of work. In that

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 214-215.

⁵⁷² Ibid., pp. 214-215.

⁵⁷³ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

respect the Home Civil differs from the Indian Civil. In India the price of a few days' casual leave was a vast pile of work awaiting one on return, here the work somehow evaporates or someone else seems to do it.⁵⁷⁴

He takes this as evidence of over-staffing but above all feels his unimportance in a job where his absence does not leave a backlog of work – and indeed apparently seems little noticed. Hume also considered the work itself to be of little intrinsic value and later in 1949 wrote

I would willingly leave the Home Civil Service with its Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere... there was a circular round from no less an authority than Stafford Cripps, warning all the Departments that the ever-increasing rate of expenditure must be curtailed, 'huge departmental supplementary budgets' must be avoided. Yet the inefficient extravagance goes on, and hundreds of men and women fuss busily around doing nothing of any value.⁵⁷⁵

Above all, in both cases, there is a sense that their contribution achieves far less effect than that they made in the I.C.S. and that their status and value is necessarily lessened by this constriction of their role. For Hume, as for many others, the solution was to seek to broaden their horizons once again with work abroad.

'A job worth doing': second careers in colonial Africa

Following Indian and Pakistani independence, British members of the I.C.S. were given the opportunity to take a 'reconstruction' examination for fast-track entry into either the Home or Foreign Civil Service. It was a natural direction for most, and in the previous section we saw how John Fearn took time to adapt to his decision to select the Home option. Andrew Hume makes an interesting case as he worked first in the Home Civil Service before finding a position in Kenya and thus developed his ideas about India and memories of his first career through both lenses, but others among the Punjabi cadre of I.C.S. men sought Foreign Office work immediately on return from India. Allan Arthur, for example, served in the Sudan Political Service from July 1948 until independence in July 1954, before returning to Britain to work in a firm dealing in sugar, cocoa, coffee

⁵⁷⁴ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 9th January 1949.

⁵⁷⁵ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 8th May 1949.

and tea, and becoming chairman in 1972 before his retirement in 1975.⁵⁷⁶ The third career, trading in the goods of empire, was perhaps one that his first two had prepared him for.

The experience of having to seek yet another new start was of course a common one for those of the Punjabi I.C.S. men who took on second positions in empire, as independence caught up with the regimes in which they had found new employment. Arthur Williams' reflections contain this morose sense of having been left behind by change that was occurring too quickly for him to find a lasting role. He writes that

I went to Nigeria in 1948 but the pace of political development was accelerating throughout the empire, and I soon saw that my choice had been mistaken. I served four years in Lagos, mainly in secretarial capacities or promoting constitutional change (and actually had to compose the first draft of the new Nigerian constitution to take effect in 1951), but was also required to act for almost every secretariat officer who went on leave.⁵⁷⁷

This loss obviously contributed in many of these cases to a feeling of the waste of their own training, of decline, and of the tendency to romanticise their experiences in the Punjab. This section considers the evolution of I.C.S. men's memories of Punjab during further careers abroad. Andrew Hume provides a case study of a life in a new colonial environment as he wrote extensive letters from Kenya detailing his impressions. The second careers that I.C.S. men entered provided a lens through which they reflected on their time in India when it came to writing their memoirs. For those who experienced a different colonial environment, there were direct comparisons to be made, between the society, working standards and indigenous cultures of the new location and of the Punjab; and routinely, these comparisons buffed up nostalgic memories of Anglo-India. For many of the men, the option of colonial service provided disappointment, leading to a cementing of their existing narrative of self, based firmly in the values and memories of their first career in Punjab.

Throughout 1949, Hume's letters to his parents recorded his repeated efforts to secure some role in one of the African colonies, following his dissatisfaction with the Home Civil Service. By September 1949, he began planning a move to Kenya with his family

⁵⁷⁶ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 32.

⁵⁷⁷ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22.

and provides gleeful details of the home they were able to set up there. His reflections on Kenyan colonial life, however, are both interesting and instructive of his ongoing sense of the value of Anglo-Indian life. Soon after the move, he wrote in January 1951,

Actually it is warm here now and I am glad to wear white drill trousers, residue of Calcutta days. Few people do wear whites or khaki, so much of the Nairobi population is made up of Englanders as opposed to colonials like us, and they cherish the dream that Kenya is really only a bit of England. This it certainly is not.⁵⁷⁸

Symbolic of his own anachronism, it is striking how even between different parts of the empire, India had been notably behind the times. Thus the culture and habits of white Kenyan society do not have the same strict rules as far as Hume can see. Of course, Kenya also had a settler population, hence Hume's dismissive reference to "little Englanders" in contrast with "colonials like us"; India's old guard who were accustomed to a professional society, without this settler aspect. Above all, the result is to reinforce for Hume the sense that Anglo-India was run as a 'tighter ship', with firmer etiquette and a strict dress code.

This constant theme of decaying standards is one Hume returned to in describing the social life of Kenyan colonial society in September 1951. He wrote to his parents, "for us at any rate 'to dine out' is the rarest occurrence, and when that rare phenomenon does take place this 'equalised' generation seldom dresses what we would have called properly fifteen years ago in India."⁵⁷⁹ This habit of dressing for dinner, whatever the location or circumstances, was a core standard of the I.C.S., standing between them and institutional decay – and had become something of a joke for observers of Anglo-Indian society. Equally, dining out was *the* method of entertaining in colonial India and provided an opportunity to cement the order of precedence in the geography of the dining room. Hume went on to comment upon how this foundation of Anglo-Indian social life was lacking in Kenya, writing:

As I expect you know, the so-called head of one of his so-called departments, I have never yet once spoken to the governor nor have we ever been invited to Government

⁵⁷⁸ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 21st January 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁷⁹ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 9th September 1951, written from Nairobi.

House. There is nothing intentional about this, merely modern decay of manners, and in modern parlance I couldn't care less.⁵⁸⁰

For Hume, the differences in the running of his second colonial environment only serve to illustrate the general decline of standards and to emphasise the superiority of the I.C.S. He concluded his letter in reference to what he considers the worst outrage against good taste, writing "the entertainment of the age is of course the cocktail party. This Wendola and I avoid if we possibly can. We have never given one and never will."⁵⁸¹

Despite having been a constant critic of the administration whilst working in different parts of India, Hume's descriptions of the Kenyan administration now alter his perspective. In contrast to his constant complaints in earlier letters about the inefficiency and laziness of the Indian bureaucracy, he wrote in August 1951,

I find much of this colony administratively far behind India; much is still in embryo. Systems and methods of procedure which had been worked out almost to perfection in India, have all yet to be discovered here by trial and error.⁵⁸²

The different type of role he performed in Kenya also led him to have the same feeling as many of those who stayed in Britain; that the scope of action and range within subsequent careers could never match what they had experienced in the I.C.S. Writing in March 1951, he commented,

The ordinary treasury work, though interesting, is quite exacting. I often wonder at the marvellous range of experiences we got in the I.C.S. We seemed to touch there sooner or later upon every phase of human existence. It was remarkable training ground, and its loss to the young manhood is great.⁵⁸³

This, for Hume, is a reflection on the generational change; the move toward a more democratic society and the loss of Britain's position in the world in terms of the opportunities it provided to young British men.

⁵⁸⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 9th September 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁸¹ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 9th September 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁸² London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 5th August 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁸³ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 11th March 1951, written from Nairobi.

Another part of this loss is the *esprit de corps* that he felt he never experienced in other careers after leaving India. He wrote in September 1951 that,

Professionally my career ended in March 1947 in India. Since then I have worked as a mercenary for the highest bidder. There was no *esprit de corps* and no tradition in the Home Civil – there it was a 9-4.30 profession. Here there is plenty of work and so far as it goes interesting. But one works as a lone unit, not part of any tradition or service.⁵⁸⁴

Throughout these comments run several key points. First, Hume mourns the changing society of the late 1940s and 1950s, in Britain, her empire and globally. He feels a biblical sense, drawn from his fervent religiosity, of catastrophic decline and loss of standards. Secondly, his previous negativity about the workings of Anglo-Indian society, which he criticised in earlier letters for their poor church attendance and apparent inefficiency at work, evaporated when placed as memories against the subsequent experience of a colonial society run along different (and to him, inferior) lines. Finally, and above all, the limited attachment he felt to both his second careers in the first decade after leaving India caused him to realise how deeply attached he was to the *esprit de corps* of the I.C.S.

Already in February 1951, Hume had been attracted by an offer of work in Malaya and wrote about the possibility of applying, “the fact is that having been kicked out of the I.C.S. one place is as good as another to me...”⁵⁸⁵ Deciding to stay, he explained the decision in the following terms:

I still do not feel irretrievably wed to the colonial service, or for that matter to any government service. There is a pension advantage in being accepted in the colonial service on a permanent basis, and my position now is (subject of course always to some scallywag government repudiating everything) that I draw I.C.S. pension; and all service from the date I joined the department of health for Scotland will count towards an H.C.S. pension for which a minimum service of ten years in the H.C.S. is necessary... Much may happen before the ten years are up, and there may be many reasons why it may not be worth continuing on the present basis. In fact it is borne in on me more than ever that nothing these days is stable...⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁴ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 9th September 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁸⁵ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 4th February 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁸⁶ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 11th February 1951, written from Nairobi.

Underlying this passage is uncertainty in which route is best to take. Having lost a job in the subcontinent which had seemed secure, his distrust of government is complete, as evidenced in his bitter suggestion of the risk of “some scallawag government repudiating everything”. Beyond the distrust of modern politics, however, is a more general uncertainty about the change happening in society and values which he had thought would outlast him, hence his comment that “nothing these days is stable.” In Hume’s attempts to secure a larger pension lies a more critical question, however. In his letters from Edinburgh, he had been disgusted with the little he could get for his money in post-war Britain and yet, this is perhaps more of a reflection on what Anglo-Indians had come to expect in their living conditions than a realistic complaint about prices and his pension’s value. In Kenya, in contrast, he and his family were able to resume the comfortable servant-run living conditions and matching comfortable paternalism which they had had in India.

Hume’s comments about his servants provide another insight into the way Indian memories were altered or reinforced by contact with an African colonial environment. He compared in his letters the new African servants that worked for his family with previous Indian servants, writing:

Although much more primitive and simple in thought processes than the Indian, these people have a very shrewd intelligence and sense of values, they seem to be very much cleaner in their persons and ways than the Indians, and are much more open and approachable. It is far easier to live as one family with them, than we ever achieved in India.⁵⁸⁷

Presumably part of this “open and approachable” reference must be intended to indicate the lack of caste or purdah restrictions in dealing with members of their domestic staff, and Hume describes in other letters how his wife and children were involved in the births of new babies to their servants and were able to visit and take gifts without controversy. He describes how, “unlike our Indian friends, the better class of African is quite natural and civilised in these ways. The baby is spotlessly clean, in clean clothes, and it is perfectly natural and easy to deal with it.”⁵⁸⁸ Above all, this passage seems to suggest the problems implicit in the religious differences and demands of his Indian

⁵⁸⁷ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 25th March 1951, written from Nairobi.

⁵⁸⁸ London, BL, APAC, ‘Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951’, MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 28th April 1951, written from Nairobi.

staff as compared to these African servants. His reference at the start to African thought processes as more “primitive and simple” than those of Indian servants and colleagues suggests confirmation of the idea of the canny and unscrupulous Indian of British colonial prejudice, and cements the exoticised and essentialised idea of India as overpowered by religious difference and cultural backwardness which had already become such a generally-accepted explanation for partition violence. Thus although Hume is quite positive in his comments on this part of his new life in Kenya, there is consistency in the fact that they reinforce his most simplistic and self-supporting ideas about the regime he had worked for in India.

The progress of the African colonies, particularly as they began to decolonise, attracted the interest of all the men. Sir Conrad Corfield looked to the example of African decolonisation in considering the reasons for partition violence during his memoir-writing. As Political Officer for the Princely States within Punjab, his particular interest was in the fate of these independent areas, and he resigned in advance of 14th August 1947 in order to avoid complicity in the decision-making which he could not agree was right. Looking back in his memoir, however, he compared the preparations made for Indian independence from the early 1920s to what he subsequently observed of events in Africa to suggest how in fact the extent of damage may have been alleviated by these actions. He writes,

At the same time a rapid increase in the Indianisation of the services was begun. As a result, nearly twenty-five years later, when India and Pakistan became independent, the services were able to continue as the backbone of the two new dominions. If only the same thing had been done before the Congo became independent, what a different picture would have emerged! Even in other African countries the colonial power handed over power too soon. If independence had come to India without this preparation, one can imagine how difficult it would have been to prevent more partition than was necessary in 1947.⁵⁸⁹

Thus despite the despair and helplessness he suggests he felt in 1947, the perspective of observing African states becoming independent in the period during which he wrote his memoir led him to the conclusion that even in the matter of the disastrous partition, the Indian case had been managed with more fore-thought than the African ones that followed.

⁵⁸⁹ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 21.

Apart from those men who sought a second colonial role, some of the more successful transitions were made by those who joined the Foreign or Commonwealth Relations Office and found a second incarnation for their knowledge of and interest in the subcontinent. Dick Slater is brief in his description of his later careers, writing:

Postings followed to South America, Russia and Burma, interspersed with spells in London. I was ambassador in Cuba from 1966-70 and High Commissioner in Uganda from 1970-1972 – the F.C.O. apparently being under the impression that Africa was a suitable field for ex-members of the I.C.S.; many of us were sent there. In Uganda I had the melancholy task of presiding over the departure of some 35000 Asians expelled by the ineffable Amin – who expelled me soon after. This was virtually the end of my second career. A third career in the city has been rather more sedate.⁵⁹⁰

Despite substantial travelling, his work for the Foreign Office did not take him back to the subcontinent – indeed, he refers to the common tendency of I.C.S. men to end up being given roles in Africa. In Ronald Belcher's case, however, his experience of the Punjab was to have some continued use to him, explaining perhaps why his is an unusually sanguine memoir. As he was too young to be accepted into the Home Civil Service in 1947, he sat the 'reconstruction' examination and subsequently entered the Commonwealth Relations Office.⁵⁹¹ This desire echoes that of Arthur Williams to "make up lost ground" although in his case the move to Nigeria provided only a temporary home, and also one amidst the 'winding up' of the colonial apparatus. In contrast, Belcher's role looked to the future, in the forging of what was hoped to be a positive institution.

Belcher's second career proved a successful choice, as he was placed immediately in a department "dealing with the economic affairs of India and Pakistan so far as they affected the United Kingdom", and in 1948 attended the Paris session of the United Nations General "at which the Kashmir dispute was an active issue."⁵⁹² Unlike most of his colleagues, Belcher was able to feel that he was part of the changes happening in global politics, rather than being left behind by them. In 1951, Belcher was seconded to the Foreign Office and served in the Washington Embassy, where he was again directly

⁵⁹⁰ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁹¹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 97-99.

⁵⁹² London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 97-99.

concerned with Kashmir.⁵⁹³ In a manner unlike many of the other men, Belcher was able to directly utilise his experiences in the I.C.S. and knowledge of the north-west region of India, now Pakistan. Moreover, following a posting to South Africa and a period as Head of the Commonwealth Office department dealing with the United Nations, Belcher was posted to Delhi as Deputy High Commissioner to India. The experience was a good one, as he comments:

When I was in Delhi, I naturally came across many of my old colleagues and also some Congress politicians from the old Punjab who might well have resented the appearance on the scene of someone from the ‘imperialist’ past but invariably gave me a warm welcome. Indeed it was noticeable that knowledge of my I.C.S. background produced a warmth and confidence in most Indians I came into contact with; especially members of the Indian services, civil and military; this was naturally most helpful to me in my work as well as being personally very agreeable.⁵⁹⁴

Belcher was able to visit the Punjab at the end of that tour of duty and see his old home, the maidan and golf course,⁵⁹⁵ and his meetings with old friends and colleagues seem to have validated his feelings about the I.C.S. reputation. Indeed, Belcher’s reference to the “‘imperialist’ past” suggests his ability to see it in those terms; his new role allowed him to change his attitudes and adapt to the times in a way that many of his colleagues were ostensibly unable to do.

Although Ronald Belcher appears to be an example of an ex-I.C.S. man who felt truly satisfied by his second life, and perhaps Andrew Hume is a diametric extreme example, the experience of these men seems generally to have been closer to that of Hume’s. Disappointment, loss, and a sense of not having their knowledge and training used or appreciated, as well as lack of status in their new roles as compared to the tremendous scope of the I.C.S. years led them to reflect with an increasingly nostalgic glow upon the period they had spent in India. For those who worked abroad again after 1947, repeated moves as more of Britain’s empire gained independence, embedded an additional feeling; of constant insecurity, and ongoing decline. Apart from Belcher, the other memoir-writer most contented with his second career seems to have been Dick Slater. The commonality between the two lies in the status they were able to achieve, as

⁵⁹³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 97-99.

⁵⁹⁴ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 97-99.

⁵⁹⁵ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 99.

both men were able to use their experiences in the Punjab and achieve an upward trajectory in their working lives post-1947.

Cubitt's study of memory suggests the process by which memories are adapted over time to construct a workable narrative of the self. He writes that,

Telling our life's story involves connecting our past and present being not just to each other, but to futures we confidently or hopefully or speculatively anticipate: it involves projection as well as retrospection. As we move through life, some of our earlier expectations are fulfilled (or retain the prospect of possible future fulfilment); others are frustrated or simply abandoned. Fresh waves of experience force us to revise our anticipations of the future, and in doing so – since modifying our vision of the future means modifying our sense of where our past actions and past experience have been leading us – may affect the ways in which earlier phases of our existence are remembered. Youthful hopes are remembered through the lens of later disillusionment; the abandonment of earlier assumptions gets recast in memory as part of a necessary process of 'growing up'.⁵⁹⁶

The rupture for most of these men, between an early life of substantial authority, clarity, and good quality of life, and second and third careers brought precipitately upon them by a change of circumstances they did not anticipate, is played out in these memoirs. Far from abandoning their belief in the regime they had first worked under, ex-I.C.S. men remained largely faithful to a romanticised imagery of their first career. For those who had sought second careers in other colonies, the continued experiences of rupture as these locations also became subject to independence demands, shaped an overall idea of decline and disillusionment with a system with which they had identified themselves. The exceptions to this were given opportunities to use their skills and experience in a new direction, which fitted more successfully with the times in which they lived. For many of the other men, the choice of continued work in empire until this was no longer available left them rooted in an anachronistic identity which made their memories of the Punjab only more valuable to them.

⁵⁹⁶ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 107.

Conclusion

The end of empire in the subcontinent and subsequent necessity to set up new homes, careers and lives – indeed, even identities – in Britain or elsewhere, was a precipitate and challenging demand upon members of the I.C.S. who were mid-career and had largely anticipated living out their working life in the Punjab. Sir Francis Caroe, whose Indian career had begun as a soldier in World War I and then continued with work as a district officer in the North-West Frontier Province, followed by acting as Foreign Secretary to the Viceroy between 1939 and 1945, epitomises most of the men's feelings in his description of arriving 'home' to Britain. He wrote,

We arrived in England late in September to find more than ever that interest in events in India was lukewarm after the war, and nobody very anxious to hear what one had to say, although by this time troubles in the Punjab, Delhi and elsewhere had led to all that loss of life and mass migration which followed on partition. I had a feeling, shared by Kitty, that for us most of the meaning had gone out of life... I was not yet fifty-five and saw no future beckoning. What were we to do, and who cared? It was far harder for us at this juncture than for our predecessors who had retired after fulfilling their years of service; they had been able to leave with full honour and without a wrench. We had no home of our own to go to.⁵⁹⁷

The lack of 'honour' in their departure at this stage was an important aspect of the problems these men were to find in adapting to a new life. Many were much younger than Caroe, but all were accustomed to taking charge of huge areas and numbers of people, and to the status which went with that responsibility. There seemed to be neither closure on the guilt and loss they felt of a home in India, or appreciation of that loss by a British public who were much more concerned with the privations of post-war life and were happy to accept the public presentation of a successful transfer of power.

Against this public discourse, I.C.S. men sought work both at home and abroad. Many made use of the opportunities to be reintegrated into the civil services. The Home Civil Service led those who took up their new career in it to feel a sense of constriction, as the responsibilities were narrower, and the standard of living available in Britain not commensurate with what they had become accustomed to in India. I.C.S. wives had to adapt to becoming homemakers in a much more hands-on way. Some happier examples

⁵⁹⁷ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters of Sir Francis Caroe: loose notes in preparation for a biography', MSS F203/77, written notes on leaving India.

of second careers are found amongst those who joined the Foreign services, as the status and quality of life matched better the freedoms of work in the I.C.S., and the most successful of the Punjab civilians considered in this thesis appear to have been Dick Slater and Ronald Belcher, who chose to use their experience in the Foreign Office. Further colonial postings in Africa also seemed a good option for some of the men in this study, but decolonisation made this a temporary option for many. African states obviously also became independent during these men's careers, creating a sense of all institutional solidity collapsing around them, whilst the work available in these closing years was often not as interesting or as wide-ranging as what they had been accustomed to in India. Although unspoken, it is clear that one of the attractions of work in African colonies must have been the quality of life, as they were once again able to employ a large staff and live a similar lifestyle to that experienced in India.

The combination of unresolved feelings about the first career in the Punjab, alongside what were often disappointing and disjointed experiences in subsequent careers, led these men to value the first experience and their memories of it more as the years passed, so that by the time the memoirs came to be written, a nostalgic imagery was pervasive. This did not come about in isolation, however: the surviving sense of *esprit de corps* meant that where these men came across other ex-I.C.S. civilians, they stuck together and retained the sense of identity which had been intrinsic to that organisation. Indeed, one of Hume's letters describes the appearance of an ex-I.P.S. officer in Kenya in June 1951, writing:

Wooldridge was born in Quetta in 1901 and so is a few years older than I am. He of course was flung out of the Indian Political for 'constitutional' reasons, just as I was from our service. It is nice to meet a gentleman and one who speaks the same language.⁵⁹⁸

This reference to speaking the "same language" presumably indicates common attitudes and values, but must also have been literal, as ex-Anglo-Indians often drew the raised eyebrows of neighbours for their casual use of Urdu terms. Above all, though, Wooldridge is immediately identified as a friend and brother-in-arms due to the survival of attachment to the I.C.S. identity, above and beyond any new commitment.

⁵⁹⁸ London, BL, APAC, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents, 1949-1951', MSS Eur D724/20, letter dated 24th June 1951, written from Nairobi.

By the 1960s and 1970s, when the memoirs were recorded, the terms by which life in India was described were proscribed by this sense of *esprit de corps*, as is apparent in Philip Mason's introduction to *Plain Tales from the Raj*. The community identity survived in a bundle of imagery of life in India; romanticised, exoticised, and rendered proud and exciting both to support individual and community self-worth, and to sell that to the British public. As Stuart Hall suggests "[identities] relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself... They arise from the narrativisation of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity..."⁵⁹⁹ The presentation of *Raj* imagery was both what disappointed ex-colonials wanted to talk about, and what the British public were interested in hearing. Indeed, Cubitt's work suggests how individual memory perhaps is always subsumed by these demands of wider communities, both intrinsic and extrinsic. He explains how,

in Michael Schudson's conception of memory, by contrast, there is no such room for ambiguity: the point is not merely that memory exceeds the limits of individual recollection, but that 'in an important sense, there is no such thing as individual memory at all', since most of the information about the past that individuals rely on in orientating themselves in the present is not stored in their own individual minds, but is 'distributed across social institutions and cultural artefacts'. The individual, for Schudson, merely 'piggybacks on the social and cultural practices of memory' that his or her society has developed.⁶⁰⁰

Whilst ex-colonials retained their own networks and friendships through which memories of India were discussed and crystallised, the public demand for a certain presentation of empire as its last remnants were decolonised is more intangible, mixed and complex. The next two chapters will consider not so much the social memory through which Anglo-Indians constructed such a remarkably uniform imagery of the empire in which they had worked, but Britain's cultural memory of empire. The ex-Anglo-Indians who were presenting their memories for public consumption by the 1960s and 1970s were motivated by a cocktail of disillusionment and desire to retain the core of an identity to which they could cling throughout the loss of their different 'home's, but the public appetite to hear these tales of days past lay both in a history

⁵⁹⁹ Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Paul Du Gay and Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1996), p. 4.

⁶⁰⁰ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 11.

compiled from a certain kind of imperial fiction and imagery, and a future which appeared to have little place for a 'Great' Britain.

Chapter Five

The India of fiction: popular narratives of the colonial experience

Returning to Britain in 1947, ex-I.C.S. men found themselves in a country which had an ambivalent relationship with its extensive empire, and did not seem deeply moved by the devolution of power in the subcontinent. In particular, there was no popular awareness of the extent of partition violence or the complexities of the two state solution. Historians like Catherine Hall and Antoinette Burton have argued for the pervasive effect of imperial culture on British society,⁶⁰¹ and yet the everyday impact of this global position on British citizens in the metropole is a difficult thing to pinpoint. Indeed, at the other end of the spectrum, Bernard Porter suggests it is mistake to assume the self-evidence of empire as an aspect of British life constantly at the forefront; rather, he argues that empire happened ‘out there’ and was the occupation of a small cadre of men whose lives were entirely lived in it.⁶⁰² Certainly, Elizabeth Buettner’s work on *Empire Families* indicates the way the Indian empire became something of a family trade, shaping a distinctive lifestyle which alienated Anglo-Indians when they had cause to return to Britain.⁶⁰³ This isolation of individuals who had worked in empire, however, does not preclude the existence of a more generalised emotional response to the imagery of empire, even if this was highly constructed and unrealistic. Indeed, whilst empire’s ‘experts’ often found themselves unable to reconnect with the Britain they returned to at the end of their Indian careers, this lack of public understanding of the reality and work of empire did not particularly indicate a change in the reach of imperial ideas. The inability of the British public to recognise the colonial civil servant says more about the *nature* of imperial culture in the metropole than it does about the extent. British people knew their empire through public statuary, royal regalia, film reels of highly selected material, childhood annuals and comics, and through a well-embedded corpus of imperial literature. In none of this was the *work* of empire the focus; rather, the romance, the heroism, the glamour and often the eccentricity of colonial lifestyles were reiterated by these works.

⁶⁰¹ Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire*.

⁶⁰² Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*.

⁶⁰³ Buettner, *Empire Families*.

The appearance in Britain in the decades after World War II of disenchanted colonial administrators and commonwealth immigrants brought empire ‘home’ in a much more realistic way, but did not necessarily displace the ambience of imperial memories. The two things had a separate lineage: the one, practical face of empire putting sugar and tea on the breakfast table, and providing cheap and stable prices of consumer goods at the expense of imperial subjects was perhaps so self-evident an aspect of British life as to be unnoticed as part of an imperial culture; in contrast, the imagination of colonial lifestyles, drawing on the Victorian-constructed ideals of white custodianship of ‘lesser races’ pervaded British life through the propagandised presentation of imperial novelists and film-makers. The irony of this latter element of imperial culture was that it was of relative short-standing, having truly developed only in the last century of Britain’s lifetime as head of a global empire, and having gained momentum right into the last decades. As John Mackenzie suggests,

It seems to be one of the apparent curiosities of British imperial history that, when the empire encountered the economic, political and constitutional crises that would ultimately bring it down, British domestic culture came to emphasise colonial relationships as never before. There were several reasons. There is often a time lapse in ideas filtering into popular culture. New entertainment technologies, such as cinema and radio, cling to tested ways to ensure their success. The practitioners of the techniques of propaganda, advertising, and public relations stuck to eternal verities around which a national consensus had formed.⁶⁰⁴

The idea of imperial propaganda over-reaching the era of empire can be over-stated though. Indeed, Cain and Hopkins argue that “far from being in decline, imperialism and empire were revitalised during the war and in the period of reconstruction which followed.”⁶⁰⁵ It is easy to draw from the independence of India and Pakistan a teleological assumption of an era of decline, ‘the winds of change’ blowing in the aftermath of World War II, but neither the contemporary impression or policy necessarily reflected any such trend. The reportage of the transfer of power to India and Pakistan was instead bound up as a success, using all the terminology of colonial responsibility to suggest a reasoned and mature process, producing a happy ending for all.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ John M. Mackenzie, ‘The Popular Culture of Empire in Britain’, in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV – The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, CBE, D. Litt, FBA (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 230.

⁶⁰⁵ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, p. 639.

⁶⁰⁶ Darwin, ‘British Decolonisation Since 1945’, p. 188.

In this chapter, I will consider the style deployed by novelists of British India to build up the context of the post-colonial Britain to which I.C.S. men returned – and within which they re-constructed their memories into memoirs for public consumption. The genre of Anglo-Indian fiction is a wide one, both chronologically and in terms of scope and quality. However, there are many consistent features – clichés indeed – that defined the image of life in India for many generations of British readers. Paramount among these is the image of the *memsahib*, the white woman patrolling the racial boundaries of the colonial environment. Her significance was reiterated by the 1857 mutiny which resounds throughout the genre, notably in the common theme of a white woman’s rape by an Indian man polarising and uniting the racial communities. This sexual potency forms one half of the *memsahib* characterisation. The other half is the corrupt white woman: not protecting whiteness so much as disrupting the possibility of cordial inter-racial relations through her vindictive and shallow character. E. M. Forster’s Club women are the archetype of this particular cliché.⁶⁰⁷ *A Passage to India* also exemplifies another legacy of 1857 which underlies much of Anglo-Indian fiction: this is the idea of India as possessing a mystique, a quality of mystery and deep power which the British feared they could not seriously hope to penetrate. In *A Passage to India*, this is both emphasised in the geography of the Marabar caves and in the inability of the will to friendship between Fielding and Aziz to surmount the un-defined but powerful pressure against any understanding developing between them.⁶⁰⁸

These underlying fears of Anglo-India are an important aspect of many novels of the genre and have been subject to substantial literary critique. The aspects I wish to consider here, however, are those directly relating to the experiences I.C.S. men had to convey in their memoirs, to consider the fictional standard set in these particular areas. The working life of colonial India is a subject that gets very little detailed coverage in novels, despite the fact that many were written by retired members of the services with insight into the working routine. Paul Scott complained of this frustrating pattern whilst writing *The Raj Quartet* and notably criticised *Plain Tales from the Raj* for containing only ten pages out of 220 which referred to the work routine.⁶⁰⁹ Novels of Anglo-India

⁶⁰⁷ E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (Penguin Classics: London, 2000), p. 48.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁶⁰⁹ Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 156.

have tended rather to focus on depicting the norms of what was increasingly seen as a fascinatingly anachronistic society. The superior quality of life that could be afforded in India, as well as the strict social hierarchy, drew derision and interest from within Britain, and the Anglo-Indian character became a recognisable backdrop to many nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels. The first section of this chapter will consider this fictional presentation of the lifestyle and social norms of late colonial India, the context in which I.C.S. probationers found themselves in the late 1930s. In the second section, I will consider specifically the representation of both the I.C.S. and the Punjab in colonial fiction. The north-west often featured as the romantic backdrop in novels from which many of the probationers gleaned their first images of their future working home, whilst the status and reputation of the I.C.S. was similarly built up in this unofficial format. This imagery is of significance both to the expectations the probationers held in the 1920s and 1930s, and to the backdrop of fictional representations on which they were drawing in the 1960s and 1970s. The final section will then consider the colonial public sphere under threat: the common theme in colonial novels of the looming fear of violence and the inability to control it which was to be so relevant to this final generation of civilians. These often popular novels offered a window onto an unfamiliar lifestyle for British readers, and as such had the power to define the terms in which colonial India was represented to, and imagined by, those in the imperial metropole. Members of the I.C.S. often joined in by gaining their first ideas about their postings from this corpus of literature, becoming familiar with the terms of a genre to which they would contribute their memoirs after their premature removal from office in the Punjab. As such, understanding the key themes of these novels is vital to the process of assessing the context in which Anglo-Indian civil servants interpreted their working life in the Punjab, committed it to memory, and structured their memories in later years for public presentation.

It is important to consider in approaching imperial fiction that despite common themes re-occurring over the course of a century or more, there were distinct phases within this writing and different attitudes taken in presenting these same issues. Nineteenth-century novelisations of empire, like Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and Henry Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* can be understood in two ways, as Andrew Thompson suggests. To an extent, "it can be argued that in view of the powerful hold of these authors over the public imagination, the experiences of empire they related were of crucial significance

in forming popular perceptions of what Indian and Southern African societies were actually like.”⁶¹⁰ However, Thompson equally emphasises the view that these men “were public spokesmen for empire, who, through their writing, played a key role in justifying and legitimising British imperial rule.”⁶¹¹ The hugely influential position of Kipling makes him a controversial figure. James Lunt suggests quite differently that rather than acting as a spokesman for empire, Kipling gained a bad reputation among Anglo-Indians themselves while his imagery of a community with poor tastes and slack morals took firm root at home.⁶¹² These images loomed large over the genre in general so that even Paul Scott, writing almost a century later, had to contend with an overwhelming focus on Kipling and Forster among reviewers, and subsequent constant comparisons with them.⁶¹³ The work of Forster and Orwell in the 1920s and 1930s brought a more troubled image of colonial India to the fore, starting to consider although not fully representing the concerns of the subjects of empire, but doing so against a backdrop of what still appeared as a firm bastion of colonial control. As Peter Morey suggests, “after 1947, issues of self-criticism and nostalgia come to the fore.”⁶¹⁴ Examples of both are used in this chapter; J. G. Farrell and Paul Scott start to challenge and play with the conventions of the form, achieving “a degree of freedom from the colonial mindset”,⁶¹⁵ whereas for writers like M. M. Kaye and John Masters, the act of writing is more by way of memorialising a lost home and way of life.

Living in the past: the anachronism of Anglo-Indian society

At the heart of literary representations of the Anglo-Indian public sphere lay the irony of a community seeking to perform and maintain ‘Britishness’ against the pressure of their Indian environment whilst in fact adopting a set of social norms which constructed in them a hybrid being, characterised by their association with empire and its values. The genre attracted interest among British audiences exactly because of the eccentric distinctiveness of ex-colonials to metropolitan eyes. Indeed, the image leaked into

⁶¹⁰ Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), pp. 4-5.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁶¹² James Lunt, ‘Introduction’ in *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937*, by Dennis Kincaid (London: Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 287.

⁶¹³ Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 121.

⁶¹⁴ Morey, *Fictions of India*, p. 10.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

general fiction with characters like Thackeray's Jos Sedley; the effeminate and indulged exemplar of a 'nabob'.⁶¹⁶ Although this character faded with the formalisation of empire through the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown in 1858, the Anglo-Indian character did retain the image of being over-indulged and rather unhealthy. Daphne Kutzer indicates the centrality of an Indian backdrop to Frances Hodgson Burnett's novels, arguing that "the mere fact that two of Burnett's most famous novels, *A Little Princess* (1905) and *The Secret Garden* (1911), begin in India suggests how omnipresent the empire, and especially India, was at the time," and indicating the way in which "empire and its values are not merely superficial gloss to the stories, but have a profound effect on how the stories are shaped, and on what values they project to the reader."⁶¹⁷ In *The Secret Garden*, Hodgson-Burnett's eventual heroine comes to Yorkshire from India and exemplifies apparently Anglo-Indian characteristics.⁶¹⁸ Not only is her personality spoiled by Indian indulgence - the combination of a feckless *memsahib* mother and devoted servants - but physically she also bears the marks of an Indian childhood in what is described as her "sallow" complexion.⁶¹⁹ Burnett's solution to Mary Lennox's sickliness was what Elizabeth Buettner describes as the key elements of British life that were considered healthy, namely "good English food, fresh milk, sea-bathing and bracing air".⁶²⁰ In this way, fictional imagery of British characters exposed to India bore out racial conceptions of the 'Orient' as corrupting and over-sexualised, weakening the racial characteristics of the white man, so successfully that the representation gained common currency outside the genre itself as a recognisable character in general literature as in life. Indeed, writing his inter-war novel *Coming Up For Air*, George Orwell evokes the same fallow complexions, unhealthy air and exotic memorabilia to describe his main character's returned Anglo-Indian in-laws.⁶²¹ So insidious was the discourse of exoticised India that the characters were familiar with little introduction.

The fear of 'giving in' to the Indian environment led the British to live by strict codes of etiquette, disciplining both the body itself to overcome its circumstances through an

⁶¹⁶ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, edited by J. I. M. Stewart (London: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 74-75. Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811 but left India at the age of six.

⁶¹⁷ M. Daphne Kutzer, *Empire's Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books* (New York; London: Garland Publishing Inc., 2000), p. 48.

⁶¹⁸ Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (London: William Heinemann, 1911).

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁶²⁰ Buettner, *Empire Families*, p. 52.

⁶²¹ George Orwell, *Coming Up for Air* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1986), pp. 135-137.

evolving series of gadgets or recommended fabrics, and also patrolling the boundary between the colonial public sphere and its Indian surroundings, performing and maintaining British prestige. The unique nature of the society that resulted drew the interest of novelists, and is often commented upon in fiction through the device of a visitor newly arrived in India and mystified by the society they found. In J. G. Farrell's mutiny-inspired novel, *The Siege at Krishnapur*, the characters of Fleury and his sister Miriam perform this role. Farrell's books, written in the 1970s, attracted interest and critical acclaim for the way they both recognised and subverted the conventions of the genre; Peter Morey goes so far as to describe both Farrell and Paul Scott as 'post-orientalist' as a result of this ability.⁶²² Farrell's character Fleury finds himself mistrusted in India because of his preference for music and academia over sports,⁶²³ indicating the value placed upon fitness and horsemanship in particular as set against bookishness or any form of cultural pursuits. In the days before the siege begins, Fleury attends a picnic and a dance, part of which is described in this passage:

It was time for the *galloppe*. As they took up their positions on the floor Louise raised her eyes and gazed at Fleury in an enquiring sort of way. But Fleury was wool-gathering, he was thinking complacently that in London one would not still have seen gentlemen wearing brown evening dress coats as one did here ... and of how he was suffocated in his own black evening dress coat, and of what a strong smell of sweat there was down here on the floor, and of whether he could possibly survive the coming dance.⁶²⁴

The wearing of full evening dress during the hot weather both shocks Fleury and strikes him as behind the fashion, despite the custom having been maintained specifically to demonstrate 'Britishness'.

Of course, the nature of identity evolves, with constantly changing fashions and customs defining the culture of a society. The distance between Britain and India both delayed the arrival of new ideas and fashions, and made them very expensive when they did arrive. What was apparent to the British in the metropole if not those in Anglo-India themselves was that their identity too had evolved, as a hybrid and rather anachronistic attempt at 'Britishness'. As Collingham argues, the 'Britishness' of Anglo-India set particular store by clothing which demonstrated their incongruity with the Indian environment, or claimed to protect them from it. She suggests that "the suit gained

⁶²² Morey, *Fictions of India*, p. 13.

⁶²³ Farrell, *The Siege of Krishnapur*, p. 35.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

additional symbolic significance in the colonies by the fact that it made no concessions to context.”⁶²⁵ Furthermore, “carelessness with regard to retaining and constraining the body ... carried additional echoes of racial degeneration.”⁶²⁶ These values marked Anglo-Indians out as culturally distinct from the ‘Britishness’ they purported to maintain. Once they had left India in 1947, the men noticed these changes themselves, taking them as a decline in standards. Writing to his parents from his new posting in Nairobi, Andrew Hume wrote in 1951, “for us at any rate ‘to dine out’ is the rarest occurrence, and when that rare phenomenon does take place this ‘equalised’ generation seldom dresses what we would have called properly fifteen years ago in India.”⁶²⁷ Rather than feeling his own conspicuousness, Hume and his wife took this all as “modern decay of manners.”⁶²⁸ The difference between their Indian habits and what was the norm in other parts of the Empire was not lost on them though, as Hume’s letters convey consistently his feelings of having lost a vocation and a society whose norms he knew and was comfortable with, and having subsequently not found a place.

Antiquated ideas extended to relations between the sexes as well as to clothing norms. Fleury’s sister Miriam cares for the Collector in *The Siege of Krishnapur* following his descent into serious illness. When he starts to recover, the siege situation is more grave than ever, with substantial numbers of the British community dying of cholera or being killed. The Collector says to Miriam, “Now that I have recovered we must think of your reputation Mrs Lang.”, to which her astonished response is “after all this, Mr Hopkins, do you think that reputations still matter?”⁶²⁹ The Collector’s conclusion is that “if they don’t matter, then nothing does. We must obey the rules.”⁶³⁰ While Miriam’s position as the outsider demonstrates the contrast between contemporary British and Anglo-Indian British social norms, the comment also suggests the idea of maintaining standards in the eyes of those to be ruled. In their memoirs, ex-I.C.S. men of the 1930s and 1940s reflect specifically on having the importance of these standards explained to them upon their arrival. As we saw in chapter three, Bill Cowley’s first experience of living in the Punjab was in the home of Arthur and Marjorie Williams,

⁶²⁵ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 65.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶²⁷ London, BL, APAC, Letters of Andrew Hume to his parents, 1949-1951, letter dated 9th September 1951.

⁶²⁸ London, BL, APAC, Hume 1949-1951, letter dated 9th September 1951.

⁶²⁹ J. G. Farrell, *The Siege of Krishnapur* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p. 246.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

where he remembers strict instructions on deportment and etiquette being issued by his hostess.⁶³¹

The image of the eccentric civilian is also reiterated by the memoirs. Dick Slater described his early impressions of superior Angus MacDonald, carefully contrasting the style of imperialism he stood for with his own:

I look back on him now with admiration and affection, but to begin with he came as a shock. A tubby Scot with an uncompromising accent, he was as far removed as anybody could be from the liberal, humanist, scholarly image which I had come to associate with the I.C.S. and to which I was myself by temperament inclined. His methods were tough and direct, his language basic and seldom complimentary to Indians. I began to wonder whether I had fallen into the hands of an arch-racist.⁶³²

These passages from the memoirs suggest how the archetypal characters of Anglo-Indian fiction were known to I.C.S. men and that the style of writing about them pervaded their approach to memoir writing. This is not to suggest that these encounters, or the probationers' surprised response to them, were fabricated, but rather that the fact that these were the memories brought to mind several decades later and the style in which they are described reflects a certain anticipation of what their audience might expect to read. Equally, the need to contrast their own era with these encounters suggests a recognition of this kind of imagery as a pervasive popular context through which their own writing would be interpreted.

The darker aspect of the image of Anglo-India as an etiquette-dominated, claustrophobic society in which the order of precedence ruled and individuals were expected to maintain their behaviour according to strict social standards, was the sense that Anglo-Indian lives were rather empty and as a result filled with drinking, affairs and gossip. This conceptualisation does not take into account the working lives of the civil service or army, but focuses on the infamous *memsahib* and in particular on the glamour of the hill station 'season'. Whilst this aspect of Anglo-Indian life held the reader's attention because of the fascination of scandal, the luxury of lives where the domestic work was entirely taken on by servants also held a certain glamour which created an impression in novels of the period. Orwell's character Elizabeth Lackersteen

⁶³¹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 35.

⁶³² London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 7.

reflects with pleasure in *Burmese Days* that “it was almost as nice as being really rich, the way people lived in India.”⁶³³ E. M. Collingham argues that, “by resembling the social life of the leisured classes, for whom socialising was a public act which established status while providing pleasure, the social life of the Anglo-Indians cast an aura of tradition and nobility over Anglo-Indian officialdom.”⁶³⁴ The availability of domestic staff for every aspect of home life allowed a better quality of life and affected status, but also meant that privacy was an impossibility in Anglo-India; with such a small British community spread over the subcontinent, and frequently posted to new stations, the society became intensely parochial. This unavoidable intimacy, created by the penetration of servants into the most private aspects of Anglo-Indian life meant that however careful individuals were in their personal comportment, any slips would quickly become common knowledge throughout the British and Indian communities. Although Orwell’s early novel set in the colonial environment seeks to subvert the romantic imagery in the same way Farrell’s writing does, he was writing from an entirely different perspective, as a retired member of the colonial police. First published in 1934, the bleakness of the setting and utter obnoxiousness of Orwell’s characters in *Burmese Days* nonetheless produce a similar effect to Farrell’s ideas, as they both seek “to puncture the pretensions which buoy up the British self-image even today and which have allowed an ongoing romanticisation of the colonial connection with India.”⁶³⁵

The fear of being caught out in behaviour that was less than prestigious features in almost all novels of Anglo-India, and is often tied up with the difficulties experienced by so-called ‘Eurasians’, people of mixed Indian and British ancestry. The exposure of mixed race parentage in people who had a sufficiently pale skin to maintain a pretence of being purely British is used in several novels to highlight both the parochialism and intolerance of the Anglo-Indian community. In M. M. Kaye’s *The Far Pavilions*, it emerges that George Garforth, an apparently respectable young man in trade, has an Indian grandmother, at which point his erstwhile friend Belinda sets out to expose him in order to distance herself from the social damage the revelation will cause. Kaye writes:

⁶³³ George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), p. 92.

⁶³⁴ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 153.

⁶³⁵ Morey, *Fictions of India*, p. 5.

Yet now she was planning to expose him as a liar and a half-caste to that same society, knowing full-well that although they might forgive the first, they would neither forgive nor forget the second. George would be ruined socially, for Anglo-India was intensely parochial and the story would follow him up and down the country. Wherever he went there would always be someone who knew it, or had heard it from someone else, and the virtuous middle-class matrons would whisper behind their hands while their daughters snubbed him and their menfolk laughed and blackballed him at their clubs.⁶³⁶

Under these circumstances, Garforth chooses in preference to shoot himself. Similarly, in Paul Scott's *The Alien Sky*, Dorothy Gower lives in constant fear of being caught out in her claims of a childhood and education 'at home' in Britain, as her life has in fact been entirely an Indian one.⁶³⁷ Set in June 1947, this book suggests the difficulty faced by people of mixed race who had to more or less of an extent pretended to be British when it came to 'returning home'; in Dorothy's case, she is unable either to travel to Britain for fear of exposure, or to explain why to her husband.⁶³⁸ In both cases, social disgrace is portrayed as absolute in a society with very firm rules about public behaviour, and zero tolerance for inter-racial sexual encounters.

Of course, underlying public exposure were the everyday occupations for which particularly Anglo-Indian women were infamous; drinking and gossiping in the Club. As we saw in chapter three, Ronald Belcher's first impressions of the Punjab, particularly of the hill stations he visited, suggest not only truth to this depiction but also continuity into the final years of the *Raj*.⁶³⁹ For these men, the experience of having arrived in Punjab during the final years of British rule, and then having had many years' subsequent experiences before committing their memories to paper perhaps allowed them to recognise the anachronism of the society in a way that was not possible for earlier generations. Having moved on to second and third careers, the vantage-point from which they viewed their first was with the teleological awareness of the fact that their years in empire had been its closing ones. Thus situated as witnesses to an historic and much-debated period and location, the memoirs necessarily are over-shadowed by the questions of why independence happened when it did, whether the administration had run out of steam, and, from the perspective of a post-colonial age, what mentality

⁶³⁶ M. M. Kaye, *The Far Pavilions* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 197.

⁶³⁷ Paul Scott, *The Alien Sky* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953), pp. 195-209.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-209.

⁶³⁹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 19-20.

made possible the governing of a subject people? Set against this was the men's own experience of finding themselves to be anachronistic figures in a fast-changing post-war and post-colonial world after 1947. The line they draw is unsurprisingly an ambivalent one: with anecdotes of old-fashioned behaviour, from which they then seek to distance themselves; pride in what they felt they had achieved, set against some attempt to recognise changing attitudes to the empire's existence.

The context in which the men wrote was significantly shaped by the imagery of *Raj*-era India disseminated in Anglo-Indian fiction, and they often overtly recognise this. The Anglo-Indian is in many ways an object of fond satire, desperately disciplining the body according to ostensibly 'British' norms, and unaware of the distinctiveness of the hybrid body they in fact created. As Collingham suggests of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian,

The Anglo-Indian bodily map of tastes, desires and deportment – a preference for British vegetables combined with a continued love of curry; the restraining black broadcloth suit alternating with a tropical white suit; the cheroot; British wives tempered with 'Hindoostanee nights' – constructed a distinctively Anglo-Indian body, clearly distinguishable from the Victorian body in the metropole.⁶⁴⁰

In 1947, returning British civil servants were presented with the distinctiveness of their identity in a way unlike previous generations. Having returned in the early years of their career, these people had to construct a new place for themselves in society, unlike the retirees of previous decades who could isolate themselves in Anglo-Indian communities within which they need not be challenged to restore a more 'British' identity. Equally, the memoirs seek to suggest in their presentation of Anglo-Indian characters and social life that although there *was* an eccentric and obsolete aspect to it, *they* were not part of it. Rather, the memoirs emphasise their expectation of India becoming independent during the course of their careers, and in some cases try to present themselves as more progressive than their older colleagues. On their return in 1947, however, their distinctiveness as Anglo-Indians was made forcibly apparent to them. What novels of the *Raj* are still continuing to be absorbed by is this very distinctiveness; the outdated standards of behaviour, stiff upper lip and racial and social hierarchies.

⁶⁴⁰ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 80.

The terrible irony of the hybrid identity depicted in fiction was that however curious and obvious it may have been to the British in the metropole, it was only truly apparent to Anglo-Indians themselves on their return ‘home’, when they realised just how completely it was not ‘home’ any longer. Orwell’s character Flory realises this after a period of home leave:

Something turned over in Flory’s heart. It was one of those moments when one becomes conscious of a vast change and deterioration in one’s life. For he had realised, suddenly, that in his heart he was glad to be coming back. This country which he hated was now his native country, his home. He had lived here ten years, and every particle of his body was compounded of Burmese soil... He had sent deep roots, perhaps his deepest, into a foreign country. Since then he had not even applied for home leave... For he had realised that merely to go back to England was no remedy for loneliness; he had grasped the special nature of the hell that is reserved for Anglo-Indians. Ah, those poor prosing old wrecks in Bath and Cheltenham. Those tomb-like boarding houses with Anglo-Indians littered about in all stages of de-composition, all talking and talking about what happened in Boggleywalah in ’88! Poor devils, they know what it means to have left their heart in an alien and hated country.⁶⁴¹

For those civilians leaving India in 1947, the cleavage was complete: not only were their careers in India at an end, but the values which had allowed the empire to be maintained were losing hold in British society. Now they were not only quaint reminders of a distant part of ‘greater Britain’, but reminders of the past – and the attitudes that had governed it.

The frontier life: building the reputation of Punjab and the I.C.S.

Many of the I.C.S. recruits mention the reputation of the Punjab as a motivating factor in their decision to apply. This was in part instilled in them by the recruitment drive of the 1930s, and particularly the element of ex-I.C.S. men visiting universities to give stirring talks.⁶⁴² One of Andrew Hume’s letters recorded such a talk in 1923. Whilst at

⁶⁴¹ Orwell, *Burmese Days*, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁴² Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 41.

Cambridge, he was present during a visit by a “Mr. Bruce of Australia to speak on the dominions and the British Empire.”⁶⁴³ He wrote of it,

he spoke as you would expect a colonial to speak, openly to the point and interesting; chiefly of course about Australia. His point was the absolute necessity of the British Commonwealth of Nations being one solid whole, as the peace of the world was dependent on it... Finally, he advised anybody present (or otherwise) who did not exactly know what to do, to go to the Dominions, where if he was prepared to work, success was almost a certainty... It was an address I would have given anything for you all to have heard. It so impressed me that I missed an important lecture, to go and hear him again at 5.30...⁶⁴⁴

Six months later, Hume began his preparations for the civil service examinations, noting that he and his friend “have exactly the same desires about the civil service, except that he would prefer the Home Civil which I would prefer to avoid.”⁶⁴⁵

The other source of information, or at least inspiration, about India was very often fiction. Anglo-Indian novels form an important part of the foundation of a mythical status for both the north-west of India and the I.C.S. itself. Kipling is consistently mentioned in the memoirs for the exciting and romantic portrait he had painted of colonial life in India, focussed particularly on the Punjab. Anglo-Indian romances tend to use the frontier life as a backdrop, due to its reputation as the most challenging posting, requiring the most resourceful and independent men, as set against Bengal and Uttar Pradesh which are used to represent communal and caste strife. M. M. Kaye’s *The Far Pavilions*, published in 1979, is a key example. Kaye was a contemporary of Paul Scott – indeed, Scott acted as her agent⁶⁴⁶ – but her work did not engage the same critical style but instead indulged her own and a more general nostalgia for a romantic image of India. *The Far Pavilions* is a shameless romance, focussing on the bravery and brilliance of the Corps of Guides, echoed by the Spartan landscape they are set against and the tough native people they work alongside.⁶⁴⁷ When Ash disgraces himself, he is sent away to a regiment in Gujarat and compares his new posting unfavourably to the wild and challenging atmosphere of the north-west. Kaye writes,

⁶⁴³ London, BL, APAC, Letters of Andrew Hume to his parents, 1923-1924, MSS Eur D724/11, letter dated 25th November 1923.

⁶⁴⁴ London, BL, APAC, Hume 1923-1924, MSS Eur D724/11, letter dated 25th November 1923.

⁶⁴⁵ London, BL, APAC, Hume 1923-1924, MSS Eur D724/11, letter dated 11th May 1924.

⁶⁴⁶ Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 56.

⁶⁴⁷ Kaye, *The Far Pavilions*.

It was set in flat, featureless surroundings near the banks of the Sabermati river, and the fertile land was as different from the harsh, lion-coloured Border country as the *sowars* of Roper's Horse were different, both in appearance and temperament, from the men of the frontier force regiments; the Gujaratis being by nature a peace-loving folk whose best-known proverb is 'Make friends with your enemy'. Their senior officers struck Ash as being surprisingly old and staid, and far more set in their ways than those in his own regiment; while as for their commanding officer, Colonel Pomfret, he might have been Rip Van Winkle in person, complete with ragged white beard and a set of ideas that were at least fifty years out of date.⁶⁴⁸

Kaye's description of the landscape to emphasise the character of both local people and the British officers stationed there echoes a tradition of matching native characteristics to the topography of their region.⁶⁴⁹ The wild landscape of the frontier regions is thus thought to breed an independent, hardy man, of better quality than those living in a less challenging area.

Susan Bayly emphasises this aspect of anthropological thinking about India, writing, "this distinction between casteless mountaineers and caste-'fettered' tropical lowlanders became a major theme in the racial classification schemes devised by the ethnologists of the later nineteenth century."⁶⁵⁰ This frame of reference reflected thinking in Europe, with the terms used to describe highlanders in Scotland having significant commonality with the phrases found in descriptions of Punjabis. As Bayly argues, "from its earliest manifestations, ethnology had reflected changing trends in European intellectual fashion, and its aim had also been shaped by political change, not just in colonial societies like India, but in Britain and other European states."⁶⁵¹ J. G. Farrell indicates

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 510.

William Boyd, *An Ice-Cream War* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1982), p. 121: Boyd similarly indicates the reputation of Punjab as compared with other regions. The character Gabriel Cobb serves in the Indian Army with a Punjabi regiment and is appalled when, after returning to his regiment in the Punjab, he is attached to the 69th Palamcottah Light Infantry, "a third-rate Indian regiment from the little-regarded Bangalore Brigade in Madras" and sent to fight in East Africa instead of Europe.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁹ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, pp. 35-36: In describing his posting to Attock, Le Bailly demonstrates the surviving tendency to associate geography with human characteristics, as he writes, "the population is about half a million. Due to its poverty the district had little chance of developing its scarce resources and the chief occupation of the inhabitants who remained at home was pursuing vendettas. This was perhaps the consequence of the bracing climate. I have noticed a similar tendency – though not with of course the same resort to violent crime – in high-lying areas in the UK notably N. Wilts."

⁶⁵⁰ Bayly, "'Caste' and 'Race' in the Colonial Ethnography of India', p. 176.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., p. 186.

these kind of pseudo-scientific trends, in particular the theory of skull measurement in defining racial difference, in *The Siege at Krishnapur* which has ideas of scientific superiority underlying its characters' sense of mission in India.⁶⁵² William Cowley's comments about the Punjab are insistent about its uniqueness within India; he writes,

In the Punjab you were not conscious of any colour bar or racial bar either way. I had never been conscious of any distrust or diffidence because I was a shade paler than my companions. In point of fact the pale Punjabis tended to look down on the dark Dravidians from the south. There was more of an obvious gulf between the Punjab and Madras than between the Punjab and Europe. An average Punjabi could pass for a Spaniard or a Marseillaise any day. Some of the hill women had an almost north European complexion. But colour was a very minor factor. The real point was that the British could feel completely at home in the Punjab and never be conscious of any anti-British feeling. This was not so in the rest of India.⁶⁵³

Key, then, to the conception of the Punjab was not only the superiority of British officers serving in the province, but of the Punjabis themselves. Even in the final years of the *Raj*, Cowley seeks to emphasise, Punjab was not like elsewhere in India; not troubled by the same problems until the British decision to leave. His conception is stated using the pseudo-science of the colonial regime, which is a natural reference point drawn from both his official work and the terms of British fiction.

The status of the I.C.S. also underlies Anglo-Indian fiction.⁶⁵⁴ In Orwell's *Burmese Days*, the other characters feel a respectful awkwardness about the District Commissioner, Mr. MacGregor. Orwell writes, "the good nature in his face was genuine, and yet there was such a wilful geniality about him, such a strenuous air of being off duty and forgetting his official rank, that no one was ever quite at ease in his

⁶⁵² Farrell, *The Siege at Krishnapur*, p. 205.

⁶⁵³ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 103.

⁶⁵⁴ Boyd, *An Ice-Cream War*, p. 77-78: Boyd's novels of colonial Africa touch insightfully upon Indian themes as well. The character Charis Cobb comes from an Anglo-Indian family and her father worked as a railway engineer: "then he was posted up the line to a small garrison town and, if anything, Charis was bored even bluer than she was in Bristol. Like it or not, she became one of the Railway People – no matter how elevated her father's position as chief engineer – and therefore distinct from Canal People, Army People or Government People. It was true that senior Europeans in the four groups happily intermingled at tennis parties, sales-of-work, polo matches and regimental sports days, but Charis soon grew aware that try to ignore or overcome it as she might, she carried the categorisation with her wherever she went. The only time she felt she left it behind was when the European population moved up from the garrison town on the plains to the popular hill station of Mahar Tal. There were no Railway People in Mahar Tal as the railway stopped at the foot of the hills. Charis stayed with a friend Eleanor, the daughter of a District Commissioner, and attained, by association, Government People status."

presence.”⁶⁵⁵ The *pukka memsahib* of the small society in Kyauktada, Mrs Lackersteen, is a devotee of the Civil List; “Mrs Lackersteen was sitting, as usual, in the best place under the punkah, and was reading the Civil List...”⁶⁵⁶ As soon as they discover from it that Verrall is listed as “Lieutenant The Honourable” they smarten up to try and get Elizabeth married to him,⁶⁵⁷ but when this fails, the best catch in the district for her is Mr. MacGregor, as his status outweighs the disadvantages of his much greater age and physical repulsiveness. As Orwell concludes, “he was rather old, perhaps, but a Deputy Commissioner is not to be despised – certainly he was a far better match than Flory.”⁶⁵⁸ Ash’s first love in *The Far Pavilions*, also makes hard-headed decisions is her eventual marriage. Her mother’s reflections on the merits of George Garforth are indicative. Kaye writes:

As a new and very junior member of a firm which dealt in beer, wines and spirits, his salary was modest and his social position even more so; for except in the great ports, such as Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, where commerce was king, Anglo-Indian society ranked the ‘*boxwallah*’ (a scornful term applied to all who engaged in trade) well below the level of those two ruling castes, the army and the civil service...⁶⁵⁹

Like Elizabeth, Belinda finally shuns both the attractive young men who court her in favour of a much older man who has high hopes of becoming a provincial Governor.

The status of the I.C.S. is a well-recognised aspect of Anglo-Indian fiction. Even in the 1930s and 1940s, the memoirs record this special status affecting their expectations and indeed their decision to apply for the Punjab, recognised as a lucky posting. The independence of action available to I.C.S. men in the Punjab is mentioned as a chief attraction. Even where novels of Anglo-India focus on such disparate themes, and are so little focussed on the work routine, the underlying values of the society make strongly apparent the hierarchy within which the I.C.S. held top position, and the conceptions of India which made the north the most competitive region to be assigned – the Punjab more than anywhere else. This status and freedom of action was, however, to come into conflict with the changing atmosphere of the 1930s and 1940s. The restrictions of war-time conditions followed by the necessity of following the decisions of the central government in 1946 and 1947 strongly contrasted with these expectations, and are a

⁶⁵⁵ Orwell, *Burmese Days*, p. 27.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-185.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁶⁵⁹ Kaye, *The Far Pavilions*, p. 146.

subject which is repeatedly revisited in the memoirs in explaining away the men's role in the loss of control and outbreaks of violence of 1947.

Anglo-India under threat: the constant fear of violence

Most novels of Anglo India involve a crisis of British control, an incident that appears to demonstrate that the administration is not as powerful as it hoped. This section will consider some of these crises and what they indicate about Anglo-Indian fears, as well as suggesting how these conventions of describing threats to British rule impacted upon memoir-writing post-1947. The defining fear of the genre was of course the 1857 mutiny, and the terror this inspired of actual violence being perpetrated by Indians upon the British. However, the incidents depicted in twentieth-century novels suggest deeper and more searching fears about the extent and legitimacy of the British hold on India. The memoirs attempt to suggest that 1947 was a precipitate decline from control to loss of control but actually the image the novels draw is of the limits of power throughout the *Raj*, and the ambivalence of Anglo-Indian life; part blissfully carrying on with careful deportment and rigorous social norms, part underlying fear of their vulnerability – or at least the vulnerability of the peace they made it their priority to retain. At times of crisis, Anglo-Indian fiction suggests, the bare reality of the British position is exposed. Their vulnerability, the limits of their ability to influence Indian behaviour, and fundamental reliance on violence all present a nagging doubt in the background of everyday administration.

Despite both writing post-1947, M. M. Kaye and J. G. Farrell take inspiration from a mutiny setting in their novels. While the mutiny inspired a terror of the vulnerability of the British community to the changing feelings of the Indian population they sought to rule, both books suggest rather more complex doubts introduced by the memory of this loss of control. In the opening section of the book where Sita and Ash flee the mutiny itself, the impression they get is that the British have been permanently defeated and this is represented as an inevitable, mythical end to the Indian struggle with Britain. She writes,

All the English in Meerut had been put to the sword, said the elders, confirming the words of the *sowars* on the Bridge of Boats, and in Delhi too all had been slain – both

in the city and the cantonments. And not only in Delhi and Meerut, either, for the regiments had risen throughout Hind, and soon there would be no *feringhis* left alive in all the land – not so much as a single child ... Their day was done. They were gone like dust before the wind, and not one would be left to carry the tale of their going. The shame of Plassey [the battle that gained India for Clive and the East India Company in 1757 – there was a legend that the rule of the Company would only last one hundred years from that date] was avenged and the hundred years of subjection at an end...⁶⁶⁰

Although the British were reinstated, Ash's subsequent experiences in the book question the ability of the British to enforce their rulings in late nineteenth century India. As Ash is able to live and think as an Indian, his perspective is often different from his colleagues. When he becomes involved with the Karidkot marriages, he realises that *sati* is planned for the two brides. The colleagues that he contacts and attempts to warn dismiss his concerns due to the British legislation banning *sati* which had been introduced in the 1820s and 1830s. Quite in contrast from British confidence in the effectiveness of their pronouncements, the novel indicates a huge cultural divide between legislation and enforcement. Equally, the final section of the novel provides a fictional account based on true events of the attempt to impose a British embassy on the Afghans at Kabul. The men involved find themselves out-witted and then trapped by Afghan soldiers, their state rooms becoming an indefensible position, in which they are all slaughtered. The over-arching message is of their inability to impress seriously upon the east. Whilst the Afghan campaign involved substantial loss of life, even when they were not physically defeated, the east is suggested to have a pervasive underlying power of resistance which they cannot understand or combat.

The Siege at Krishnapur concludes on a similar note, emphasising the insignificance of the events that had passed in comparison with the vastness and historical depth of India. It also highlights the limitations of British rule when put under strain. Both mixed-race 'Eurasians' and converted native Christians seek refuge at the outbreak of the siege, demanding the British community take appropriate responsibility for their safety; "they say they're loyal to the Company and that as Christians they'll certainly be murdered by the Sepoys."⁶⁶¹ Under pressure from the demands of the British community, however, the Collector feels unable to make room for these communities and hedges by issuing

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁶¹ Farrell, *The Siege of Krishnapur*, p. 114.

certificates of loyalty to the Indian Christians so that they can be rewarded for their allegiance in the aftermath of the mutiny.⁶⁶² This idea of the desertion of collaborators and those who relied on their association with the British, of colonial promises being unfulfilled at the time of most need, is apparent in Ronald Belcher's account of meeting with the tribal group who felt they had so much to lose from British departure.⁶⁶³ When faced with violence and the breakdown of state structures, both the fictional and this memoir account suggest that it is local collaborators who suffer; those who had operated within the system imposed by the British and were threatened once it retracted. In 1947, the memoirs emphasise, there was no real fear of violence against the British themselves; what suffered instead was their capacity to control events or help others who did not have this kind of immunity.

The attack on the Club in *Burmese Days* indicates similarly the sense of confidence that the British themselves would not be physically attacked. Indeed, Orwell specifically writes "no Englishman ever feels himself in real danger from an Oriental."⁶⁶⁴ Despite the fears of those inside the Club, when Flory enters the fray, he finds himself unharmed; Orwell writes

The whole riot had been ludicrous from the start, and what was most ludicrous of all was that the Burmans, who might have killed him, did not know what to do with him now that he was among them. Some yelled insults in his face, some jolted him and stamped on his feet, some even tried to make way for him as a white man.⁶⁶⁵

The ambivalent status of the white face is strongly apparent. In tackling the incident, Flory commands that the soldiers aim their shots over the heads of the crowd so that no one is injured. The anxiety for twentieth-century colonialists was of how much violence it was reasonable to use in the face of rioting. Before the attack happens, the members discuss in the Club the effect of the 1919 Amritsar massacre in terms of exposing the delicate position of the British in India; faced increasingly with incidents of non-violent demonstration which they could not hope to control with violence for fear of the reprobation this would draw.⁶⁶⁶ Sir Conrad Corfield reflects on exactly these issues when looking back at the early 1920s in his memoir.⁶⁶⁷ Although not necessarily seen in

⁶⁶² Ibid., p. 114.

⁶⁶³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 74-75.

⁶⁶⁴ Orwell, *Burmese Days*, p. 75.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 238.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

⁶⁶⁷ Cambridge, CSAS, Corfield, p. 13.

that light at the time, reaction to 1919 led to it being presented as a turning point, opening up the questions which Orwell highlights here in *Burmese Days*. In determining his behaviour both in the incident of the riot and in the over-arching storyline of U Po Kyin's blackmail, Flory's concern is not at all that his own safety may be in danger but instead a fear of threat to the community's prestige and desire to preserve the image of rule.⁶⁶⁸

In Paul Scott's *The Alien Sky*, published in 1953, the difficulty of how far to go in protecting themselves from native violence is revisited by Tom Gower when his farm at Ooni is attacked by a group of students. In the heat of the moment, his manager Steele shoots a man who is approaching the house with a knife, but they quickly realise that the man was MacKendrick's bearer, a dishonest but not violent man who was in fact himself seeking refuge from the crowd.⁶⁶⁹ Steele is subsequently shot dead on the way in to the inquest, but even before this his unnecessary use of violence has caused him to be condemned by his own community.⁶⁷⁰ As with Flory's anxiety for the prestige of the British community, it is the seepage of power that is the big fear in this novel, set in 1947. All of the characters reflect upon their loss of influence, and of the emptiness of their future lives. Harriet Haig plans to stay in India because she cannot imagine making a life anywhere else, but realises by the end of the novel that her power to advise the Maharajah to whom she was governess has slipped away.⁶⁷¹ Tom Gower realises the transience of his impact at Ooni, reflecting "beneath the earth the vigorous jungle crouched. Let it come up. Let it take back what I've stolen. What have I ever done but scratch at the surface?"⁶⁷² Cynthia Mapleton frantically plans for a new life, responding to MacKendrick's question about her future, "'I'm going to Kenya.' She banged down her cup. 'It should be fun. My dear,' her voice rose, 'everyone's going to turn up in Nairobi, it'll be just like Simla or Srinigar in the season.'"⁶⁷³ Cynthia's hopes anticipate the common decision among of ex-Anglo-Indians to seek to reinstate the community they had known in India, and find a place for themselves in a world which has moved

⁶⁶⁸ Orwell, *Burmese Days*, p. 75.

⁶⁶⁹ Scott, *The Alien Sky*, pp. 209-220.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-266: "His voice gained in strength. Its assurance divided them. Yes, he had gone from her."

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

on and stranded them. Andrew Hume's case certainly suggests that Kenya proved in many ways as much of a disappointment as a return to Britain.

The disillusionment of Scott's characters, in the *Raj Quartet* as in *An Alien Sky*, revolves around both their loss of a place, and a creeping fear that they have not been able to make the impact on India that they hoped; in particular, that when crisis strikes, they are unable to protect the Indians in whose lives they were involved. As Peter Morey argues, Scott's work "enacts the fragmentation of traditional historiography and imperial certainties."⁶⁷⁴ The defining case that echoes throughout the *Quartet* is Daphne Manners' inability to prevent Hari Kumar from being abused at the hands of Ronald Merrick and then subsequently imprisoned,⁶⁷⁵ but the other characters also have this feeling at different points. In *The Jewel in the Crown*, Edwina Crane despairs after leading fellow mission teacher Mr. Chaudhuri into a crowd of protestors, whose murder of him she is then unable to prevent.⁶⁷⁶ In *The Towers of Silence*, Barbie Batchelor reflects on how little she has achieved in her lifelong mission to India, realising the shallowness of the impression she has left upon the Indian children she has taught, and the lack of influence she has even within her own community.⁶⁷⁷ She bears witness to the worst of that society, and despairs of the futility of British life in India, her life ending symbolically on the day of the Hiroshima bombing.⁶⁷⁸ Finally, Sarah Layton develops a warm friendship with Ahmed Kasim, but when their train is attacked and he is dragged to his death, is left reflecting on her impotence in the face of crisis.⁶⁷⁹ All four women are left with the words "There's nothing I can do, nothing, nothing," as they realise the futility of their place in India and their failure to act to protect the Indians in their lives.⁶⁸⁰ In all these cases, Scott's characters realise that they are both responsible for creating violence and danger, and incapable of protecting the Indians they care about from it, despite walking away unscathed themselves. The emptiness of the British community's legacy resounds through the novels.

⁶⁷⁴ Morey, *Fictions of India*, p. 5.

⁶⁷⁵ Scott, *The Raj Quartet, volume 1* (London: Everyman, 2007), pp. 406-409.

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-58.

⁶⁷⁷ Paul Scott, *The Raj Quartet, volume 2* (London: Everyman, 2007), pp. 201-202.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1002-1013.

⁶⁸⁰ Scott, *The Raj Quartet, volume 1*, pp. 403 and 409.

John Masters' novel of the last years of British rule in India, *Bhowani Junction*, emphasises a final key aspect to the attitude with which many of the British left India. Masters was ex-Indian Army and is an example, like Kaye, of writing about India which is overwhelmingly nostalgic. Morey describes how he uses "Kiplingesque tropes, situations and power relations to mythologise the colonial encounter", and argues that although he attempts cultural relativism in *Bhowani Junction*, "the Indian and the Eurasian is always filtered and carefully controlled by a meta-narrator who acts to re-colonise it."⁶⁸¹ The storyline of the book, focussed on Victoria Jones, an Anglo-Indian woman in the sense of being mixed race, essentialises the characteristics of all those involved. Victoria finds in the course of the novel that she cannot fit in with Indian or British communities, and can only really be at home with her 'own people'. The book has a strong sense of fate and external control about it, that the inevitability of its conclusion draws on the nature of all those involved. When a Quit India march is planned, the British line the route in preparation for an expected descent into communal violence, and this occurs as anticipated despite the efforts of both British and Indian characters to carry off a peaceful protest.⁶⁸² As well as suggesting the limits of British control, the climax of this novel clearly emphasises the inability of Indians to achieve united protest, so riven are they by fundamental religious identities. As Gyanendra Pandey argues, "by the end of the nineteenth century, the dominant strand in colonialist historiography was representing religious bigotry and conflict between people of different religious persuasions as one of the more distinctive features of Indian society, past and present – a mark of the Indian section of the 'Orient'."⁶⁸³ By this reckoning, the idea of successful Indian nationalism – let alone independent government – was impossible; in Pandey's words, "'history' happens to these people; it can hardly be a process in which they play a conscious and significant part."⁶⁸⁴ It is with this ideological perspective on empire that Arthur Williams concludes in his memoir that "when responsibilities for life and welfare have been assumed and exercised over a long period of years it is futile and irrelevant to harp on the rights and wrongs of that assumption, and the responsibilities become a trust not to be discarded unless there is a successor at least as well able to maintain it."⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ Morey, *Fictions of India*, p. 4.

⁶⁸² John Masters, *Bhowani Junction* (London: Souvenir, 1954), pp. 169-177.

⁶⁸³ Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, pp. 23-24.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁸⁵ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 21.

The memoirs suggest that however ‘progressive’ I.C.S recruits of the last decade of the *Raj* claimed to be, they basically subscribed to this view to more or less of an extent. Consistently in the comments considered in chapters two and three, the men express concern about leaving behind their responsibilities in 1947 and doubt about the workability of the new Indian and Pakistani nations. The extent of violence is taken as proof of the basic instincts of Indians once an external control is removed. John Masters was himself part of this final generation, the fifth member of his family to have served in the army in India, retiring in 1948.⁶⁸⁶ M. M. Kaye was part of similarly extended family relationship with India, her grandfather, father, brother and husband all having served in the subcontinent.⁶⁸⁷ George Orwell wrote from his own experience of work in the Indian police, whilst Paul Scott and E. M. Forster were inspired by fainter connections, travelling to India as a soldier in World War II and a tourist in the 1910s respectively. J. G. Farrell was inspired by the idea alone, producing his Indian trilogy in the 1970s. Yet despite this variety of experience, the common thread in all these novels is of the exploration of Anglo-India’s relationship with violence and control. The pre-occupation with incidents of rioting, however, is not focussed on the threat to the British themselves, as had become the case in 1857. Rather, the novels suggest a deeper legacy of 1857 in the introduction of an underlying anxiety that India could never quite be under British control, a sense that was to last right through the high noon of colonialism. In all the novels, the incidents of violence highlight the ambivalence of the Anglo-Indian situation, performing their rule across huge districts and yet unable to put this into practice once structures of control and collaboration were unsettled. Moreover, Anglo-Indian fiction leaves the gnawing sense of an emptiness and futility to the British claims; when crisis does strike, they suggest, the apparent omnipotence of those at the top of the colonial hierarchy dissolves, leaving them unable to realise any of their claims to protect or control the Indians around them. This feeling of ‘loss’ of power is exactly what the I.C.S. memoirs describe, and yet Anglo-Indian fiction suggests a longer history of questioning, and of doubt in the capacity of the *Raj* to enforce the power it claimed to have. In the twentieth century, novelists recognised exactly the limits of a colonial state without recourse to violence to enforce its will, so that by the 1930s and 1940s the extent of power these men seemed to have was largely an illusion.

⁶⁸⁶ Masters, *Bhowani Junction*, p. 5.

⁶⁸⁷ Kaye, *The Far Pavilions*, p. i.

Conclusion

Despite the glamour and ease of life that attracted the British reader to Anglo-Indian fiction, in many of its works there are underlying doubts about the effectiveness of rule, the moral acceptability of the ‘mission’ and of the sacrifices made by those involved, despite the apparent luxury of the lifestyle. Partly this is a result of critiques back ‘home’ of the maintenance of the empire. Allan Arthur generally stoutly defended the regime with which he worked in his letters his parents,⁶⁸⁸ yet Anglo-Indians themselves express doubt about their role and the righteousness of what they were doing. In one letter, Arthur himself commented “this absurd superiority complex and chosen-race complex of the British is one of our worst characteristics”.⁶⁸⁹ This separation in the minds of the final generation of I.C.S. men is expressed in terms of a recognition of the sepia-stained view of Anglo-Indian authority which is such a big part of the attraction of the novels of the genre, but then distanced from their own conduct and indeed concept of an apparently more ‘progressive’ type of colonial government. Andrew Thompson suggests that this split in the conception of Britain’s imperial role was evident in the British presentation;

On the one hand, the *Raj* sought to legitimise itself by conservative appeals to ‘traditional’ authority; on the other, after the Mutiny it came to place increasing emphasis on good government and administration, delivered by an impartial and trained civil service, untainted by commercial considerations. This was in essence a conflict between an aristocratic view of governance, where authority was hereditary and exercised by men born to rule, and a professional view of governance, where authority was acquired and exercised by men trained to rule. Significantly, Britain’s experience of governing India could service either point of view.⁶⁹⁰

The memoirs show evidence of both views, drawing on the theoretical ‘backwardness’ of India as justification for the violence of 1947, despite their efforts to contrast their own ‘progressive’ attitudes with the behaviour of the previous generation with whom they were trained. Both aspects of the colonial ‘mission’ seem to feature as part of the appeal of an I.C.S. career and whatever their presentation, the men realised in the event of Indian and Pakistani independence how rooted they were in their roles in the Punjab – and how much they were identified by the values and norms of that society.

⁶⁸⁸ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 5.

⁶⁸⁹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 10.

⁶⁹⁰ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?*, p. 10.

In 1934, Orwell was able to recognise the cliché of the retired Anglo-Indian, out-moded and out of place in a Britain that was no longer home. In *Burmese Days*, Flory says to Elizabeth:

‘We Anglo-Indians are always looked on as bores. And we *are* bores. But we can’t help it. You see, there’s – how shall I say? – a demon inside us driving us to talk. We walk about under a load of memories which we long to share and somehow never can. It’s the price we pay for coming to this country.’⁶⁹¹

For the final generation, there was no option but to find a new life, and to be exposed to their own anachronism. Paul Scott’s *Staying On* details this particular conundrum in Tusker Smalley’s final letter to his wife Lucy. He writes:

I know for years you’ve thought I was a damn’ fool to have stayed on, but I was forty-six when Independence came, which is bloody early in life for a man to retire but too old to start afresh somewhere you don’t know. I didn’t fancy my chances back home, at that age, and I knew the pension would go further in India than in England... I’m happier hanging on in India, not for India as India but because I can’t just merely think of it as a place where I drew my pay for the first twenty-five years of my working life, which is a hell of a long time anyway, though by rights it should have been longer. But there you are. Suddenly the powers that be say, Right, Smalley, we’re not wanted here any more, we’ve all got to bugger off, too bad you’re not ten years younger or ten years older. I thought about this a lot at the time and it seemed to me I’d invested in India, not money which I’ve never had, nor talent (Ha!) which I’ve only had a limited amount of, nothing India needed or needs or has been one jot the better for, but was all I had to invest in anything. *Me*. Where I went wrong was in thinking of it that way and expecting a return on the investment in the end.⁶⁹²

This attitude of being left over, without a place in a world which had moved on – and often of feeling under-appreciated – is apparent in the memoirs. What is clear from comparing the accounts with Anglo-Indian fiction is the ambivalence and doubt which lay behind apparent certainties. The men recognise the imagery of Kipling’s Punjab in their accounts, and recall anecdotes of eccentric behaviour and quaint social customs. Yet when faced with violence and a realisation of the illusory aspect of the control they had felt they wielded as District Commissioners, this last generation of I.C.S. officers

⁶⁹¹ Orwell, *Burmese Days*, p. 169.

⁶⁹² Paul Scott, *Staying On* (London: Granada, 1978), pp. 231-232.

demonstrate remarkable loyalty to the conception and basis of colonial rule, betraying their own rootedness in their first career. This commitment to the regime they had served comes across in the memoirs in their unwillingness to depart from practised behaviours of *esprit de corps* and paternalism in their attitudes to the Indians they had worked with. Looking back on empire after twenty years and subsequent careers, there is nonetheless a lasting commitment to that first colonial identity they forged for themselves which prevents them from giving truly detailed accounts of the events they witnessed. Rather, the memoirs follow the well-trodden path of Anglo-Indian fiction, detailing the eccentricities of a now-extinct society without giving serious account of the Indian lives in which they were involved – and above all, keeping discussion of their work itself at a minimum. This approach paved the way for the revival of popular imagery of Indian colonialism as it maintained an unchallenging attitude to the colonial legacy, allowing the glamour to take the fore-front, subtly backed by an underlying acceptance of many of the myths of colonialism.

Chapter Six

Post-colonial Britain: race, memory and nostalgia in the legacy of empire

The previous two chapters considered the context in which ex-I.C.S. men re-configured and recorded their memories of empire; first, in terms of the experiences they had during second and third careers, and secondly, in terms of the fictional conventions established for writing about colonial India. This final chapter will extend consideration of the post-war and post-colonial environment in Britain to suggest where ex-colonial memoirs fitted in to the collective sense or ‘memory’ of empire, what audience they were received by, and how influential they have been in shaping ideas about the British identity and past. The extent of British popular interaction with, and interest in, empire is an enduring historiographical question, above all because it is hard to prove. In one example, Antoinette Burton’s work has suggested the impact of Indian students and visitors to Britain in increasing visibility of empire’s subjects within the metropole.⁶⁹³ There is often, though, a more general sense in writing about Britain’s relationship with empire that it somehow *must* have been significant and prominent in people’s everyday lives due to the facts of its size and value to Britain’s global image and domestic wealth. As Elizabeth Buettner and E. M. Collingham’s monographs demonstrate, however, those involved in the work of empire were often marginal characters in British life.⁶⁹⁴ Empire was, after all, very far away and inaccessible to most. Indeed, in her study of the formative aspects of British identity, Linda Colley brushes over any significance of empire in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, focussing instead on Protestantism, the distinction of being an ‘island nation’ with a large navy, and the extrinsic pressure of ongoing conflict with France in constructing ‘Britishness’.⁶⁹⁵

After World War II, gradual decolonisation brought the question of empire’s significance to British identity to the fore in a new way. John Mackenzie suggests how conventional historical wisdom assumes that the British felt no strong connection to their empire and barely noticed its loss because it related so little to their life, thus the

⁶⁹³ Burton, *At the Heart of Empire*.

⁶⁹⁴ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*.

Buettner, *Empire Families*.

⁶⁹⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale Nota Bene, 2005).

apparently easy decolonisation, unlike France's turbulent process.⁶⁹⁶ The 'process' of decolonisation was, however, an extended and inconsistent one, within which periods of apparently smooth unconcern were interrupted by landmark moments of crisis like Suez and the Falklands war. These moments were, above all, about anxiety to recoup a sense of national identity and world power. Dominic Sandbrook records some of the media coverage of the Suez crisis, writing:

The Times had run leaders with headlines like 'A Hinge of History' and 'Resisting the Aggressor', and one edition warned that the British people, 'in their silent way, know better than the critics. They still want Britain great.' *The Daily Sketch* echoed this tone in September with its notorious headline: 'LET THE CRYBABIES HOWL! It's GREAT Britain again.' 'How good it is to hear the British Lion's roar!', wrote one reader in the *Daily Telegraph*.⁶⁹⁷

Sandbrook emphasises the ambiguity in ascertaining how much public support drove these incidents of 'national' crisis though, stating that contemporary opinion polls show that "public opinion was intensely divided".⁶⁹⁸ Indeed, the core issue in assessing the impact and importance of imperial culture on Britain during decolonisation is not to assume the existence of consensus or consistency in public opinion.⁶⁹⁹

Mackenzie's work offers a valuable approach, as he suggests that empire was vital "in creating for the British a world view which was central to their perceptions of themselves," but emphasises that this significance did not require or imply popular knowledge about empire, arguing that "even if they knew little and cared less about imperial philosophies or colonial territories, nonetheless imperial status set them apart, and united a set of national ideas which coalesced in the last three decades of the nineteenth century."⁷⁰⁰ The defining feature of attachment to empire both pre-1945 and in the postcolonial period has, I would contend, not been found in concrete knowledge of empire, but in a vaguely romanticised, and as Mackenzie suggests, *implicit* sense of being part of a 'greater' Britain. It is this ambiguity that makes it so difficult to assess or enumerate levels of participation in imperial culture, or to conclusively describe Britain as an imperial nation. The second problem that arises is that although we can point to

⁶⁹⁶ John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 1.

⁶⁹⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, p. 18.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶⁹⁹ Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left & the End of Empire, 1918-1964* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 19.

⁷⁰⁰ Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 2.

periods where imperial nostalgia became culturally significant, the rush of decolonisation in the 1960s cannot be uniformly demonstrated to have produced significant public anxiety. This variability of response and engagement with colonial questions reflects the experiences of the retiring I.C.S. officers considered in this thesis: on their return to the UK, they found little interest in, or knowledge of, the work they had undertaken or the places in which they had lived. However, when presented not in terms of a professional record, but as nostalgic recollections of a lifestyle now lost, Anglo-Indian memoirs *did* achieve a public audience. As Mackenzie suggests, between 1850 and 1950, “a whole range of propagandist imperial bodies, conventionally regarded as failures, in fact succeeded in diffusing their patriotic intentions and their world view, if not their specific and sophisticated plans of action, through almost every institution of British life.”⁷⁰¹ Lack of interest in the individuals and policies of the empire is not indicative of a complete divorce from the subject in popular culture; rather, the facts did not necessarily connect with the more generalised attitudes and imagery involved.

This chapter will not attempt to assess the *extent* of engagement with imperial memories in forming British post-colonial identity, but rather the *nature* of those images and the legacy of empire into which ex-I.C.S. men fitted their memoirs. We have seen in previous chapters how the culture of the Punjabi I.C.S. encouraged unity in the narrative the men presented of their work in empire, and how the pressures of the transfer of power and premature retirement further flattened out differences within the service. The commonality of subsequent experience, in terms of disappointment in their second careers and inadequacy of status back at ‘home’ created additional reason to remain committed to the I.C.S. *esprit de corps* on a grand scale. Finally, I contend in this chapter that the nature of British public experience of empire and exposure to a certain pageantry in its presentation, mediated through novels, cinema and media coverage, added to the expectations upon ex-colonials in terms of the style and conventions they used in writing about their experiences. The first section will consider the legacy of imperial propaganda up to the 1930s, suggesting how structures for disseminating ‘values’ of empire were continuing to operate effectively during the inter-war period. The second section will consider this overlap of imperial culture as decolonisation took

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., p. 253.

place in the 1950s and 1960s, against a backdrop of social change in Britain. Rather than losing place, many semi-imperial institutions survived throughout this period and, moreover, retained an important status as defining elements of ‘Britishness’. The third section will suggest the pressures upon British identity posed by Commonwealth immigration and the changing image of ‘whiteness’ in the post-war period. This element of post-colonial British life is clearly one of the most immediate experiences of the impact of empire for British people ‘at home’ and posed questions about how ‘Britishness’ could be defined. The final section will consider how the legacy of empire in its multiple popular representations shapes and contributes to British identity, suggesting how changes in national life have reinforced a certain imagery and use of colonial memories, often without serious scrutiny.

Late imperial culture: the legacy of romanticism

Despite ostensible weaknesses and the progress of independence demands in the inter-war period, the rhetoric of empire remained a significant element of advertising, education and literature. Indeed, just as the importance of work in the colonial environment was being reiterated in the recruitment strategies of the I.C.S., reinforcement of Britain’s identity as an imperial nation took place through various forms of propaganda and the introduction of new mediums. John Mackenzie suggests that by the late colonial period, imperial themes had secured a popular resonance and momentum that could not be easily reversed. He writes:

A generation brought up on imperial concepts before the First World War matured to propagate them after it. These were the years of the greatest exhibitions of them all, the years of continuing expansion of the youth movements, less militaristic perhaps, but no less imperial and patriotic in their objectives. Thus it is possible to argue that imperial themes secured greater cultural penetration in the period following the First World War, and indeed prolonged their shelf life until the 1950s.⁷⁰²

Victory in World War I, Mackenzie suggests, confirmed for some the idea of “Britain as a world power deriving from its unique imperial status”.⁷⁰³ Moreover, he argues that

⁷⁰² Ibid., p. 256.

⁷⁰³ John M. Mackenzie, ‘Introduction’ in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, edited by John M. Mackenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 8.

“in the economic storms of the inter-war years it was possible again, as in the late nineteenth century, to depict the empire as a saviour from decline.”⁷⁰⁴ This is not to suggest that knowledge of empire necessarily increased in this period, but rather that the bastions of imperial culture within Britain were strengthened and communicated in new ways. As Mackenzie argues,

If the formal propaganda and public relations work of the Empire Marketing Board had limited appeal, maybe the inherited influences of juvenile literature, an immensely popular iconography, imperial and patriotic theatre and ethnic shows, the connections between education, pressure groups, and youth organisations all set up currents in the popular memory so powerful that it took more than one war to turn them aside.⁷⁰⁵

This informal culture of empire was embodied in developments of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods such as music hall, art, juvenile fiction, cinema, the scouts and the BBC.

J. A. Mangan highlights how the values of empire were core tenets of schooling by the inter-war period. In public schools in particular, he suggests, boys were taught the essence of imperial duty through sports; imparting the necessary skills of pluck, energy, perseverance, good temper, self-control, discipline, cooperation and *esprit de corps*.⁷⁰⁶ These ideals prepared generations to be open to the rhetoric of empire, whether in its service or in distant admiration. Mangan emphasises the power of schooling to set cultural standards, writing that

School knowledge, more often than not, serves in this manner as an instrument of social control and conformity and assists in sustaining the status quo. The external world is portrayed as an intractable reality and an ideology is created and perpetuated sustaining this portrayal and demanding a specific response. The extent to which its absorption is successful must often be a matter of conjecture but in the case of the Victorian and Edwardian public school imperial propaganda, on the evidence of hundreds of biographies, autobiographies and memoirs, the least that can be said is that such conditioning was not ineffective. In fact, widespread concord and sparse dissent suggest

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷⁰⁶ J. A. Mangan, “‘The grit of our forefathers’: Invented traditions, propaganda and imperialism’ in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, edited by John M. Mackenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 120-121.

that it was remarkably effective, reflecting period class ambitions, concepts of high status occupations and national jingoistic tendencies.⁷⁰⁷

For most of the men in this study, the background of a public school education had prepared them for the acceptance of responsibility and status in an imperial role, had glamorised the possibility, and is evident in the way they felt themselves to be part of a network with other men in the service as much from their educational background as their choice of career.

Mangan emphasises, however, that public schools were not the only bastion of imperial culture or source of inspiration. The scouts was an organisation set up deliberately to train boys in the requisite skills and values of empire. Bill Cowley is an example of a grammar school-educated boy who became a lifelong adherent to the scouting movement, describing it in his memoir as “a ruling passion”,⁷⁰⁸ and spent a period of his time in the I.C.S. teaching scouting, with its apparently ‘British’ values, to Punjabi boys. Mangan emphasises how the continued existence of the scouts, albeit in altered form, demonstrates the survival of traditions established as part of imperial propaganda and cultural dissemination.⁷⁰⁹ Another example of the use of ritualised school activities in teaching imperial identity was the introduction of Empire Day, an activity which Mangan explains was not restricted to public schools:

By the 1920s, a public school ‘tradition’ had merged into a national ‘tradition’ and had become ‘an ideal for emulation in state schools and youth organisations alike’. A homogeneous ideology had been established which promoted common characteristics – ‘social discipline, national consent and Social Darwinian superiority’. ‘Empire Day’ was eventually held in schools of every kind all over Britain.⁷¹⁰

Mackenzie quotes a child of the 1930s recalling that “‘empire was all around us, celebrated in our biscuit tins, chronicled on our cigarette cards, part of the fabric of our lives. We were all imperialists then.’”⁷¹¹ This extent of participation is open to challenge but, vitally, the imagery suggests the nature of popular understandings of empire; mediated through advertising and schooling, the picture painted is of a wider British world, happily under the custodianship of benevolent white leadership and generating exotic everyday products for the home market.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 123.

⁷⁰⁸ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 1-3.

⁷⁰⁹ Mangan, ‘The grit of our forefathers’, p. 127.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 134-135.

⁷¹¹ Mackenzie, ‘Introduction’ in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, p. 8.

Robert Aldrich writes in his book about colonial vestiges in France that,

The iconography provides insight into the ideology of imperialism during the heyday of empire and in subsequent decades. The evolution of sites since the end of the colonies reflects the metamorphosis of perspectives on the past... These traces, in brief, say something about the place that the empire occupied (and occupies) in national identity, and how the French have and have not come to terms with the colonial past.⁷¹²

In the inter-war period in Britain, iconography and institutions of imperial culture were not only surviving but were thriving and setting deep roots. By forming such a key part of British childhood, memories of empire - in whatever form it was encountered – had a collective and lifelong impact. Institutions like the BBC, established with its home and empire services, out-lived the reality of empire, and as Aldrich suggests, the continued existence of these colonial relics reflects both cultural continuity and a failure to face up to the legacy of empire in everyday British life.

Using the work of Maurice Halbwachs, Aldrich indicates the opaque nature of collective memory and the problems of breaking down what are vague and intermeshed concepts. In reference to Halbwachs' argument, Aldrich writes:

There are also national memories, both of events experienced by the present generation and those passed down through institutions and traditions. Memories can be kept alive, forgotten or repressed, acknowledged or reconstructed. Memories are personal, but also social; autobiographical *and* historical; active *and* passive. Some are recent, while others date from long ago, and it is difficult, he added, to say at what point a collective memory disappears.⁷¹³

The developments in imperial propaganda techniques by the 1920s and 30s meant that generations of children and young adults grew up with empire as a part of their school lives, extra-curricular activities and early cultural experiences, particularly in books and the cinema. It is the nature of these introductions to empire which resulted in them having a more pervasive effect than direct teaching, and a cultural resonance which is hard to pin down. The very vagueness of this instructed patriotism, with its imagery and sense of adventure allowed it not to be disrupted by alterations in the facts of empire:

⁷¹² Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p. 6.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

gradual decolonisation need not impinge upon an ideal of empire so distanced from its geographical and political reality.

Mackenzie describes the development of inter-war imperial culture as an opportunity not only for those involved in, and informed about empire, but anyone British to have a stake in the sense of being part of a greater Britain. Rather than requiring knowledge of the colonies, he suggests specifically that this collective arrogance was deliberately nurtured through imagery and exoticism. Mackenzie writes,

The British had created a popular cultural dimension to match their remodelling of the world through economic and political control. That control could be exercised all the more confidently and be better understood by the public at large through the manufacture of cultural images and racial stereotypes.⁷¹⁴

The legacy of imperial propaganda in the final decades before World War II, then, was of a collective notion of being at the heart of a great endeavour, however little might be understood and appreciated by individuals in the metropole. It allowed people to “feel part of a national enterprise... conducted by the state and great commercial companies, protected by the army and navy, and sanctified by the church”, “tinged with a sense of moral crusade, aided by periodic war, led by charismatic figures, both alive and dead” and linking “tribal atavisms with cultural self-satisfaction and technical advance.”⁷¹⁵ Everyday experience of buying products of empire, stamped with their origins and advertised in line with a comfortable sense of superiority reinforced a way of thinking about empire that was untroubled and reassuring, exotic but undemanding. Mackenzie suggests how large numbers of colonial biographies and tales of exploration became staples as childhood presents and school prizes, with the result that “even if books were not read, their owners could scarcely miss the stirring titles and equally exciting cover illustrations which depicted an heroic and expansionist age, in which fellow countrymen generally overwhelmed or converted people of ‘lesser’ cultures.”⁷¹⁶ This sense of a great age was one of the most significant legacies of the late colonial period: for people who often knew very little about the detail and geography of the empire, the most prominent impact it had in everyday life was not on the way the outside world was interpreted but on how the British saw themselves. The idea of a period of progress and world dominance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, successfully

⁷¹⁴ Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, pp. 254-255.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

mediated in late colonial novels, consumer goods and schooling, was the essence of imperial imagery with which post-war and post-colonial Britain could be contrasted.

Post-war imperial culture in the face of local and global change

As a child of the 1950s, David Cannadine nonetheless describes himself in the appendix to *Ornamentalism* as having experienced in many ways an ‘imperial childhood’. Writing to assess his subjectivity in approaching the topic of empire, he concludes of his childhood impression of empire that it was a “comforting picture: as I envisaged and understood it, the empire seemed good and friendly and big and strong, and I simply took it for granted that it was right that Britain had it, without thinking what it might be like for the people who actually lived in it.”⁷¹⁷ Moreover, he is able to appreciate in retrospect that,

I note that there are many things that are *not* here: heat and dust, palm and pine, the P&O. And I seem to have had no military or strategic perception of empire, and no awareness of the people who lived in the empire, whatever the colour of their skin. As such, this is a very domestic, metropolis-based story, from which ignorance of empire, rather than knowledge of it, emerges as its most marked feature. This means, in turn, that my recollections are wholly devoid of the searing, wrenching episodes of independence and partition, massacre and murder, imperial resentment and post-imperial trauma, which are so vividly recounted in the writings of post-colonial contemporaries such as Salman Rushdie and Sara Suleri...⁷¹⁸

Indeed, Stephen Howe suggests that “the overwhelming fact about British public perceptions of colonial issues during decolonisation, as earlier, was that of sheer ignorance.”⁷¹⁹ Such ignorance allowed for remarkable continuity in attitudes toward empire in the first decades after World War II, and many of its domestic cultural emblems and activities continued to function. The fact that imperial propaganda had not achieved dissemination of *knowledge*, but rather had encouraged a romanticised attachment to the concept of empire, actually facilitated this continuity.

⁷¹⁷ David Cannadine, ‘Appendix: An Imperial Childhood?’ in *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 187.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷¹⁹ Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics*, pp. 20-21.

One of the bastions of imperial culture both before and after the war was public admiration of and interest in royalty. David Cannadine's memories of the significance of Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953 suggest how these events of royal pageantry continued to be strongly linked to the ideals of empire - or increasingly, commonwealth - and defined a sense of British pride and progress. Describing the "extraordinary feelings of hope and euphoria it generated", Cannadine recalls that,

While I have no recollection of the deprivations of food rationing, I vividly remember playing with cardboard cut-outs of soldiers and horses and golden coaches; I know my sister's first doll was named Queenie after the Queen of Tonga, one of the overseas celebrities of the coronation; and I later learned that Mount Everest had been successfully conquered by a British-led expedition on the very day the Queen had been crowned, a Henty-like adventure story that was regularly re-told throughout the 1950s, and especially to my generation of schoolchildren.... Because I was in these ways a coronation child, I think I did acquire the vague impression that there was a greater Britain, somewhere beyond Birmingham and beyond the seas, that had sent its representatives to London to join the Queen in Westminster Abbey, and that this was how things always had been and always would be.⁷²⁰

This extent of continuity in the regalia of empire, with the emotions involved breezily transferred to the concept of 'commonwealth' suggests how completely the facts of India and Pakistan's independence, and the violence and loss of life involved, failed to penetrate British public knowledge - at least, not in such a way as to interfere with the cultural positioning of empire as part of an ongoing ideal of Britain forging ahead. This successful air-brushing of the substantial loss incurred with the transfer of power in the subcontinent even extended to government, as Darwin suggests, writing

On the face of it, the great bulk of Britain's Asian Empire, once the envy of her rivals, had collapsed like a mud fort in a monsoon... But the British were curiously reluctant to see the events of 1945-48 in this light. Their strategic thinking, as Philip Darby has pointed out, showed little sign of being influenced by the loss of India.⁷²¹

The idea of progress, of a nation in a position of global leadership, was a vital element of the discourse of 'Britishness' as supported by the ideal of empire - and thus was the basis for a contrast with ostensible post-war decline. By 1945, as John Darwin suggests,

⁷²⁰ Cannadine, 'Appendix: An Imperial Childhood?', pp. 183-184.

⁷²¹ Darwin, 'British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?', p. 194.

“the global conditions once so favourable to Britain’s colossal empire-on-the-cheap were disappearing one-by-one with the emergence of the military superpowers, the relative decline of the British economy, the obsolescence of old-style sea-power and the new turbulence of Britain’s colonial possessions.”⁷²² This is not to suggest that the subsequent decades present a clear and consistent narrative of self-determination and British departure; clearly there was a time-lapse between the independence of India and Pakistan and more widespread decolonisation, a phenomenon matched to some extent in public sensitivities. However, Darwin argues that both in the historiography and the popular imagination, “it has been an easy step to conflate the twenty-five years after 1945 into a single phase of rapid and predictable decline.”⁷²³ Despite the romanticisation of the commonwealth - in David Cannadine’s words, as “an alumni association of a university that seemed to be rapidly going under”⁷²⁴ – whereas the empire had been an institution of real power, the commonwealth was more one about sentiment,⁷²⁵ and the post-war decades were a period in which Britain had increasingly to turn to both the US and Europe.

Both relationships produced some level of anxiety and bitterness. Dominic Sandbrook suggests how American and European influences were increasingly seen as a threat in the 1950s and 60s, describing criticisms made in the work of John Osborne and John Wain. He writes,

Like the Movement, the New Wave can be seen as a reassertion of ‘British common sense’ and ‘feeling’ against Continental affectation and intellectualism. At the very beginning of *Look Back in Anger*, Jimmy Porter throws the newspaper down and complains: ‘I’ve just read three whole columns on the English Novel. Half of it’s in French.’ He is pleased to hear that a Vaughan Williams concert will be broadcast on the radio, though: ‘Well that’s something, anyway. Something strong, something simple, something English.’...⁷²⁶

Sandbrook suggests how these anxieties extended equally to the influence of the US, writing:

In *Hurry on Down*, John Wain’s hero winces at the ‘cheap smartness’ of his girlfriend’s brother Stan: ‘He talked a different language, for one thing; it was demotic English of

⁷²² Ibid., p. 187.

⁷²³ Ibid., p. 187.

⁷²⁴ Cannadine, ‘Appendix: An Imperial Childhood?’, p. 190.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., p. 190.

⁷²⁶ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp. 211-212.

the mid-twentieth century, rapid, slurred, essentially a city dialect, and, in origin, essentially American.’ And he smokes ‘a cheap American-style cigarette,’ an immediate sign of moral turpitude.⁷²⁷

The popular currency of such representations suggests how recognisable examples of foreign cultural influence were and how widespread the accompanying anxieties.

In response, the 1950s and 60s saw a rush of films produced celebrating victories of World War II. Indeed, more than a hundred were produced between 1945 and 1960.⁷²⁸

As Sandbrook argues,

Clearly the vogue for war films was partly intended to alleviate anxieties about declining British power and prestige abroad, as well as trying to recapture the old community spirit of the Blitz. One successful war film director, Lewis Gilbert, admitted that they were ‘a kind of ego trip, a nostalgia for a time when Britain was great’.⁷²⁹

This fear of Britain having lost position, and being in thrall to other cultures, encouraged not only attachment to the legacy of war victory but also to many traditions associated with empire, most notably in the spectacle of the coronation in 1953. For Cannadine, the connections he felt to empire by the 1970s were “Test Match cricket (which, strange to record, I don’t remember thinking of at the time as an imperial relic), the Order of the British Empire (the last use of this phrase in official parlance) and the BBC World Service (appropriately enough, the Empire of the Air).”⁷³⁰ The feeling of cultural threat thus encouraged both reinterpretation of elements of British life, and a reinforcement of those ostensibly linked to British ‘greatness’ and independence.

The anxieties of the 1950s and 60s reflected genuine reconfiguration of Britain’s global position. Stuart Ward indicates the significance of the turn to Europe, writing that,

Britain’s decision to enter the European Economic Community in 1961 proved to be a traumatic exercise for all parties concerned. The symbolism of Britain joining a new community of ‘foreigners’ undermined the idea of Greater Britain as a focus of civic identification and raised new conceptual barriers among the countries that once comprised the British world.⁷³¹

⁷²⁷ Ibid., pp. 211-212.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., pp. 202-203.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., pp. 202-203.

⁷³⁰ Cannadine, ‘Appendix: An Imperial Childhood?’, p. 190.

⁷³¹ Stuart Ward, ‘Transcending the Nation: A Global Imperial History?’ in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, edited by Antoinette Burton (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 47.

Moreover, as John Darwin suggests,

The four major decisions of the 1960s – the accelerated withdrawal from East Africa, especially Kenya; the acceptance of majority rule in Zambia and Malawi and the dissolution of the Central African federation; the application in Europe in 1961, and again in 1967; and the decision to terminate in 1971 all military commitments east of Suez, suggest an agonising reappraisal of Britain’s place in world politics.⁷³²

The period entailed a true readjustment of expectations for the British: both in terms of stature as a nation, and from the perspective of how one identified oneself as ‘British’, as what that entailed seemed to be in massive flux.

Whilst so much about Britain’s position altered in this period, the balance between the US, Europe and the commonwealth left Britain poised in a stronger position due to its imperial past than it otherwise would have been. Influential in the course of the cold war due in part to the relationship with the US, Britain’s relative economic position continued to be boosted and protected by connections with the commonwealth. Darwin argues that hard-headed factors encouraged continued association with the commonwealth, as Britain’s economic weakness post-1945 reinforced the need for a “highly insulated imperial economy, in which the countries of the sterling area (the dominions excluding Canada, the colonies and certain associated states) traded freely with each other but rigorously controlled purchases from outside, especially dollar goods.”⁷³³ He suggests the benefits of this imperial outlook in economic terms to have been the preservation of sterling as a world currency, the fact that it “allowed Britain’s sterling debts to be discounted by exports, and it secured markets and supplies for Britain which might otherwise have been lost.”⁷³⁴ Indeed, for Darwin, this was one of the most fruitful periods for Britain of economic benefit from the imperial world.⁷³⁵ The narrative of decolonisation is thus a nuanced one, in which trends of increasing significance of relations with the US and Europe took time to erode the old relationships with empire.

In some other ways, war had exposed Britain to her empire more than ever before. Andrew Thompson argues that imperial politics had always been an “extra-

⁷³² Darwin, ‘British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?’, p. 203.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

parliamentary activity”, suggesting that however we attempt to assess the popularity of late imperial culture, “it was widely believed at the time that by invoking Empire was a good way of winning popular support.”⁷³⁶ Thompson indicates that public interest in empire was prompted by “royal ceremonial and public festivals; by exciting wars reported in the provincial and national press; by relatives and friends who had settled there; by exploration and missionary work in the tropics; and by the discovery of minerals such as diamonds and gold.”⁷³⁷ These impressions of empire were compounded for many by the Second World War, not only due to the imagery of an imperial Britain in wartime propaganda but by the experience of fighting with, for and alongside it.⁷³⁸ Paul Scott’s lifelong engagement with India was initially prompted by war service there, and one of David Cannadine’s early impressions of empire came from his father’s tales of army days in India.⁷³⁹ In the aftermath of war, some parts of the empire, particularly the dominions, continued to feel disproportionately close. Cannadine describes Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa as having been in the 1950s and 60s “much closer both in sentiment and in substance to Britain than they are today. The British press reported events there as though they were domestic news, and figures such as Lester Pearson and Vincent Massey in Canada, Keith Holyoake in New Zealand and Robert Menzies in Australia were household names...”⁷⁴⁰ This was reinforced in consumer experiences as “there was lamb and butter from New Zealand, tea from India, chocolate from Nigeria, coffee from Kenya, and apples, pears and grapes from South Africa... I played with toys that were identified as ‘Empire made’...”⁷⁴¹ The landscape of post-war Britain thus retained a distinctly imperial shape, even as the countries involved achieved independence.

The transfer of power to India and Pakistan in 1947 was a particular coup of presentation in Britain: despite the loss of the ‘Jewel in the Crown’, careful management of the news against a backdrop of significant domestic hardship and widespread ignorance about the geographical realities of empire allowed substantial continuity of imperial culture in the metropole during the 1950s and early 60s. David Cannadine recalls being taught in primary school from a world map “on which the

⁷³⁶ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, pp. 11-12.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁷³⁹ Cannadine, ‘Appendix: An Imperial Childhood?’, pp. 185-186.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

British Empire was coloured red”, but as it was at least ten years out of date, “it depicted the empire as it had existed at its territorial zenith between the first and the second world wars”, producing an “extraordinary vista of early dominion”.⁷⁴² He concludes that for the British, empire was above all “more an internal state of mind than an external way of life.”⁷⁴³ Its place, as Antoinette Burton argues, was not so much as a phenomenon ‘out there’ but as “a fundamental and constitutive part of English culture and national identity at home where the fact of empire was registered not only in political debate... but entered the social fabric, the intellectual discourse and the life of the imagination.”⁷⁴⁴ This place in the imagination, I would contend, both allowed for continuity in the early post-war period and was reinforced in the face of increasing anxieties about Britain’s global position and cultural security. The overwhelming ignorance British people continued to have of their empire meant that territorial loss did not always impact as heavily as might be thought, but when faced with the sense of cultural imposition from Europe and the US, it was in bastions of imperial culture that British people sought a demonstration of their national identity. Royalty and the pageantry that went with it, the BBC, cricket, exotic adventure in both film and novels all held their positions as essential to ‘Britishness’ under external pressure and internal anxiety in the post-war decades.

The relative smoothness of decolonisation in Britain can also be understood in terms of the grand narrative created by civil servants and politicians alike to represent loss of empire as enlightened and controlled generosity. As Darwin argues, “from the moment that the British began the transfer of power in their colonial territories after 1945 they set about constructing a rationale for their actions plausible enough and ambiguous enough to satisfy international and especially American opinion, to soothe opinion at home and to flatter the colonial politicians whose goodwill they wanted.”⁷⁴⁵ The account produced, Darwin suggests, was dictated by civil service norms and thus “the result is an uplifting chronicle of sagacity and foresight, of careful adaptation to new circumstances, of enlightened and sympathetic response to the aspirations of colonial populations, of dignified understanding that Britain’s role must change with the

⁷⁴² Ibid., pp. 185-186.

⁷⁴³ Ibid., p. 197.

⁷⁴⁴ Antoinette Burton, ‘Introduction: On the Inadequacy and the Indispensability of the Nation’ in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, edited by Antoinette Burton (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 3.

⁷⁴⁵ Darwin, ‘British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?’, p. 188.

times.”⁷⁴⁶ Although the I.C.S. men in this study were certainly recruited with an element of this tone; of the need of a great service to adapt to changing times and to prepare their charges for independent government, the narrative they produce in their memoirs does not indicate the sanguine acceptance of 1947 being the moment of realisation for altruistic handover of control and the launch of new nations. Rather, the reality of violence in the Punjab produces a united account in which foresight is claimed in the aspect of India and Pakistan having *not* been ready. The narrative produced is not one of success or control; rather of a disconcerting and distressing loss of the norms of colonial rule, white prestige and bureaucratic order, collapsing into what they rationalise as a natural state of Indian in-fighting and communalism.

This kind of orientalism comes into the memoirs irrespective of the men’s attitudes toward individual Indian friends, or members of the bourgeois middle-class; the acceptable Indian. The men do not suggest that the right time had come for independence, or that partition was the best outcome in the circumstances; instead, they bemoan the betrayal of central government in creating a situation at district level where their status and image was gnawed away to nothing, and shake their heads over the foolishness of Indian nationalists in believing that India could possibly be ready for self-government, retaining the conviction that Punjabis in their districts desperately wanted the maintenance of reliable, paternalistic rule and would be ill-served by democracy. This feeling was retained throughout their subsequent careers, as they observed unfolding independent Indian and Pakistani events and what they assessed as being a collapse of values and class structure within Britain. Thus even when writing their memoirs in the 1960s and 1970s, the men do not in any way see the 1947 date for transfer of power as a timely and desirable decision. The shaping of the men’s narrative by a sense of decline of post-1945 Britain mirrors popular continuity of certain ideals about empire. The men carefully represent in their memoirs the problems of late colonial Punjab as a result of implicit Indian characteristics, validating the concept of colonialism to which they remain committed; disinterest in the facts of empire and decolonisation allowed the British in the 1950s and 60s to similarly maintain an untroubled adherence to romanticised and exotic imagery of what was increasingly

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

becoming the imperial past by not considering the implications of the imperial institutions still clung on to as evidence of Britain's past 'greatness'.

Commonwealth immigration and the changing face of 'whiteness'

Britain has always had visitors and migrants from its empire, as Antoinette Burton's work indicates. Following World War II, however, the ideal of citizenship for members of 'greater Britain' was utilised to encourage a workforce of West Indian and subcontinental migrants to come to Britain and fill post-war employment gaps. The results were multiple, but fundamentally the new Britons challenged long-standing colonial mythology and justifications based upon the idea that those in the empire were British. Just as the I.C.S. narrative was of a confirmation of the idea of Indian and Pakistani fundamental religiosity and violence, reactions to immigrants in the metropole often utilised the same terms to interpret and classify people not accepted as part of an evolving 'Britishness'. As Sayyid suggests,

The representations of South Asians in Britain have for the most part continued to rely on a conceptual vocabulary borrowed from the legacy of Indology and its allied disciplines. Indology can be seen as a variant of orientalism: indological discourse is founded upon the opposition between normative western practices and establishments against which South Asian ways of living appear as distortions and aberrations. These distortions and aberrations are domesticated by the use of tropes such as *caste* (hierarchical divisions), *izzat* (notions of honour) and *biraderi* (kinship networks). They help to identify South Asian settlers as essentially 'Indian'.⁷⁴⁷

These terms of 'differentness' allow for distinct public space for immigrant groups: defined specifically by these ideas and restricted by them. It also prevents a more thorough investigation of the imperial legacy in British identity, as immigrant groups are not allowed a more significant role in redefining national identity.

⁷⁴⁷ S. Sayyid, 'Introduction: BrAsians – Postcolonial People, Ironic Citizens' in *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain*, edited by N. Ali, V. S. Kalra and S. Sayyid (London: Hurst & Co., 2006), p. 2.

Arvind Mandair suggests that maintaining the colonial preoccupation with British Asian *religious* identity allows the possibility of public space for these groups, without any challenge to the national order.⁷⁴⁸ Describing this distancing effect, Mandair writes,

The enunciation by BrAsians of their cultural traditions as specifically *religious* has been the standard political (neo-colonial) response and the standard entry point into the politics of recognition. That is, by asserting the *distinctness* of their religious traditions Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus have automatically conferred recognition and legitimacy on the West (British identity) as their other, and in so doing have consistently been accommodated within the multicultural frame.⁷⁴⁹

Ongoing usage of colonial conceptualisations of cultures of the subcontinent inevitably represents a hangover of imperial thinking and structures into modern British life. For Sayyid, this limitation of the postcolonial British mind and its imposition upon the thinking of new Britons as they seek to define their place in society has prevented “colonial closure”, as “the continual reliance on colonial framing in the context of the postcolonial condition has been largely responsible for inability of ‘race relations’ paradigms to cope with ethnicised minorities’ attempts to re-write the history of the nation.”⁷⁵⁰ The key problem for Sayyid is that “BrAsians’ relationship to the dominant story of these isles continues to see them and their presence as something supplemental to the nature of what it means to be British” and that “BrAsians (like other ex-colonial ethnically marked people) are often reminded that to be in Britain but not a part of Britain is not the same as being British.”⁷⁵¹

The presence of non-white Britons acts as a challenge to conceptions of ‘Britishness’ specifically because it is inextricably linked with the history of colonialism and the mythology and inequality that are bound up with it. The idea that people outside of geographical Britain could be made part of national identity as part of a ‘greater’ Britain is turned on its head by commonwealth immigration, as the promises of colonialism are re-claimed by ex-colonial ‘subjects’. As Hesse and Sayyid argue, “the expansive migration and settlement of South Asians in Britain cannot be accounted for outside the context of the relationships established between Europe and South Asia in general and

⁷⁴⁸ Arvind Mandair, ‘[Im]possible Intersections: Religion, (Post-)colonial subjectivity and the ideology of multiculturalism’ in *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain*, edited by N. Ali, V. S. Kalra and S. Sayyid (London: Hurst & Co., 2006), p. 93.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁷⁵⁰ Sayyid, ‘Introduction: BrAsians – Postcolonial People, Ironic Citizens’, p. 4.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

between post-Timurid India and the British Isles in particular.”⁷⁵² Thus “Asian settlement is a post-colonial suffix to the colonial relationship between Britain and its Indian empire.”⁷⁵³ Non-white British communities are a visible reminder of the colonial past, and remain judged and categorised by the norms of the past rather than being the prompt for reassessments of history in relation to modern British identity. Rather than posing questions about the role of the past in the present, immigrant communities have often been branded instead as a problem, disruptive of the nation’s values or image. Although the initial post-war economic imperative was to fill jobs in the metropole, subsequent legislation has sought to restrict immigration and, as Ashley Dawson argues, to “portray colonial and postcolonial immigrants as aliens whose presence threatened fundamental British traditions.”⁷⁵⁴ Dawson points to two pieces of legislation designed to restrict numbers of migrants: the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which put in place numerical controls based on skills and job prospects specific to commonwealth and not applicable to European and Irish immigrants;⁷⁵⁵ and the 1981 Nationality Act, which he suggests “also bore the clear stamp of eugenically tinged fears concerning the purity of British bloodlines.”⁷⁵⁶

Growing antagonism toward post-colonial immigrants reflects anxiety about the implications of a ‘Britishness’ which includes non-white members. The issue of immigration raises questions about the definition of ‘Britishness’, in terms of whether race, place, culture or other factors are the most important markers of identity. Ian Baucom’s analysis of Enoch Powell’s 1968 Rivers of Blood speech suggests the way in which the existence of non-white Britons could disrupt the concept of ‘Britishness’ in general. By denying the possibility that second-generation immigrants could become British by being born and growing up in Britain, Powell undermined a basis of ‘Britishness’ for all concerned. Baucom explains,

Throughout his speeches and writings, the growth of Britain’s black population coincides with the need to abandon a spatial theory of identity. And this is because for Powell what is finally threatened by the growth of a black population in England is less

⁷⁵² Barnor Hesse and S. Sayyid, ‘Narrating the Postcolonial Political and the Immigrant Imaginary’ in *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain*, edited by N. Ali, V. S. Kalra and S. Sayyid (London: Hurst & Co., 2006), p. 15.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁵⁴ Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 16.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the white body than the metropolitan landscape – which the immigrants remake, as they have remade the ‘once quiet’ street [from Rivers of Blood speech]. And in remaking the street, in transforming it into a place of ‘noise and confusion’, the island’s immigrants, he bitterly admits, remake England and Englishness.⁷⁵⁷

Baucom argues that as a result of the perceived need to protect ‘Englishness’ from immigrants and their descendants national identity is increasingly being defined by race, not place.⁷⁵⁸ Powell’s fear, Baucom suggests, stems from a sense that “England can no longer take its essence for granted, that a black population is promising to fundamentally alter England and what it means to be English.”⁷⁵⁹ Thus the shift of the boundary of empire into the metropole challenged people like Powell to find a new way of defining national identity.⁷⁶⁰

The relationship of ‘Britishness’ to race is equally challenged by the presence of non-white Britons. Sayyid suggests that “British refers both to a civic constitutional identity and to a term heavily implicated in the racialised narratives of the *herrenvolk* of the British Empire.”⁷⁶¹ Thus ‘Britishness’ remains defined not only by the history of empire but by the structures of mind involved. A “transformation of the idea of Britishness cannot be accomplished without the dis-articulation of coloniality in its constitution”, Sayyid argues, as what is required is a replacement of the conceptualisation of ‘Britishness’ “in which the distinction between West and non-West is no longer privileged.”⁷⁶² The problem of race is two-fold for the definition of modern ‘Britishness’. First, as Ashley Dawson suggests, the loss of imperial power and status intensified reliance on ‘whiteness’ to define privilege and superiority: “indeed, the more potency they lost on the global stage after the eclipse of imperialism, the harder some Britons clung to the illusory status symbol that covered their bodies – their white skin – and the immutable cultural difference that it seemed to signify.”⁷⁶³ However, the meaning of ‘whiteness’ in a post-colonial world is significantly altered. As Sayyid suggests, within a multicultural society, white British people are the “ethnically unmarked majority” set against the “ethnically marked minority”.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁷ Baucom, *Out of Place*, p. 23.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁶¹ Sayyid, ‘Introduction: BrAsians – Postcolonial People, Ironic Citizens’, p. 6.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁶³ Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*, p. 6.

⁷⁶⁴ Sayyid, ‘Introduction: BrAsians – Postcolonial People, Ironic Citizens’, p. 4.

Those returning from colonial settings had particularly developed senses of race differentiation and the subtlety of definitions of ‘whiteness’. Elizabeth Buettner’s work on racial and social identity within late colonial communities in India suggests how status was negotiated and recognised in a very nuanced way within this specific space. She argues that,

Despite the widespread tendency of white people to portray themselves as racially neutral, their hegemonic political, socio-economic, and cultural position has resulted from, and been reinforced by, elaborate mechanisms designed to maintain and police boundaries which divide them from less privileged groups. Defining who counted as ‘white’ in multi-racial societies was one of the key aspects of this process, because racial identity historically has depended on a shifting set of subjective criteria rather than a fixed group of innate characteristics.⁷⁶⁵

These criteria of racial identity were marked through different terminology, with the words ‘European’ or ‘English’ featuring in colonial era sources instead of ‘white’ or ‘British’.⁷⁶⁶ Buettner suggests that these differences “perhaps illuminate most effectively how characteristics such as geographical location, nationality, ancestry, and physical and social attributes worked *in combination* to place women and men either within or outside the bounds of a privileged community.”⁷⁶⁷ Whiteness did not work alone to mark out status but was nonetheless fundamental to expectations of recognition and respect.

Having lived in a society where racial definition and the hierarchy of status involved was an implicit and significant part of everyday life, the return ‘home’ to Britain involved various elements of loss for ex-colonial inhabitants. The fear of being “merely ‘ordinary’ and ‘insignificant’ in Britain” resulted, Buettner argues, from two issues:

The first pertains to their white racial status and its differential value in Britain and India. While residing in a part of the overseas empire where white Britons were a small minority amidst a large population whiteness was one of the most symbolic attributes that identified them as rulers rather than ruled.⁷⁶⁸

Thus, “those coming back from India returned with enhanced understandings of the prestige that whiteness might carry with it overseas, which could make it disconcerting

⁷⁶⁵ Buettner, ‘Problematic Spaces, Problematic Races’, p. 278.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 278.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 278.

⁷⁶⁸ Buettner, ‘From Somebodies to Nobodies: Britons Returning Home from India’ pp. 224-225.

when it lost its power to distinguish them from crowds in the street or those who worked as shop assistants and domestic servants.”⁷⁶⁹ The second issue related to quality of living. Despite the majority of Britons living in India having come from middle class backgrounds, in India “race combined with class to enable them to constitute what Francis Hutchins described as ‘a middle-class aristocracy’ living ‘in a manner well above the station from which they had sprung in England’...”⁷⁷⁰ Thus the return to Britain lost ex-colonials the recognisability of status through the colour of their skin, and the means to uphold the lifestyle associated with it. The result, ironically, was that groups of returnees from colonial India stuck together in small communities, in much the same way as immigrant groups feel pressurised to do.⁷⁷¹

The case of returning colonial workers highlights the problem of ‘whiteness’ in postcolonial Britain; as a marker of ‘differentness’ in which some groups sought to invest historical significance, but not necessarily a clear marker of identity. The work of Ruth Frankenburg on racial identities in the US suggests importantly the *lack* of cultural investment in ‘whiteness’, that “most often, whites are the nondefined definers of other people. Or, to put it another way, whiteness comes to be an unmarked or neutral category, whereas other cultures are specifically marked cultural.”⁷⁷² Thus Frankenburg’s interviewees are able to identify cultural attributes of other racial groups, but cannot see any united identity in ‘whiteness’. This tendency to be defined rather as what it is not than what it is makes ‘whiteness’ a weak identifiable characteristic in the face of immigration. Frankenburg argues that “whiteness often stood as an unmarked marker of others’ differentness – whiteness not so much void or formlessness as norm.”⁷⁷³ This separation of a norm of British ‘whiteness’ from racially, religiously and culturally marked non-white Britons is exactly the limitation posed by interpreting modern multicultural ‘Britishness’ without coming to terms with the legacy of colonialism in structuring our thoughts about race and identity. By maintaining terms of reference to post-colonial immigrant groups and their British descendants, the progress of a modern version of ‘Britishness’ is hindered, as colonial structures of thought are compounded. The presence of members of ex-colonial nations within and as part of

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 224-225.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 224-225.

⁷⁷¹ Buettner, *Empire Families*, p. 20.

⁷⁷² Frankenburg, *White Women, Race Matters*, p. 197.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., p. 198.

metropolitan society should pose a challenge to outdated and over-simplified notions both of empire and its relation to ‘Britishness’ and yet the frame of reference for assessing both appears to have retained much of the style and norms of colonialism. The loss of status in ‘whiteness’ is matched by a dichotomous essentialisation of characteristics of the non-white ‘other’ which fails to challenge ideas about the colonial past, or to open up conceptualisations of ‘Britishness’.

Interrogating ‘Britishness’: the problem of identity in the post-colonial era

In the second half of the twentieth century, Britain’s relationship with its imperial past has developed into an ambivalent legacy. The restriction of global reach and re-visiting of the concepts of empire through the presence of post-colonial immigrants in the metropole have both prevented closure on the role of the imperial past in British identity, and encouraged a continued attachment to a time of apparent ‘greatness’. Ian Baucom describes how, for Salman Rushdie, the empire “is less a place where England exerts control than the place where England loses command of its own narrative of identity.”⁷⁷⁴ As a result, the legacy of empire within Britain gains inconsistent treatment. As Baucom suggests, “the co-appearance of country house fetishism, *Raj*-revivalism, and the policies that culminated in the 1981 Nationality Act reveal, once again, the English state’s propensity to simultaneously avow and disavow the Imperial determinations of English identity.”⁷⁷⁵ Whereas in the 1950s and early 60s the engine of imperial propaganda was still running, and imagery of the colonial world was an integral part of schooling, consumerism and popular culture, the sweep of African decolonisation and turn to Europe drew this phase to a close in the mid-1960s, with empire appearing very much a thing of the past. The revival of imagery and nostalgia for empire in the 1980s thus presents an intriguing phenomenon which this final section considers.

Robert Aldrich’s work on post-colonial France suggests a loss of interest in imperial history and culture in the 1960s which parallels that in Britain. He writes that,

Imperialism and colonialism became taboo – despite accusations of ‘neo-colonialism’ – and reminiscences of the colonial era were less than welcome... Museum collections

⁷⁷⁴ Baucom, *Out of Place*, p. 3.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

grew dusty, exhibition labels yellowed, colonialism was shifted to storerooms. Recollection of empire was the province of specialist historians, amateurs of nostalgia, diehard colonialists or dilettantes of the exotic in a France resolutely trying to be hyper-modern.⁷⁷⁶

These categories of interest in empire have relevance for Britain too. By being divided between academic study and amateur nostalgia, the laymen's terms for discussing empire were reinforced as being those of exoticism, romance and nostalgia. Aldrich suggests that this forgetting of imperial culture and artefacts was the second of three "stages of the workings of memory".⁷⁷⁷ In the first, colonial age, he argues, "museums and monuments created memories"; then in the period of decolonisation, "memories were forgotten, repressed or denied."⁷⁷⁸ In the contemporary stage of recollection and rediscovery of imperial relics, Aldrich suggests a new self-critical edge to approaches to these memories, writing:

In the phase of colonial rule, colonies were proudly presented: the spectacle of colonialism. In the years of decolonisation and *tiers-mondisme*, they were embarrassedly hidden away. Now they are on show again, but increasingly colonialism is problematised, imperial rule is viewed critically, colonialism is being categorically interrogated. The presuppositions underlying colonialism are being re-examined, and the way in which colonial ideologies under-pinned collecting and exhibition of art is being analysed.⁷⁷⁹

This level of analysis suggests an ability to distance the modern collective identity from the past to an extent which I would challenge.

The nature and provenance of museum and gallery artefacts indicates one of the fundamental problems for post-colonial nations; created, as Mackenzie argues, to "feed the white gaze", British institutions used objects and peoples discovered through colonialism as "part of the objectivity of the museum".⁷⁸⁰ Thus the museum, as a vestige of national pride and source of identity, relies upon objects gained by conquest and attitudes toward the peoples involved vested in a colonial outlook.⁷⁸¹ Without returning the objects, the collection cannot truly be separated from the values involved

⁷⁷⁶ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France*, p. 16.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁸⁰ John M. Mackenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 5.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

in its compilation; but without such collections, the history on which modern ‘British’ identity might be claimed to be based is in part lost. If ‘place’ and ‘race’ are problematised as defining aspects of national identity, perhaps ‘culture’ is the marker; but to define British ‘culture’ is not only difficult, it is necessarily tied into such institutions and characteristics associated with empire. Ian Baucom suggests how a ‘traditionalist’ turn in the 1980s introduced exactly these difficulties. He describes a development analysed by both Patrick Wright and David Cannadine, of “‘a distinctive public mood... withdrawn, nostalgic and escapist, disenchanted with the contemporary scene, preferring conservation to development, the country to the town, and the past to the present’ that emerged at virtually the same time as, and was nourished by, the ascendancy of New Right orthodoxies.”⁷⁸² Indeed, Baucom stresses that this was “the paradoxical, if not inexplicable, counterpart to the development-oriented and global-economic fiscal policies of Margaret Thatcher”, operating by “‘fetishizing’ the ‘quintessential’ architectures of Englishness”.⁷⁸³ Of these examples, Baucom points in particular to the British love of visiting stately country houses, which, he adds, were “so often built on the profits extracted from the British Empire”.⁷⁸⁴

The most widely recognised element of what Salman Rushdie called the ‘*Raj* revivalism’ of the 1980s, was the launch and extraordinary popularity of television adaptations of popular novels set in colonial India; notably *The Far Pavilions*, *The Jewel in the Crown* and *A Passage to India*.⁷⁸⁵ Andrew Thompson describes how these series “invested the *Raj* with considerable glamour” and received criticism for portraying “India primarily through European eyes” with Indians only receiving walk-on parts.⁷⁸⁶ Robin Moore gives some indication of the widespread popularity of *The Jewel in the Crown*, describing how:

When Granada screened the television serial adaptation of the *Quartet*, from 3rd January to 3rd April 1984, Scott’s admirers increased a thousand-fold. *The Jewel in the Crown* attracted eight million viewers on Tuesday evenings and a further million for Sunday repeats. For fourteen weeks Tuesday was a stay-at-home evening. It was said that the streets of London were as quiet as they had been during the Blitz.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸² Baucom, *Out of Place*, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁸⁶ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?*, p. 224.

⁷⁸⁷ Moore, *Paul Scott’s Raj*, p. 1.

Whilst critics questioned the authenticity of the portrayal of British India, they did not doubt the series' popularity. Moore refers to comments made by Ferdinand Mount in *The Times*, who wrote that he "was 'taken aback by how far the ITV series... falls short of the claims made for it.' Here was 'barley water rather than a chota peg.' The puzzle was the 'huge enthusiasm among people of the better sort' for this soap opera. The answer must be its accommodation to the present nostalgia for the *Raj*.'" ⁷⁸⁸

The use of Scott's books as a romantic revival of the glory of empire appears antithetical to the themes and intentions of the man himself, as the *Quartet*, as considered in chapter five, is not a credulous celebration of the Indian empire. Scott was certainly absorbed by his wartime experiences of India, however, and his books give some telling insights into the outlook he had on post-war and post-colonial Britain, in terms of explaining how his work could possibly become part of a nostalgia for empire. In his 1962 novel, *Birds of Paradise*, Scott puts his thoughts in the mouth of one of his characters, William Conway. Reflecting on 1950s and 60s Britain, Conway states:

We were consumers. This was my obsession... there was no longer anything you could contribute as an ordinary man [and] ... the out-of-the-ordinary man was up against it too. There wasn't a square inch of earth that hadn't been discovered, trampled on, littered with cigarette ends and Kwikkaffly tins; not a square mile of ocean that hadn't seen the passage of a million balsa-wood rafts; not a social or political concept that hadn't been tried, tested and discredited, not an idea that hadn't been had before and been applied and then disowned not an instinct that hadn't been written up by Freud or Jung, not a microbe that hadn't been bottled by Pasteur or Fleming not an act of mercy left unperpetrated by UNRRA or Schweitzer. It had all been done. The moulds were cast. They only had to be serviced, filled with the molten sub-standard iron of inherited good intentions and upended to produce little tombstones of inferior, repeat performances. ⁷⁸⁹

This generational disillusionment echoes the letters of Andrew Hume, with his attitude that the glory, romance and mystery had gone out of life by the second half of the twentieth century, leaving a disappointing scope to modern lives and laying the foundation of nostalgia and cultural pessimism.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Whilst Scott's books are critical in their approach to colonial rule, and set out to invert the racial assumptions of the *Raj*, Michael Gorra comments on Scott's sense of the losses involved in the end of empire. Gorra argues that:

He [Scott] has, in both the *Quartet* and its coda, *Staying On* (1977), an acute sense of the dislocation that the servants of the *Raj* feel after the end of empire, of the way in which, as Perron writes, such people 'may now see nothing at all when looking in [the] mirror' of English life, not even themselves. Yet though that acknowledgement of individual confusion and pain can hardly be taken as a nostalgia for imperial rule, the *Quartet* is nevertheless marked by a nostalgia of a particular kind: not in its deliberately and ironically clichéd evocations of the swank and the swagger of the *Raj*, but instead in the seriousness with which Scott takes the belief, memorably voiced by Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, that empire can be redeemed by 'some idea at the back of it'.⁷⁹⁰

Scott's books contain a strong sense of pathos in the lives of those bound up in empire and left behind by the changes of the mid-twentieth century, even as he critiques the institution of which they were part. His tender handling of these characters and, in some cases, conviction of their having acted for the best, means that the picture produced of colonial India is a nuanced one. Accompanied by vistas of the Indian landscape and imagery of exactly the lifestyle which had always attracted the imagination of the British public, the series allowed a focus on the romance of the *Raj*, without requiring a very serious understanding of the political events which remained very much in the background.

The appeal of romantic and adventurous imagery of colonial India in the 1980s sheds light on the continued attachment of the British imagination to conceptions of empire which glossed over politics and geography in favour of emotional responses. In accounting for this continuity, Scott's own feelings suggest the significance of a sense of deterioration in life in the latter half of the twentieth century. Peter Clarke relates this specifically to the British experience, suggesting that "the main reason ... why British history is no longer in thrall to triumphalist accounts is surely not just because of methodological enlightenment: it is because at the end of the twentieth century British historians lack confidence that there is much to celebrate."⁷⁹¹ Imperial pride and wartime victory are ostensibly the last examples of a sense of British glory. Mackenzie

⁷⁹⁰ Gorra, *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie*, p. 24.

⁷⁹¹ Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-1990* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 2.

sees in the Falklands war evidence of the retention of appetite for this kind of glory. He comments that:

Just as the pageantry surrounding Victoria grew as her personal power waned, so national ritual became a nostalgic solace for lost power. The patriotic fervour and orchestrated spectacle of naval and military homecomings after the Anglo-Argentine war revealed the old nineteenth-century magic still at work. The dominant ideology had not entirely lost its grip... The values and beliefs of the imperial world view settled like a sediment in the consciousness of the British people, to be stirred again by a brief, renewed challenge in the late twentieth century.⁷⁹²

In attachment to an imagined conceptualisation of empire, replete with the possibility of adventure, romance and the stiff-upper-lipped Englishman at work, lies not so much an envisioning of the outside world, but an established way for the British to continue to imagine themselves. What is lost for 'Britain' in colonial identity is, above all, a comfortable idea of what it means to be British and of the conviction of 'greatness'.

Cain and Hopkins suggest that by the end of the twentieth century, "what used to be referred to as the 'Establishment' had been further weakened and diluted", with the monarchy, the Church, and the English gentleman all losing ground as images of modern 'Britishness'.⁷⁹³ As a result, they suggest,

The citizens of the once United Kingdom are now uncertain about what it means to be British: Scotland has its own parliament and Wales its Assembly; the residual English have been obliged to re-think their own identity. As they do so, they have also had to take account of influences from the European Community, notably in matters of law, which have impinged on the sovereignty and hence on the independence of the state.⁷⁹⁴

Andrew Thompson similarly suggests that the sources of 'Britishness' have increasingly evaporated in the late twentieth century, producing anxieties about the future of the UK. He comments that "if the major props of a British national identity in the past were religion, wars and empire, then its prospects in an essentially secular society, with a fading memory of the century's two world wars, and virtually no colonies left to govern, can be made to look rather bleak."⁷⁹⁵ For Ashley Dawson, the result of this

⁷⁹² Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, pp. 257-258.

⁷⁹³ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁹⁵ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, p. 194.

inability to see a new role and identity for ‘Britishness’ means that Britain retains an “enduringly imperial stance in the world”.⁷⁹⁶

Uncertainty about creating a modern meaning for ‘Britishness’ which retains both global status and cultural pride both results from and compounds a failure to come to terms with the imperial past. The vision of comforting nostalgia provided by the proliferation of television adaptations and the popularity of memoir accounts like those presented by Charles Allen demonstrate how the sense of imperial history in 1980s Britain still leant toward the same aspects of imagery imbued by early twentieth-century propaganda. Baucom suggests this is unsurprising as “remembrance, especially nostalgic remembrance, is regularly intimate with forgetting”.⁷⁹⁷ Hence, he argues that “many contemporary Britons can imaginatively recollect the *Raj* only by assiduously forgetting about India, and those Indian and other ex-colonial subjects who managed to survive the lowering of the Union Jack”, recovering the past “only through a disavowal of the after-effects of imperialism on the present”.⁷⁹⁸ The limitations of terminology used to consider the new Britons descended from commonwealth immigrants demonstrate continued attachment to outdated modes of thought about empire, and block the progress of a new concept of ‘Britishness’. John Darwin provides an insight in his analysis of decolonisation which indicates the fundamental problem. Commenting on the efforts made to portray decolonisation as a steady, controlled process, Darwin suggests that:

In fact, a better image might be that of an impoverished grandee whose hereditary mansion becomes slowly uninhabitable room by room as, in apparently random sequence, the floors give way, the plumbing fails, the ceilings fall in. But however dilapidated the mansion became, it was not to be given up because no other mode of life was tolerable and an address is, after all, an address.⁷⁹⁹

Without a positive envisioning of the future of ‘Britishness’, imagined conceptions of the imperial past retained their hold in much the way throughout the twentieth century.

⁷⁹⁶ Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*, p. 7.

⁷⁹⁷ Baucom, *Out of Place*, p. 7.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁹⁹ Darwin, ‘British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?’, p. 206.

Conclusion

It is a difficult task to identify trends in British public opinion reactive to the events of decolonisation, apart from at points of crisis. Rather than suggesting, however, that this means empire was insignificant to British people in the metropole, or that its loss had no bearing on their lives, I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter that attachment to the concept of empire simply remained stable because there was never any particular interest in detailed knowledge of the colonies 'at home' in Britain. As Mackenzie argues, ignorance of the geography and politics of Britain's empire did not entail lack of impact:⁸⁰⁰ indeed, the failure of imperial propaganda to transmit a basic understanding of details of the colonial world has facilitated the ongoing adherence to a vague idealisation of empire, restricted to those aspects which impacted on the British conception of themselves. The potency of the idea of being at the heart of a global empire has not been replaced in the latter half of the twentieth century by any effective alternative conception of national identity, so that although the essence of empire is repudiated, many of its terms and modes of thought remained in use in the late twentieth century.

In the aspects of 'Raj revival' of the 1980s, it becomes clearly evident how I.C.S. memoirs fitted into the popular image of empire. The continued attraction of an uncomplicated depiction of colonial life in which politics, location and indeed Indian people themselves are not allowed to interfere with a romanticised and elegant lifestyle suggests the ongoing relevance of ex-colonial accounts. Chapters two and three identified key themes of the I.C.S. memoir depictions of their lives in Punjab: namely a surviving commitment to the style of rule and belief that it was the best suited to Punjabi subjects they saw in the main as primitive and zealously religious; an emphasis upon the power vested within them individually and assertion of the status embodied in 'whiteness'; and finally, an explanation of their work as civil servants, using steady, bureaucratic means to maintain control. The clearly-drawn lines of status and hierarchy, within which group characteristics are simplified by essentialising racial and topographical features offers both a pseudo-scientific basis for belief in British 'greatness' and depicts a world where identities are straight-forwardly drawn. This

⁸⁰⁰ Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 2.

simplification of empire, with an imagery of hard, uncomplaining British colonial officers, a spirit of adventure and individualism, and the high quality of life made possible by embodied status and inflated remuneration had always formed the attractive ideal of empire which was the limit of most British people's engagement with it.

The ideal imagery was not something from which I.C.S. officers had distance, but was a sense of empire in which they were also embroiled, both as recipients and contributors to this imagined version of colonial India. In one example, Allen Greenberger suggests how the fictional 'types' became an ideal for the actual colonial officers to replicate. Thus he records, "one author writes in regard to 'the cult of the strong silent man', that when he came out to the Punjab at the turn of the century, this cult was being worshipped in all the clubs and messes."⁸⁰¹ This embedded ideal is not only of and about empire, but has much more to do with imagining 'Britishness', whereby the exoticised imagery of the colonial subject or modern non-white Briton offers an untroubled way of dismissing alternative conceptions of national identity and retain an image of a 'greater' Britain which does not attempt to break down the contradictions and offences it relies upon. David Rubin emphasises that the attraction of a limited and romanticised view of colonial India has not yet expired, or seems likely to, writing:

One can only speculate how long the various types of fiction that compose the Anglo-Indian tradition will continue to be written and achieve popularity. Probably indefinitely. The romantic imagination paints India as glamorous, mysterious and dangerously seductive to those who feel superior to it, as a century and a half of fiction has taught us to expect. This India appears able to survive any amount of bad publicity in the country's post-Independence era.⁸⁰²

The ability of ex-colonial civil servants to gain public space for their memoir narratives in the 1970s and 80s can thus be understood as evidence of continuity in the way that the British have imagined empire and its reflected image on themselves. Like the novels, films and propaganda of earlier decades, the material gaining popularity in the 1980s did so by negating the complexities and problems of Britain's imperial heritage and focussing upon strong, simple and attractive messages of a 'great' and 'greater' Britain imbuing the nation itself with a sense of a proud and romantic past.

⁸⁰¹ Greenberger, *The British Image of India*, p. 2.

⁸⁰² David Rubin, *After the Raj: British Novels of India Since 1947* (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1986), p. 174.

Conclusion

Like any work of personal narrativisation, the memoirs considered in this study produce myths of the self, wherein unsettled and chaotic realities are negotiated into a controllable, logical story of progress and personal growth. As Susan Brison suggests, “narrative memory is not passively endured; rather, it is an act on the part of the narrator, a speech act that defuses traumatic memory, giving shape and a temporal order to the events recalled, establishing more control over their recalling, and helping the survivor to remake a self.”⁸⁰³ The significance of these accounts lies in the fact that in representing their own past careers, they shape an image of a cohesive local colonial state set against assumptions about Indian nature which reinforce the most exoticising tendencies of the ‘white man’s burden’ construction. What is more, these memoirs secured an unusual level of public attention as part of a wider British culture of memorialising the most comfortable elements of the colonial past whilst skimming over the everyday brutality involved. In Urvashi Butalia’s book of partition memories, she describes in detail the commemoration organised by a modern Sikh community living in Delhi of their relatives lost at partition. Many of those who died are referred to using the terminology that they ‘martyred themselves’, disguising a distressing truth that such people (generally women) were killed by members of their own families in order to avoid the suffering and loss of face that would have resulted from their having been kidnapped. The use of specific terms and restricted remembering means that, “for the community of survivors, the remembrance ritual works at many levels. It helps keep the memory alive, and at the same time it helps them to forget. They remember, selectively, in order to forget.”⁸⁰⁴ As I suggested in chapter two, very few of the memoirs in this study refer explicitly to the violence the men witnessed, and never in human terms, but as figures and statistics. They represent the act of governance as a bureaucratic duty, discharged until what is suggested to have been a mistaken subcontinental demand for self-rule. Such a discourse cements the restricted remembering that Butalia describes; the ex-colonial cadre are able to memorialise their experiences within manageable terms. Moreover, this discourse offers a route into memories of empire that allows a

⁸⁰³ Susan J. Brison, ‘Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self’ in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, edited by Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1999), p. 40.

⁸⁰⁴ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 288.

nation to think of it drily, romantically, or nostalgically – but rarely graphically and honestly.

Andrew Thompson writes valuably about the resurgence of imperial culture in Britain, suggesting that:

After years of neglect, the empire is everywhere today – in novels, newspapers and museums, on the radio and the television. Indeed, the British appear to be attached to their imperial past like a mooring rope; the further they travel, the more they feel its pull.⁸⁰⁵

Moreover, Thompson argues that the power of imperial imagery is “‘as an emotional force’”,⁸⁰⁶ not necessarily consistent in the response it produces but, as a collective memory rather than a detailed historical awareness, potently emotive. L. J. Butler suggests that the ability to maintain this view of the imperial past lies in the effectiveness with which decolonisation was presented to the British people not as evidence of decline but as a fundamental continuity of imperial purpose. Butler thus argues that, “it is hardly surprising, then, that the people of Britain have been slow to embrace a dispassionate or rounded view of their imperial past.”⁸⁰⁷ The relative calm he suggests was characteristic of the British response to decolonisation has left as its legacy a past which has not been fully interrogated, the meanings and consequences of which have yet to be understood.

As part of this limitation of British teaching and thinking about the imperial past, genocidal events like partition fail to receive the recognition, study and soul-searching which they ought to prompt. As Butler argues,

Britain escaped from India relatively unscathed, but at the cost of sacrificing the hoped-for defence treaty in the process. More importantly, according to some historians, the manner of Britain’s retreat appears to have precluded the kind of fundamental reassessment of Britain’s real international stature which Indian independence ought to have encouraged.⁸⁰⁸

Such lack of public recognition at the time is evident in the reaction of the civil servants in this thesis; on returning to Britain they experienced a continuity of the British lack of

⁸⁰⁵ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?*, p. 1.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁸⁰⁷ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 197.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

engagement with the realities of what was happening in India. Whilst in 1947 this attitude conferred isolation and often segregation on ex-colonial groups, decades later their representations of life in Britain's colonies have a nostalgic attraction which appears contradictory. However, throughout the twentieth century, what has been consistent in British attitudes to empire has been exactly that lack of specificity which allows for romantic notions and nostalgic imagery to be the dominant themes. Andrew Thompson suggests, indeed, that the feeling of omnipotence and permanence associated with imperialism has been a fundamental and continued troubling legacy post-decolonisation. He writes,

The historian Ashis Nandy believes that imperial attitudes and values were thoroughly internalised by the British. While Indians were largely able to confine the impact of empire to their urban centres, the British were 'overwhelmed' by their experience of being colonial rulers. The former cabinet minister and leading thinker on Labour's left, Tony Benn, agrees. He regards Britain as the empire's last colony and the British people as the last to await liberation.⁸⁰⁹

This failure to move on from the imperial past has connotations not just for Britain's image of itself, but of its capacity to recognise the negative impact and legacy of colonialism upon many areas of the world, notably the divided subcontinent.

Failing to adapt ideas of empire also has connotations for immigrant communities and their descendants in Britain. As Vron Ware argues, "the contingencies of imperialism brought under British jurisdiction many different ethnic groups who continue to retain an affinity with the country, either through direct settlement here or through structures such as the Commonwealth – but this does not automatically permit them to identify as English, even if they are born and brought up in the country."⁸¹⁰ As discussed in chapter six, immigrant communities in Britain are one of the most visible reminders of empire. These subjects of empire were given reason to believe that they could lay claim to their part of 'Britishness' and post-World War II, the acute shortage of labour in Britain's industrial cities made way for an influx of migrant workers from the former colonies.⁸¹¹ However, the retention of nostalgic impulses about empire, and an idea of 'Britishness'

⁸⁰⁹ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?*, p. 203.

⁸¹⁰ Vron Ware, 'Perfidious Albion: Whiteness and the International Imagination' in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, edited by Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica and Matt Wray (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 186.

⁸¹¹ Roger Ballard, 'Introduction: The Emergence of *Desh Pardesh*' in *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, edited by Roger Ballard (London: Hurst & Company, 1994), p. 6.

based on diffuse ideas of ‘whiteness’ and ‘liberalism’ have restricted the public space for a multicultural re-imagining of national identity. The messages of the memoirs: of a lasting belief in the benefits of white paternalism and the intrinsic weaknesses of the Indian people with whom they worked; and the sense of decline in the second half of the twentieth century into a smaller, less romantic world, form part of a continued British sense of postcolonial deterioration. While Blitz-era London and idealised images of colonial life remain those celebrated as representing the best of Britain’s past, adaptations to a new future which includes Commonwealth immigrants and their descendants in the national story will remain stymied.

Like the other work produced by the project ‘From Subjects to Citizens’, I have set out in this thesis to show 1947 not as an exceptional moment of transition but within a context of continuity in mid-twentieth century modes of governance in India and Pakistan. My perspective on this has been in breaking down the narrative British I.C.S. men give of 1947 as a disastrous end, unrepresentative of the rest of their work in the Punjab; a narrative which makes sense in their self-definition due to their precipitate departure in 1947, in most cases, never to return. The descriptions they give of their work in the preceding years, however, betray not a breakdown of previously much more powerful administrative norms but a continuity of distance, reliance on local networks of control, and unwillingness to accept the true humanity of the people in their districts. This interpretation of ‘communalism’ as implicit, entrenched and unavoidable, an unshakeable part of the South Asian psyche, has wide-ranging implications. First, it provides exactly the insight Judith Brown suggests that life histories are capable of offering; the ability to listen in on “the intense debates that such people had within themselves and with each other over crucial issues of their day”⁸¹² and to understand the working presumptions of an administrative organisation. As such, it is evident that the colonial state at district level was able to disassociate itself from communal violence using this kind of interpretation, hence not recognising or acting upon situations which it might be considered the responsibility of the state to prevent. The reactions to riots discussed in chapter two exemplify this attitude, as, whilst they men like Allan Arthur

⁸¹² Brown, “‘Life Histories’ and the History of Modern South Asia”, p. 589.

sought to amass the relevant forces to put a stop to the violence and kept a statistical record which allowed in order for remunerations to be paid, the human element seems to evade him. This also suggests how the state model which was largely adopted by the I.A.S. post-1947 was one which encouraged a non-interventionist stance, especially as related to what was labelled as ‘communalism’.⁸¹³ Finally, the image of South Asia projected by the I.C.S., a colonial administrative body with significant prestige and influence in its day, was clearly one that consistently reinforced images of Indian religiosity, unshakable traditionalism and animalistic violence. This presentation has a lasting potency within and beyond the subcontinent.

In their depiction of the government of which they were part, the I.C.S. men in this study emphasise the amount of ‘power’ held within their own hands, and yet their everyday working practices complicate this image by suggesting reliance upon lower level officials for both information and control. This particularly challenges the reputation of the Punjab, as a region considered to give its civilians the most extensive powers and independence. This image was bound up in fiction about colonial India throughout the twentieth century, both shaping the expectations of those planning a colonial career and the style in which they later wrote about their experiences; a self-reinforcing, snow-balling mythology of state powers which it is important to problematize. One of the other key characteristics for which the I.C.S. was famous was the notion of *esprit de corps* and this element of organisational culture was not only important to a thinly spread professional group but outlasted their time in the Punjab. During second and third careers in Britain or abroad, the men both explicitly refer to their continued attachment to the I.C.S. values and community, and demonstrate in their descriptions of others and united narrative of the past the extent to which they continued to subscribe to a group mentality and sense of wider belonging across time and distance. This unity of message and commitment to a shared set of values strengthens the narrative produced by ex-colonial officers and makes them easily transmittable as part of an existing body of literature, film and late colonial propaganda which has disseminated a simple, nostalgic set of ideas about empire which are easily digested and stubbornly powerful. As J. A. Mangan argues, “mentalities created by yesterday’s

⁸¹³ For more detail on the I.A.S. adoption of I.C.S. norms of governance, refer to: Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

certainties survive more frequently than some would like to believe. These mentalities still extensively influence those of today.”⁸¹⁴

The necessity of assessing the impact of colonialism and decolonisation upon Britain itself has already been established, and has recently become a fruitful field of research.

As Andrew Thompson suggests,

Scholars are now actively challenging insular and inward-looking approaches to the writing of British history. Moves towards closer European integration, the transfer of Hong Kong to China, Scottish and Welsh devolution, and the peace process in Northern Ireland – all these have undermined the idea that the Britain we know today is simply the creation of forces from within ‘little England’.⁸¹⁵

Moreover, Gavin Nardocchio-Jones argues that “it is now becoming clear how the loss of Great Britain’s colonies affected metropolitan politics, demography and national identity.”⁸¹⁶ This legacy is often difficult to establish, however; examples of imperial culture being part of British lives or of imperial propaganda being placed in the way of people in the metropole can be established, but the extent of its absorption is harder to define. I have contended throughout this thesis that little real *knowledge* of the colonies did penetrate British life, but rather that the knowledge of simply having an empire, and the assumptions about Britishness that this prompted, has been an implicit aspect of the nation’s concept of itself for so long that it is now difficult to disentangle. Thompson provides some useful examples of this intrinsic reality of imperialism in everyday life, writing that,

Imperial issues were part and parcel of domestic political debate, not necessarily in the sense that they were consistently centre stage, but in that they intersected with many of the other major topics of the day. Problems of urban poverty and unemployment were linked to the economic development of empire. High levels of spending on the armed forces were justified by Britain’s imperial commitments and not just its own security...

⁸¹⁴ J. A. Mangan, ‘Introduction’, in *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism*, edited by J. A. Mangan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 20.

⁸¹⁵ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, p. 1.

⁸¹⁶ Gavin Nardocchio-Jones, ‘From Mau Mau to Middlesex? The Fate of Europeans in Independent Kenya’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 26, 3 (2006), p. 491.

In each case the empire provided the context in which key domestic issues were debated.⁸¹⁷

As such, imperial history is not a finite area of study but should rather be considered as a vital underlying aspect of British history; a lens through which Britain's relationships with the rest of the world must necessarily be viewed.

Whilst imperial scholarship increasingly recognises the superfluity of divisions between metropole and periphery in writing about the colonial legacy, recent developments have recreated this divide within the historiography itself. Valuable, focussed approaches based on area studies, on giving voice to the subjectivities of women and those subaltern identities overlooked by past approaches, all provide important insights.⁸¹⁸ At the same time, work on the wider networks of empire, its global interconnections and instances of mutual impact, have an important role to play.⁸¹⁹ In between these extremes, there is little middle ground: area studies scholars speak to other specialists of their region; imperial or British historians still maintain a focus on that area. In this thesis, I have set out to bridge the two and to suggest an extension to Judith Brown's concept of life histories.⁸²⁰ As well as providing us with a route into institutions like the I.C.S., into everyday governance and attitudes, the imperial lives of the men in these memoirs link them back to Britain and to the wider colonial world. As such, by interrogating the narrative they produce, it is possible to link the experience of an event like partition with its representation back in Britain; to see how local rule and detailed knowledge of a colonial province translated in memoirs and novels into a simplistically celebratory record of an imperial system and set of values now past. My approach has attempted to suggest one possible way to link the work being produced in area studies with that of imperial historians; to re-introduce the complicated networks of mutual impact which defined the imperial world, and have continuing influence on the post-colonial nations. Inter-disciplinary work, collaborations and case studies all provide alternative approaches to this problem. To view post-colonial nations and their imperial history in isolation is, I would contend, certainly a problem however; the imperial world

⁸¹⁷ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, p. 193.

⁸¹⁸ For example, David Ludden, ed., *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalisation of South Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2002).

Chaturvedi, Vinayak, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London: Verso, 2000).

⁸¹⁹ For example, Burton, *At the Heart of Empire*.

Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*.

⁸²⁰ Brown, 'Life Histories' and The History of Modern South Asia', pp. 587-588.

was based on multiple interactions which require further analysis for their full implications on modern nations to be understood.

This thesis set out to use memoir sources which, whilst popular in narrative and nostalgic histories, have largely been overlooked for analytic history-writing purposes. I have traced the experiences of the men who wrote these memoirs through their years in the Punjab, into their lives beyond India and in the lasting life that their accounts have had through their exposure to a public audience primed by images of empire drawn from an established genre of fiction. Chapter one set out to question what motivated these young men to apply for and start a career in the Indian empire at a point when the possibility of granting independence was becoming increasingly real. I sought to suggest how the inter-war period, rather than being one of unabated decline in imperial confidence, was marked by serious efforts to reinforce weaknesses and secure control over independence demands. In India, this meant that constitutional changes were largely conservative in aim; intended to stem the tide of protest and apply a gradual process of transfer of power. The 1919 and 1935 Government of India Acts exemplified this intention through their limited scope and maintenance of British control over central power. Moreover, in the arena of I.C.S. recruitment, one of the major incentives used was the representation of the continued importance of civil service supervision over Indian politicians as they formed provincial ministries. Nonetheless, the backdrop of the 1930s, the period when most of the I.C.S. men in this study applied to the service, was marked by the Round Table Conferences in London. As such, the men in this thesis must undoubtedly be recognised as a tiny minority. They were, however, an academic elite who had been genuinely convinced by the recruitment efforts with which they had come into contact, alongside impressions of the empire often drawn from fiction and popular imagery, that they could expect to serve a reasonable length of time in the subcontinent. The context of wartime Punjab facilitated the survival of this expectation. Unlike other parts of India which were faced with 'Quit India' demands and civil unrest, Punjab stood out in the late 1930s and early 40s for its relative calm and for the success of its coalition Unionist Ministry.

Chapter two investigated the mentality of late colonial rule in the Punjab, posing the question as to how I.C.S. officers maintained confidence in the value of their work despite its ostensible failure in the face of what became, by 1947, catastrophic levels of violence. The memoirs all stand by the service for which they worked, and emphasise its good qualities and effectiveness. The core value they affirm is their bureaucracy. As such, the examples of riot situations demonstrate how the I.C.S. approach fundamentally valued quantifiable data, legislative activity and record-keeping. The violence itself is represented as having two key causes, both beyond the control of the administrator. The first cause is emphasised in the separation the men draw between politicians in Delhi and London, and those operating on the ground. Sir Evan Jenkins' letters, situated between the two, demonstrate the position taken by I.C.S. district officers of being the aggrieved expert, overlooked by the political interplay of the centre.⁸²¹ The second point which the narratives reiterate is their belief in the natural inclinations of Punjabis toward zealous religiosity and communal violence. Startlingly, considering the date and the context of transfer of power, these men maintain an uncompromising stance of believing in the vital role of paternalistic government to prevent what they see as the basic tendency of Indians toward chaos and violence. Chapter three sought to break down the myths surrounding I.C.S. power and stature. The extent of independent operation and personal prestige emphasised as being the core features of I.C.S. rule belie a fundamental reliance upon collaboration. More realistically, civilians operated as figureheads for far more widely dispersed state authority, necessarily allowing the continued identification of much more junior officials as local representatives of the state. In 1947, the men identify a 'collapse' of state control as their own networks of information and support were no longer operational. The true limitations of their own role, however, mean that much of the structure of local state operations was able to survive post-1947. Moreover, the concept of complete collapse is also an exaggeration as the carefully-constructed image of white prestige did not simply evaporate, with widespread attacks on British civilians never materialising. Finally, the significance of the experience of status and prestige as conferred by the performance of 'whiteness' in the colonial environment had a lasting impact on the men, leading them to continue their belief in the values of I.C.S. life and

⁸²¹ Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 – Volume VIII The Interim Government 3rd July-1st November 1946*, pp. 376-377, document 233: Letter and enclosure from Sir E. Jenkins (Punjab) to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, dated 31st August 1946, sourced from Wavell Papers, Political Series, June-December 1946, pp. 158-64.

to feel themselves still to be part of a network created by the service's famous *esprit de corps* long after they left the subcontinent.

Chapter four highlighted some of the reasons the men found for holding on to their memories of the I.C.S. Subsequent experiences in Britain and in other colonial postings were, for many, a disappointment; never providing the same level of ostensible authority or camaraderie as the I.C.S. had done. Two incidences within the memoirs of less nostalgic attitudes come from Dick Slater and Ronald Belcher, whose second careers gave them status and variety working for the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices. The opportunities provided for them to utilise their previous experiences, with heightened levels of seniority available to them, allow for a smoother transition in the narrative of the self; the I.C.S. experience, for men like Belcher and Slater, was not wasted in subsequently disappointing careers, but operated as a logical preceding career to their work as diplomats. For many of the other men, leaving the subcontinent made them acutely aware of their attachment to the country they had worked in and, above all, to the experience of status that life had conferred at an early age. Subsequent disappointments reinforced the bonds of *esprit de corps* and the belief in the work they had undertaken in the Punjab. This collective experience explains the unity of the memoirs, as decades after leaving India, many still considered the career they had experienced in the Punjab to be fundamental to their identity. The united narrative and values conveyed in the memoirs, as well as their tendency to evade the darker questions of colonialism through their conviction in the vital role played the paternalistic state, made them attractive as part of a wider nostalgic imagery of empire which shared the I.C.S. men's nostalgia for a lost 'greater' Britain.

The development of *Raj* nostalgia, however, had deeper roots. In chapter five, I suggested how the established genre of colonial fiction of India features powerful conventions for approaching and representing the subcontinent which have sustained over the course of a century. Skirting around the actual work of colonialism, fictional representations of British lives in India have played a crucial role in building and sustaining the image of the I.C.S. as a prestigious cadre and the Punjab as a romantic location. As such, books of significantly different calibre and style are able to tap into a well of popular imagery of the wild frontier life, and the district officer of Kipling's

representation, who is *mah-bap* to his simple subjects.⁸²² The lifestyle of Anglo-India is also idealised in many such books, as having a romance and excitement that the restrictions of life in Britain cannot offer.⁸²³ The unfamiliarity and exoticism of the colonial lives represented, even with their dangers and hardships, have consistently represented an alluring romanticism which has dominated British imaginations of the empire. In the final chapter, I set out to suggest that such vague, affectionate ideals of empire have a pervasive potency which has not yet been allayed by alternative representations of ‘Britishness’. Although imperial possessions were already being lost and new nations formed by the post-war period, memories like David Cannadine’s serve to demonstrate how imperial culture retained a prominent position in public imagery of Britain in the 1950s, appearing in education, entertainment and advertising as well as childhood books.⁸²⁴ Many of the features of ‘imperial’ life that Cannadine describes still sustain in British culture today; in the fascination with the royal family, the Proms season, and the BBC World Service; all sitting uneasily with the new realities of Britishness that include non-white Britons and attempts to define a new inclusive national identity.

In his epic series of *Raj* novels, Paul Scott uses the character of Guy Perron to express most directly his views about the enmeshed history of India and Britain. In *A Division of the Spoils*, Perron reflects on the significance of India to the British, writing “for at least a hundred years India has formed part of England’s idea about herself and for the same period India has been forced into a position of being a reflection of that idea.”⁸²⁵ The subtle power of collective memory means that this legacy for both Britain and India has not yet been fully eroded or even understood. The vagueness and romanticised inclinations of the British imagination of India have reinforced over several centuries concepts of a nation thought to be exotic, religiously zealous, emotional and unpredictable; but in parallel have allowed for the British to think of themselves as modern, civilised, liberal in their colonial benevolence, and of course powerful. These dichotomies do not simply evaporate. In this thesis, I have suggested how I.C.S. memoirs transmit the same core messages about the Punjabi people with whom they

⁸²² Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, 3rd Edition (London: MacMillan and Co., 1891).

⁸²³ For example, Perrin, *The Anglo-Indians*, pp. 138-139 & 227: The Fleetwood family struggle to come to terms with retirement from work in India, Mr Fleetwood dying within a year after return to Britain, so diminished is he by the different environment.

⁸²⁴ David Cannadine, ‘Appendix: An Imperial Childhood?’, p. 187.

⁸²⁵ Scott, *The Raj Quartet, volume II*, pp. 105-106.

worked in the 1940s as might be expected decades earlier; the institution of colonialism had a powerful inertia effected through social norms in the colonial environments, and the continuous flow of literature and propaganda in the metropole. Vron Ware describes governmental efforts in the 1990s to ‘re-brand’ Britishness, attempting to shed “the crusty images of interminable industrial and imperial decline and rapidly diminishing importance as a world power”.⁸²⁶ As yet, however, no image powerful enough to displace the nostalgic pull of global greatness and sepia-toned colonial lifestyles has emerged. The solution for finding a new Britishness perhaps lies in greater honesty about the old: a fuller and franker public discourse in schools, universities and politics about the darker truths of the imperial past would offer the chance to re-evaluate both Britishness and its interactions with the rest of the world. The legacies of unrecognised colonial tragedies like partition might pose a good starting point.

⁸²⁶ Ware, ‘Perfidious Albion: Whiteness and the International Imagination’, p. 194.

Appendix 1: Biographies

Allan J. V. Arthur

Arthur was born on 16th September, 1915, in Calcutta, where his father was working for Jardine Skinner and Co., East India Merchants. He was educated at Seabrook Lodge, Hythe, Kent, where he was head boy, Rugby School, where he was head of his house, Senior Cadet Officer in the O.T.C. and Captain of Swimming, and Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he achieved a 2:2 in History, was President of the Junior Common Room, Captain of University Swimming and commanded the Cavalry Squadron of the Cambridge University Officer Training Corps.⁸²⁷

He was recruited to the I.C.S. by selection in August 1937 and appointed to the Punjab.⁸²⁸

Arthur took his probationary year at Cambridge, taking his finals examination in July 1938 and he passed 24th out of 58, coming top in riding.⁸²⁹

Arthur sailed for India in October 1938 and was allocated first to Amritsar, under District Commissioner Angus MacDonald. MacDonald left on leave in December 1938, after which he was succeeded as D.C. by Ivan Jones. In April 1939 Arthur took Departmental Examinations in Lahore and passed with a Higher Standard in Urdu, Civil Law and Criminal Law and credits in Revenue Law, Local funds and Treasury. In July 1939 he was sent to Dalhousie, a small hill station in Gurdaspur, for ten weeks' treasury training. Back in Amritsar, MacDonald returned to his post in October. In November 1939, Arthur was sent for Settlement training in Amritsar district. Then in May 1940, after 18 months in Amritsar, he was transferred to Lahore as Personal Assistant to the D.C., Mr. F. C. Bourne, and later Kenneth Henderson.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁷ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 1, part 1 – 'Introductory'.

⁸²⁸ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 1, part 2 – 'Reasons for Joining the I.C.S.'.

⁸²⁹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 1, part 3 – 'The probationary year in Britain'.

⁸³⁰ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 2-13, part 4 – 'First Impressions of India and Early Training'.

In April 1941 Arthur was posted to Murree, a north-eastern tahsil of Rawalpindi, for six months as Sub-Divisional Officer under Mr. F. B. Wace. In January 1942 he was transferred to Kasur as Sub-Divisional Officer for two years, serving under Kenneth Henderson, D.C. Lahore.⁸³¹

In January 1944, Arthur took over as D.C. Attock at Campbellpur, where he remained for just over two years.⁸³² He took home leave in 1946 and on his return, was posted as D.C. Multan, where he served from October 1946 to August 1947.⁸³³

Post-1947, Arthur was selected for the Sudan Political Service in July 1948 and, after a short course in Arabic at the School of Oriental Studies, travelled to Sudan in January 1949. He worked as D.C. of Khartoum for two years and then of Shendi in the Northern province for three years, finally ending up at Deputy Governor of Northern province for three months in 1954. Leaving in July 1954 when his post was “Sudanised”, he returned to the U.K. and worked for J.V.Drake & co. Ltd., Sugar Brokers, which then amalgamated with Woodhouse, Carey and Browne to form a larger company dealing in sugar, cocoa, coffee and tea. He became Vice Chairman in 1971 and Chairman in 1972, then retired in July 1975. Arthur served during his retirement as High Sheriff of Essex 1971/2 and Deputy Lieutenant from January 1975.⁸³⁴

⁸³¹ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 13-17, part 5 – ‘Period as Sub-Divisional Officer’.

⁸³² London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, pp. 19-24, part 6 (A) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Attock’.

⁸³³ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 24, part 6 (B) – ‘Period in Charge of a District: Multan’.

⁸³⁴ London, BL, APAC, Arthur, MSS Eur F180/63, p. 32, part 11 – ‘Brief History of Career after 1947’.

Ronald Harry Belcher

Belcher was born on 5th January 1916. He was educated at Christ's Hospital and Jesus College, Cambridge, and took his probationary year at Brasenose College, Oxford after being appointed to the I.C.S. on probation on 24th September 1938. His appointment was confirmed on 11th September 1939, and he sailed for India on 28th September, arriving in October 1939.⁸³⁵

In his probationary report, written by J. G. Barrington-Ward during his time at Brasenose, he was described as “quiet and unassuming and, for this reason, not so easy to get to know as some of the others. Once one gets on terms with him, he appears as a man of a singularly pleasant and well-mannered disposition with plenty of ability. His lecturers speak with enthusiasm of his intellectual powers and of his sense of responsibility, and I fully expect him to make a very efficient officer.”⁸³⁶

Belcher's first posting was to Gurdaspur,⁸³⁷ and during the summer of 1940, he spent six weeks doing treasury training at Dalhousie hill station.⁸³⁸ Following his departmental examinations at Lahore, he did six months' revenue training in Jhelum from winter 1940. His project was a small village called Lilla Goj between the Salt Range and the river Jhelum.⁸³⁹

Between May 1941 and January 1944, Belcher was posted to Rawalpindi to serve as Assistant Commissioner under D.C. Blyth Wace. Wace left in autumn 1941 and was succeeded as D.C. by Vernon Stainton.⁸⁴⁰

In January 1944, Belcher was posted to Kasur Sub-Division in Lahore District.⁸⁴¹ After five years' service, he was given leave between 25th October 1944 and 24th April 1945,

⁸³⁵ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Probationers recruited in 1938', IOR/L/SG/7/172, list of candidates in order of superiority from final examination.

⁸³⁶ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940', report on R. H. Belcher, written by J. G. Barrington-Ward, Esq., M.A., Supervisor of I.C.S. Probationers, Oxford, L/SG/7/114.

⁸³⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 2, part 3: 'Arrival in India'.

⁸³⁸ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 8, part 19: 'Treasury Training'.

⁸³⁹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 10, part 22: 'Revenue Training'.

⁸⁴⁰ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 13-15, part 29: 'A minor independent charge'.

⁸⁴¹ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 22, part 51: 'An Independent Charge; The Kasur Sub-Division'.

travelling by troopship back to England in November 1944 and arriving back by cargo boat in May 1945, reaching Lahore on 7th May.⁸⁴² On his return from leave, he took up a post in the Punjab Civil Secretariat, in the new Department of Civil Supplies.⁸⁴³

In the winter of 1946-47, Belcher was posted as Colonisation officer in charge of the Haveli Project, with headquarters at Multan, responsible for managing the transformation of the desert into productive farming lands as they became canal-fed.⁸⁴⁴ In August 1947, he was transferred to take temporary charge of Multan as Allan Arthur was leaving on Independence Day and there was no suitable Muslim officer available to take over.⁸⁴⁵ He was relieved in mid-September by the new Commissioner, Sikander Baig,⁸⁴⁶ and flew out of Karachi in November 1947.⁸⁴⁷

Belcher took the post-war reconstruction examination, and was seconded to the Commonwealth Relations office. He worked first in a department dealing with the economic affairs of India and Pakistan so far as they affected the UK, and then with the UK delegation to the Paris session of the United Nations (UN) in 1948. Later, seconded to the Foreign Service, he worked as first secretary in the Washington Embassy 1951-3, then as Private Secretary to Lord Swinton as Commonwealth Secretary and later went as Deputy High Commissioner to South Africa. He returned in 1959 and became head of the Commonwealth Office Department dealing with UN affairs, and then subsequently became head of the economic division there. Between 1961 and 1963, he was sent as Deputy High Commissioner to India. In 1963, he returned to take a post as Under Secretary in charge of the Division in the new Ministry of Overseas Development and held this for eight years. In 1973, he gave up the Asia Division and took on the Division dealing with the Caribbean and Latin America, and held this until his retirement in 1975.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴² London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 26, part 64: 'Home Leave'.

⁸⁴³ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 26, part 66: 'Civil Supplies'.

⁸⁴⁴ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 30, part 74: 'In charge of a Canal Colony'.

⁸⁴⁵ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 35, part 90: 'A temporary Commissionership'.

⁸⁴⁶ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, p. 42, part 110: 'Multan to Lahore'.

⁸⁴⁷ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 43-44, parts 112 and 115: 'A journey from Simla' and 'Resignation and Departure'.

⁸⁴⁸ London, BL, APAC, Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64, pp. 44-46, parts 117-122: 'Subsequent Career'.

Patrick Brendon

Brendon arrived in the Punjab in October 1937, serving first as A.C. Sargodha. Between 1941 and 1942, he served as Assistant Colonisation Officer at Nili Bar Colony, Pakpattan, and in 1943 was transferred to Jhang as D.C.⁸⁴⁹ Brendon's final posting was to the district of Gurgaon as D.C. 1946-47, from where he returned to the UK in March 1947 with his wife and baby.

⁸⁴⁹ London, BI, APAC, 'Punjab Civil List 1943', V/13/1043.

Sir Olaf Caroe

Caroe was born on 15th November 1892. He was educated at Winchester, and then at Magdalene College, Oxford where he studied Classics, graduating in 1914. He volunteered as a soldier in India during World War I, 1914-1919.⁸⁵⁰

On his return to the UK, Caroe married his fiancée Kitty Rawstone on 10th January 1920. He was persuaded by meeting with I.C.S. men including Sir Michael O'Dwyer to apply to the I.C.S. Arriving in Lahore in 1920, his first posting was as A.C. Amritsar under Sir. Henry Craik.

In 1922, he was transferred to Simla as Under Secretary Revenue, and then in 1923 was accepted into the I.P.S. and posted to Peshawar as City Magistrate. From November 1924, he had a three-year posting as A.C. Mardan, during which his second son was born and he was allowed home leave to bring his wife and sons back with him.

Postings followed as D.C. Hazara between July and November 1927, then as D.C. Kohat until October 1929, to Peshawar as Secretary to the Chief Commissioner and, from the autumn of 1930, as D.C. Peshawar. In May 1932, Caroe was granted home leave, returning February 1933.

On his return from leave, Caroe became Deputy Secretary in the Foreign Department until 1937, when he was transferred to Agent to the Governor General of Baluchistan. In 1938 he became Resident to Waziristan, and then in 1939 Revenue Commissioner in Baluchistan. During the war years, Caroe served as Foreign Secretary under Linlithgow and Wavell, while his wife stayed in London. They only saw each other for three months during the course of the war.

Caroe's final posting was as Governor of North-West Frontier Province between 1946 and 1947, based at Peshawar. On 15th August 1947, he took retirement.⁸⁵¹ He began

⁸⁵⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Punjab Civil List 1926', V/13/1031.

⁸⁵¹ London, BL, APAC, Sir Olaf Caroe, MSS Eur F203/78, from loose notes.

writing after his early retirement, first publishing in 1953: *Wells of Power*, quickly followed by *Soviet Empire*.⁸⁵²

⁸⁵² London, BL, APAC, Sir Olaf Caroe, MSS Eur F203/77, from loose notes.

Sir Conrad Corfield

From his obituary in the Times, 6th October 1980:

“He entered the I.C.S. in 1920 and held an exceptional variety of posts in the Indian Foreign and Political Department during the last quarter of a century of British administration of the subcontinent.

Conrad Laurence Corfield was born on August 15th 1893, the son of the Rev Egerton Corfield, MA, Reverend of Finchampstead, Berkshire. He was educated at St Lawrence College of which he later became a Governor. In the First World War he served with the First Cambridgeshire Regiment on the Western Front with the rank of Captain and gained the MC. In 1920 he was in the first batch of candidates for the I.C.S. and his brief probation was spent at St Catherine’s College, Cambridge. He was captain of the University Hockey team and played in the England Hockey International.

After initial district training in the Punjab Corfield moved to Delhi in May 1921 to be Assistant Private Secretary to the Viceroy, then Lord Reading, and held the position for 18 months. He returned to the Punjab for district work, and in 1925 was selected to join the Foreign and Political Department of the Government in India. His first appointment was that of Secretary to the Agent for the Governor General in the Western Indian States. Next he was transferred to the North Western Frontier Province as Assistant to the Political Agent in Kalat. At the end of 1928 he had been transferred in the same capacity to the Rajputana states. Three years later he was given charge of the Political Agency in the Southern States of Central India and Malwa. This was no more than a prelude to his transfer to Hyderabad as Secretary to the Resident in the Nizam’s dominions. In the spring of 1932 he was sent to Rewa to help in correcting some acts of maladministration by the ruler, and was made Vice-President of the State Council. He came home toward the close of 1932 to serve as advisor to the delegation for that State at the third session of the Indian Round-Table Conference. In 1934 Corfield was appointed Joint Secretary of the Foreign and Political Department under Lord Willingdon and afterwards Lord Linlithgow. In 1938 he became Resident in Jaipur, and in 1940 was transferred in the same capacity to the Punjab States.

It was from this background of wide experience of ‘Indian India’ that Corfield was called to Delhi in 1945 to succeed Sir Francis Wylie in the newly designated post of Political Advisor to the Crown Representative, Lord Wavell. This change of nomenclature was designed to assist in negotiations between the Viceroy and the ruling

princes of India as to their future in a self-governing India. Corfield was the official link between the Viceroy and the Chamber of Princes. The intimation of the British Cabinet Mission in 1946 that suzerainty so long held by the British sovereign would not be transferred to any successor Government accorded with the hopes of Corfield and many other experienced Political Officers. He made no secret of his regret that the Maharaja of Bikaner had accepted membership of the Constituent Assembly as he felt that this step weakened the bargaining power of the Chamber of Princes.

There were not wanting those in the senior ranks of the Indian Political Service with a long experience of the subcontinent, in that Lord Mountbatten for all his distinction in war was perhaps less well-grounded. Mountbatten was prone to accept too easily what Nehru told him, not excluding Nehru's own *idée fixe* (born of his Kashmiri background) that the whole of the I.P.S. was opposed to the cession of the Princes to the 'new' India. This was by no means the case; in fact some had worked extremely hard – and Corfield was one – advising the Princes to accede to the 'old' federal idea.

But in the end hopes of any form of federation in which the Princes would participate were frustrated, and when power was transferred from British hands in August 1947 Mr Nehru's government pursued with determination the policy of absorbing the Princedom into the general pattern of the Indian Union and personal rule came to an end. When in the spring of 1947 Wavell was recalled home and Mountbatten took his place as Viceroy, Corfield continued in the post of Political Advisor to the Crown Representative until power was transferred in the following August. Corfield was made a CIE in 1937, a CSI in 1942 and KCIE in 1945. Returning home he became President of the Wokingham Division Conservative Association. He was also Chairman of the St John's Council for Berkshire.

He married in 1922 Phyllis Betha, daughter of the late L.P.E. Pugh, KC, and they had a son and a daughter.⁸⁵³

Paul Scott used Corfield's memoir as a source for his novel *Birds of Paradise*, in which he focuses on the way Indian princes were 'betrayed' into joining the union.⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁵³ *The Times*, Obituaries, 6th October 1980.

⁸⁵⁴ Moore, *Paul Scott's Raj*, p. 64.

William (Bill) Cowley

Cowley was born on 17th November 1917. He was educated at Middlesbrough High School and Jesus College, Cambridge where he studied Economics as a scholarship student, and took his probationary year at London School of Oriental Studies. He was appointed to the I.C.S. on 24th September 1939, and arrived in India October 1939.⁸⁵⁵

Cowley grew up in Cleveland, an area between the Tees and the moors. He came from a family of farmers and farm-labourers, with no connection to India, and was brought up by his widowed mother, a nurse, living with his maternal grandparents in Middlesbrough.⁸⁵⁶

In 1934, he was present at a lecture given on the I.C.S. by Sir Edward Blunt.⁸⁵⁷

Having failed his first attempt at the I.C.S. examination, he went on a 'Grand tour' in 1937 around France, Italy and Austria, and then re-took the I.C.S. examination in London in 1938.⁸⁵⁸

His probationary report records: "An unfortunate illness culminating in an operation for appendicitis and followed by complications has prevented him doing himself justice during his probationary year; but I have a high opinion of him. The sort of man whom I should like to have with me in a tight corner. Will make an excellent executive officer in a frontier or other turbulent district."⁸⁵⁹ He became engaged to Mary Dyson just before sailing for India on 28th September 1939.⁸⁶⁰

His first posting was to Rawalpindi, bordering the North-West Frontier Province. He trained under Arthur Williams, then D.C. Rawalpindi.⁸⁶¹ In 1940, he undertook six

⁸⁵⁵ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Probationers recruited in 1938', IOR/L/SG/7/172, list of candidates in order of superiority from final examination.

⁸⁵⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 1-3.

⁸⁵⁷ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 11.

⁸⁵⁸ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 14-17.

⁸⁵⁹ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940', report on W. Cowley, written by S. G. Vesey Fitzgerald, LL.D. I.C.S. Retired, Supervisor of I.C.S. probationers at the School of Oriental Studies, London, dated 8th September 1939, L/SG/7/114.

⁸⁶⁰ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 24-26.

⁸⁶¹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 30-31.

weeks' Treasury training at the hill station of Murree.⁸⁶² At the end of March 1940, he passed the Higher Standard Departmental Examinations in law, language, revenue work, office and Treasury procedure held at Lahore at which point he was gazetted to 2nd class magistrate status.⁸⁶³ In autumn 1940, Cowley was sent to Gurgaon on settlement training,⁸⁶⁴ and then as first class magistrate on to Ferozepure, 18th May 1941, a very significant district in the war effort.⁸⁶⁵ From there, he was transferred to Jullundur to assist with a judicial enquiry in 1942.⁸⁶⁶

In April 1942, Cowley went with Peter Ensor to Calcutta to train as a Civil Defence Officer and to take a Staff Officers' Course.⁸⁶⁷ On return in May he was posted to Multan.⁸⁶⁸ He became heavily involved in running the Punjabi Scout movement between 1941 and his departure in 1946,⁸⁶⁹ serving as Assistant Organiser, National War Front (youth), Lahore.⁸⁷⁰

He took six months' leave in 1943, during which time he was married, and then returned alone to Lahore.⁸⁷¹ His wife joined him on 3rd January 1944,⁸⁷² but then died in June 1946, following which he took on an a role in the Secretariat in Lahore as Under Secretary Supply Department, inspecting the Punjab's surplus corn and rice and allocating and despatching it to other provinces.⁸⁷³

In February 1947, Cowley accepted an offer of eight months' leave, expecting to be back in October to be part of the transfer of power in June 1948, but returned only in 1957.⁸⁷⁴ Back in Britain, he bought a farm in the Hambleton Hills, remarried and had a large family.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁶² London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 43.

⁸⁶³ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 47.

⁸⁶⁴ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 62.

⁸⁶⁵ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 77.

⁸⁶⁶ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 95-98.

⁸⁶⁷ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 99.

⁸⁶⁸ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 104.

⁸⁶⁹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 115-132.

⁸⁷⁰ London, BL, APAC, 'Punjab Civil List 1943-1944', V/13/1043.

⁸⁷¹ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 133-136.

⁸⁷² London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 137.

⁸⁷³ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 170-173.

⁸⁷⁴ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, p. 173.

⁸⁷⁵ London, BL, APAC, Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66, pp. 178-180.

John Martin Fearn

Fearn was born on 24th June 1916. He was educated at Dundee High School and St. Andrew's as a scholarship student, achieving an MA with 1st class honours in Economics and Modern History.⁸⁷⁶ He spent his probationary year at Worcester College Oxford, 1939-40,⁸⁷⁷ during which the following probationary report described his progress: "I should regard him as one of the best, if not the best, of his year. He has a fine presence, delightful manners, and a very clear head, besides which he is an athlete of considerable distinction who was unlucky just to miss his Rugby Blue. He takes things with a happy blend of seriousness and humour, is self-reliant without a trace of conceit, and is naturally sympathetic and considerate of others. He should do very well in the Final Examination in all his subjects, and will, I am sure, prove himself an admirable officer all round."⁸⁷⁸

Fearn's first posting was to Multan, where he spent ten months, broken up by six weeks' treasury training in Kasauli, a minor hill station in the Ambala district.⁸⁷⁹ He then spent six months doing settlement training in Gurgaon, and then an assignment for one year in Amritsar under D.C. Penderel Moon, at which point he states that he felt he "began to earn my salary" (1942). In this job he sat as magistrate for an area controlled by 2-3 police stations.⁸⁸⁰ His next posting was in the provincial secretariat in Lahore, "mainly on work arising from the war-time shortages of materials for industry".⁸⁸¹ In November 1944, he appointed sub-divisional officer, Kasur, where he stayed until March 1946.⁸⁸² During 1945 to 1946, he narrowly missed out on home leave as the death of senior colleague V. Stainton led to him taking on the district of Lahore in March 1946, and then helping out once the more senior J. Eustace was brought in as replacement until he was sent on home leave in March 1947.⁸⁸³

⁸⁷⁶ London, BL, APAC, 'I.C.S. Probationers recruited in 1939', IOR/L/SG/7/173, list of candidates in order of superiority from final examination.

⁸⁷⁷ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 1.

⁸⁷⁸ London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940', report on J. M. Fearn written by J. G. Barrington-Ward, Esq., M.A., Supervisor of I.C.S. Probationers, Oxford, L/SG/7/114.

⁸⁷⁹ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁸⁰ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 3.

⁸⁸¹ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 4.

⁸⁸² London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 5.

⁸⁸³ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 7.

Fearn joined the Home Civil Service through one of the post-war Reconstruction competitions and started work as an assistant principal in the Scottish Home Department in Edinburgh. He retired in 1976 as deputy secretary and head of the Scottish Education Department.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸⁴ London, BL, APAC, Fearn, MSS Eur F180/67, p. 8.

Andrew P. Hume

Hume first took interest in the I.C.S. as a career whilst studying at Cambridge in the early 1920s. He was present at a lecture given by a Mr Bruce “of Australia” on 25th November 1923 who talked about work in the British Empire and dominions. He subsequently enquired into the application process and took the civil service examination in the summer of 1926, passing and sailing for India in November 1927.

Between November 1927 and December 1935, Hume undertook his training and work in UP. From January 1936, he was transferred to the service of the Government of India in New Delhi, working in supply until December 1943, with seven months’ home leave between 1938 and 1939.

In January 1944, Hume was transferred from the food preservation department to take charge of card rationing in Delhi. In 1944, he was transferred to Calcutta. In the spring of 1947, he was granted leave during which he attended civil service interviews to secure a position for after the transfer of power. He worked in the Home Civil Service in Edinburgh until January 1951, when he moved his family to Nairobi, Kenya.

M. Azim Husain

Husain was born and grew up in Punjab, and was educated at the Central Model School in Lahore. In 1928, he entered Government College, gaining a 2nd class BA in Mathematics. He then travelled to the UK to study at Christ's College Cambridge, taking Mechanical Sciences from October 1932. Once there, he was attracted to the I.C.S. but as his father had also tried for the I.C.S. and had failed to get in, he only reluctantly approved the change of direction.⁸⁸⁵

Husain took the I.C.S. exam in London in 1935 and did reasonably well but not well enough to succeed. He re-took it in New Delhi in 1936, came 5th in the order of merit and was one of the seven successful candidates. He took his probationary year at University College, Oxford 1936-1937, with Sir John Maud as his tutor. Returning to India in November 1937, he asked to be allocated to the Punjab.⁸⁸⁶

Husain's first posting was as A.C. attached to the D.C. of Lahore, Mr. F. C. Bourne. The three month posting allowed him time to deal with family matters following the death of his father.⁸⁸⁷ At the end of the posting, he was granted powers of a third class magistrate and placed under the tutelage of Additional District Magistrate, Mr. Isar (P.C.S.).⁸⁸⁸

On 1st March 1938, he was transferred to Ferozepur as A.C. Some of his initial tasks included: inspecting a school where a new teaching method had been devised, crop inspections for the assessment of annual land revenue, and Tehsil inspection (of the treasury, criminal and revenue case work, record room and copying agency, maintenance of revenue records, collection of land revenue etc.)⁸⁸⁹

In April 1938, Husain passed the departmental examination in Civil and Criminal Law, Local Fund, Treasury, Urdu and Punjabi, and then spent six weeks doing Treasury

⁸⁸⁵ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 1.

⁸⁸⁶ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁸⁷ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 3-5.

⁸⁸⁸ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 5.

⁸⁸⁹ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 11-13.

training in Simla.⁸⁹⁰ In November 1938, he was posted to Lahore for six months Settlement training under the Settlement Officer G.E.B. Abell.⁸⁹¹

In June 1939, Husain was transferred to Montgomery district for six months as Sub-Divisional Officer Pakpattan. He worked as first class magistrate and Sub-Divisional Revenue Officer.⁸⁹² In January 1940, he was then posted to Ferozepur for judicial training under Mr. S. A. Rahman, I.C.S., District Judge. He progressed quickly due to his legal background but found the judiciary boring.⁸⁹³ As a result, in April 1940, his judicial training was curtailed and he was posted to Kulu as a Sub-Divisional Officer, working under Mr. J.C.W. Eustace, I.C.S., D.C. Kangra District.⁸⁹⁴

As he sought a “wider field in which to work than my province”, Husain asked to be interviewed by the Government of India for work in the Government of India Secretariat. Following a successful interview, he proceeded to New Delhi in September 1942 as Under-Secretary in the Defence Department to work under Sir Charles Ogilvie, Secretary of that Department. He continued in the Defence Department until 1944, when he was transferred to the Department of Information and Broadcasting, and continued there until independence.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁰ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁹¹ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 15.

⁸⁹² London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 16.

⁸⁹³ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 17.

⁸⁹⁴ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁵ London, BL, APAC, Azim Husain, MSS Eur F180/68, pp. 21-22.

W. F. G. LeBailly

LeBailly was born in 1904. He was educated at Windlesham House near Brighton 1914-1917, Wellington 1918-1922, Brasenose College, Oxford 1922-1927, and entered the I.C.S. in 1927.⁸⁹⁶

His first posting was to Sargodha, capital of Shahpur District, the chief town of the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony, with about 20,000 inhabitants.⁸⁹⁷ He lived at first in a chummary with two more senior unmarried officers, with the responsibility of house-keeping falling on him as the most junior member of the household.⁸⁹⁸

In November 1928, LeBailly was sent to Montgomery, another canal irrigated district, for his settlement training.⁸⁹⁹ Then on 2nd March 1929, he was unexpectedly transferred to take the place of the Assistant Colonisation Officer, Nili Bar Colony who was proceeding on leave. He remained in the post until he himself went on leave in 1931.⁹⁰⁰

In April 1932, he returned and was sent to Montgomery as D.C.⁹⁰¹ In 1934, he was posted to Bahawalpur State as a Colonisation Officer.⁹⁰²

On 15th November 1937, following home leave, he joined the Punjab Secretariat as Development Secretary to the Financial Commissioner and Deputy Secretary to the Development Department, within the dyarchy-style government.⁹⁰³

In March 1942, LeBailly was transferred as D.C. Delhi,⁹⁰⁴ where he served until November 1946, when he took his first home leave in nine years and did not return to the Punjab.⁹⁰⁵

⁸⁹⁶ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p.1.

⁸⁹⁷ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 3.

⁸⁹⁸ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 9.

⁸⁹⁹ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 10.

⁹⁰⁰ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 11.

⁹⁰¹ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 16.

⁹⁰² London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 12.

⁹⁰³ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, pp. 28-29.

⁹⁰⁴ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, p. 38.

⁹⁰⁵ London, BL, APAC, LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65, pp. 47-48.

Sir James Downing Penny

Penny was born on 25th May 1886. He was educated at Marlborough and Magdalene College, Oxford. In 1910 he entered the I.C.S. and was assigned as Assistant Commissioner to the Punjab. In 1914 he was transferred as Assistant Registrar, Cooperative and Credit Societies, Punjab, and in 1916 selected as Political Assistant and Commandant of British Military police, Punjab. Between 1917 and 1918, Penny served as Under-Secretary to the Government of Punjab, Revenue Department.

Between 1918 and 1919, Penny was placed on military duty, and in 1919 was briefly made superintendent of Simla Hill states. In 1926, he became Deputy Secretary, Government of India, Financial Department, and from 1927 to 1930 served as Financial Secretary to the Government of Punjab. He was assigned as Acting Commissioner of Multan Division in 1934, Lahore in 1935, and Rawalpindi in 1936, and then between 1937 and 1941 served as Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab.

Between 1941 and 1945, Penny was appointed Financial Commissioner, Development Department and Secretary to the Government of Punjab. He retired in 1945, and took a brief tour around India before sailing home. Penny died on 23rd May 1978.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁶ John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport, Connecticut; London: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 287.

Sir Clarmont Skrine, OBE

From his obituary, printed in *The Times*, 23rd September 1974:

“Sir Clarmont Percival Skrine, OBE, whose death is announced, has had a distinguished career in the I.C.S., though much of it was spent under the Foreign Office on duties of Consul-General in Turkestan and Persia.

His more permanent claim to distinction rests, however, upon his considerable work on Chinese Central Asia, based upon extensive travel; and his numerous lectures before the Royal Geographical Society. His papers, too, published in specialised journals, had marked him out as a leading authority upon those little known regions of Asia.

Clarmont Skrine was born in 1888 and educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, where he took a second in Lit Hum in 1910. He entered the I.C.S. in 1912, and within a year or two was Political Agent at Sibi in Baluchistan. In 1916, he was appointed Vice-Consul at Kirman in Eastern Persia, and there he remained until 1919, when he returned to India as Political Agent at Quetta.

In 1922 he was appointed to the important post of Consul-General for Kashgar, and he was also stationed at Seistan and Kain. In 1929, he returned to more strictly I.C.S. duties, and he was Political Agent at Sibi, Baluchistan, until 1932, when he went to Kalat and Chagai, and later he was Revenue and Judicial Commissioner in Baluchistan; then Resident for the Madras States from 1936 to 1937, and for the Punjab states from the latter year until 1941, when he went back to Persia as Consul-General at Meshed, and his last post was that of Counsellor for Indian affairs at the British Embassy in Tehran.

It will be seen that he was in Persia during the critical war years, and after the occupation of Persia by the British and Russian forces, and the abdication of the remaining Shah in September 1941, it fell to Skrine to take him to his exile in Mauritius. This was Skrine's last post, and he retired from the service on attaining the age of 60. He was shortly afterwards appointed, with the full approval of the Foreign Office, by the well-known firm of Balfour Beatty and Co., to be Resident Director of the Jerusalem Electric Corporation in connection with the scheme for obtaining electric power from the Jordan.

Skrine was a gifted linguist, and in addition to his knowledge of the Indian dialects, he was proficient in Russian, Persian and Turkish. Without this knowledge the

remarkable journey that he took in 1925, into the secret valleys of the Kungar Alps in Chinese Turkestan, would have been impossible. This journey, on which his wife accompanied him, was a remarkable feat as it entailed riding part of the time on yaks, and at other times crawling desperately up the precipitous faces of what are locally considered 'passes'. He mapped, photographed and surveyed the country. The journey was fully described, with a map, in an article in *The Times* in May 1925. In 1927, it was more fully set forth in *Chinese Central Asia*.

He published in 1962 *World War in Iran* and in 1973, with Pamela Nightingale, *McCartney in Kashgur*.

He married in 1920, Doris Forbes, second daughter of James Whitelaw of Nungate, North Berwick. She died in 1971.”⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁷ *The Times*, Obituaries, 23rd September 1974.

Richard (Dick) Mercer Keene Slater

Slater was born on 27th May 1915 in Simla and lived in India for the first two years of his life. He was educated at Eton and Magdalene College, Cambridge, and took his probationary year at London School of Oriental Studies. He was appointed to the I.C.S. on probation on 24th September 1938, confirmed 13th September 1939, and arrived in India in October 1939.⁹⁰⁸

Whilst studying in London under S. V. Fitzgerald, he received the following confidential report: “At fifth in the order of merit settled by the Final Examination he is the first of the British candidates, and has excellent marks in all subjects, including riding. Good marks in Urdu, and also took the School of Oriental Studies first-year certificate in that language *with distinction* [sic]. His work in Law was uniformly good; and, though he never appeared flustered or unduly hurried, he could always be relied upon for a penetrating answer to a sudden question. At the annual dinner of the I.C.S. Club of the School of Oriental Studies he made, apparently impromptu and in a conversational tone, a really eloquent and moving speech on a young man’s outlook to India and to the changing world of the present day. He is the son of a retired Indian Civil Servant, and – if I may say so – the very best type of Old Etonian. I feel confident that he has a very distinguished future before him.”⁹⁰⁹

Slater married in August 1939, initially sailing to India on his own, followed by his wife several weeks later.⁹¹⁰ His first posting was Amritsar, under Angus MacDonald, where he undertook general training between October 1939 and June 1940.⁹¹¹ This was followed by Treasury training between June and September 1940, completed at Dalhousie, a hill station in Gurdaspur.⁹¹² For his settlement training, he was based at

⁹⁰⁸ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S. Probationers recruited in 1938’, IOR/L/SG/7/172, list of candidates in order of superiority from final examination.

⁹⁰⁹ London, BL, APAC, ‘I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940’, report on R.M.K. Slater written by S. G. Vesey Fitzgerald, LL.D. I.C.S. Retired, Supervisor of I.C.S. probationers at the School of Oriental Studies, London, dated 8th September 1939, L/SG/7/114.

⁹¹⁰ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 5; ‘Probationary Year 1938-39’.

⁹¹¹ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 8; ‘General Training (October 1939 to June 1940)’.

⁹¹² London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 10; ‘Treasury Training (June to September 1940)’.

Jhelum between November 1940 and April 1941, with his first settlement project at a small village called Choa Saidan Shah.⁹¹³

Following completed training, Slater's first full posting was as Sub-Divisional Officer at Dalhousie, May-October 1941, giving his wife, Barbara, a chance to recover from serious illness in the hill station climate.⁹¹⁴ Judicial training followed at Amritsar between October 1941 and April 1942, during which time his first son was born at Willingdon Hospital in Lahore.⁹¹⁵

Between 17th April 1942 and March 1944, Slater served in the Punjab Secretariat, as Under Secretary (Political) in Lahore, largely working on passport policy.⁹¹⁶ He was then transferred as Sub-Divisional Officer Pindigheb between March 1944 and August 1945.⁹¹⁷ His final posting was as D.C. Dera Ghazi Khan between October 1945 and March 1947.⁹¹⁸

In March 1947, Slater handed over to his Political Assistant, John Biggs Davidson and stayed with Sir Evan Jenkins in Lahore, before sailing back to the UK from Bombay.⁹¹⁹ Back in England, he was accepted by the Foreign Service, and seconded to the Commonwealth Relations Office. He was posted to the new High Commission in Karachi shortly after partition and afterwards to South America, Russia and Burma, with spells in London. He served as Ambassador in Cuba 1966-70 and High Commissioner in Uganda 1970-72, "the F.C.O. [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] apparently being under the impression that Africa was a suitable field for ex-members of the I.C.S.; many of us were sent there. In Uganda I had the melancholy task of presiding over the departure of some 35,000 Asians expelled by the ineffable Amin –

⁹¹³ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 11-12; 'Settlement Training (November 1940 to April 1941)'.
⁹¹⁴ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 14; 'Sub-Divisional Officer Dalhousie (May 1941-October 1941)'.

⁹¹⁵ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 16; 'Judicial Training (October 1941 to April 1942)'.

⁹¹⁶ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 17; 'Punjab Secretariat (April 1942 to March 1944)'.

⁹¹⁷ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 20; 'Sub-Divisional Officer Pindigheb (March 1944 to August 1945)'.

⁹¹⁸ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 25; 'DC DGK (October 1945 to March 1947)'.

⁹¹⁹ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, p. 25; 'DC DGK (October 1945 to March 1947)'.

who expelled me soon after. This was virtually the end of my second career. A third career in the City has been rather more sedate.”⁹²⁰

⁹²⁰ London, BL, APAC, Slater, MSS Eur F180/69, pp. 36-37; ‘Epilogue’.

Arthur Williams

Williams was born 16th May 1910 in Crosby, near Liverpool. He was educated as a day boy at Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby. He had no family history of administration; his father was a marine engineer and grandfather a schoolmaster. He went to Cambridge in 1928 to read History at Selwyn College, and received a 1st.⁹²¹

Williams took the civil service examination in 1931 and was placed 1st out of the I.C.S. candidates, holding this position in the probationary examination the following year and receiving the Bhaonagar Medal, given each year to the first Cambridge man in the final list of new I.C.S. entrants. He spent his probationary year at Cambridge and made Punjab his first choice after reading about its reputation in the Simon Commission report.⁹²² Williams sailed in November 1932 and was posted first to Rawalpindi.⁹²³ He worked in Rawalpindi for two years, including treasury training and revenue training.⁹²⁴

In 1934, Williams spent six months at Murree as sub-divisional officer as, as a hill station, it only needed a hot weather administrator, and then had six months doing judicial training at Rawalpindi before being sent to Sargodha for two years as Assistant Commissioner. He had six months' leave in 1937 after his first four and a half years of service, and then became Sub-Divisional Officer at Rajanpur in Dera Ghazi Khan until the spring of 1938.⁹²⁵

After only 4 months in Rajanpur, Williams was posted to Rawalpindi to serve as D.C., to relieve an officer who had gone on leave after a riding accident. He stayed for two and a half years, and was then posted to Jullundur in 1940, to Attock in 1942 and finally to Lahore in 1944.⁹²⁶

Williams took leave in spring 1946, returning in September 1946. He served on his return in a Secretariat posting in Lahore as Secretary in the Medical and Local

⁹²¹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 1: 'Family, School and University Background'.

⁹²² London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 1: 'Choice of I.C.S. as Career'.

⁹²³ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 2: 'Training Period'.

⁹²⁴ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 2: 'Training Period'.

⁹²⁵ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 4: 'Subordinate Responsibility'.

⁹²⁶ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 10: 'Major Responsibility'.

Government Department,⁹²⁷ and then moved in the spring of 1947 to the post of Home Secretary.⁹²⁸

Williams departed India from Bombay in August 1947.⁹²⁹ He chose to go into the Colonial Service on his return to Britain and went to Nigeria in 1948. He served four years in Lagos, mainly in Secretariat capacities on promoting constitutional change, including drafting the first draft of the Nigerian constitution. After that took effect in 1951, he took an offer in 1952 of a transfer to Singapore. Here he worked again on altering the structure of power from a colonial one to a system prepared for independence. When this occurred in 1957, he had reached the position of Deputy Chief Secretary, acting occasionally as Chief Secretary and ex-Officio Minister for Home Affairs in a dyarchical form of administration. On his return to Britain, he took up a post as Bursar and Fellow at Queen's College, Oxford in the beginning of 1958. He wrote his memoirs in December 1976.⁹³⁰

⁹²⁷ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 19: 'End of a Career – The Final Year'.

⁹²⁸ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 19: 'End of a Career – The Final Year'.

⁹²⁹ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 20: 'End of a Career – The Final Year'.

⁹³⁰ London, BL, APAC, Williams, MSS Eur F180/70, p. 22: 'Afterwards – Subsequent Career'.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources:

Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies, Brendon Collection.

Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies, Corfield Collection.

Cambridge, Centre of South Asian Studies, Penny Collection.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Memoir of a District Officer in the Punjab – 1938-47', by A. J. V. Arthur, M.B.E., D.L., I.C.S. (Rtd), MSS Eur F180/63.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Recollections of the Indian Civil Service: Punjab 1939-1947', by R. H. Belcher, MSS Eur F180/64.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Letters of Sir Francis Caroe: loose notes in preparation for a biography', MSS Eur F203/77-78.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Peacocks Calling: One Man's Experience of India 1939-1947', by W. Cowley, MSS Eur F180/66.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'John Martin Fearn C.B., Indian Civil Service (Punjab) 1940-47', MSS Eur F180/67.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Letters from A. P. Hume to his parents', MSS Eur D724/11-20.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Memoirs of M. Azim Husain', MSS Eur F180/68.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Indian Reminiscences – 1927-1946', by W. F. G. LeBailly, MSS Eur F180/65.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, "Letters from C. P. Skrine to his mother 1940-41", MSS Eur F154/24-25.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'District Officer's Memoirs: R. M. K. Slater, Punjab Commission 1939-47', MSS Eur F180/69.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Indian Civil Service District Officer Recollections', by A. A. Williams, Punjab 1932-1947, MSS Eur F180/70.

India Office Files**a) Service and General:**

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S. Recruitment, 1927-1934', IOR/L/SG/7/85.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Recruitment Committee Report, 1934-1936', IOR/L/SG/7/86.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S. Probation Confidential Reports, 1937-1940', IOR/L/SG/7/114.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S., showing annual intake from all sources', IOR/L/SG/7/126.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Open examination 1937 – Provincial Allocation and Application Forms', IOR/L/SG/7/145.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'London Examination 1938 – Allocations to provinces (candidates' preferences)', IOR/L/SG/7/163.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'I.C.S. probationers recruited in 1938', IOR/L/SG/7/172.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, '1939 Open Examination – Application forms of successful candidates', IOR/L/SG/7/173.

London, British Library, 'Recruitment to I.C.S. and Indian Police during the war – definition of war service, 1939-1946', IOR/L/SG/7/258.

b) Political and Judicial:

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Quarterly surveys of the political and constitutional position in British India, 6th April 1937 to 31st January 1939', IOR/L/PJ/7/1813.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Quarterly surveys of the political and constitutional position in British India, 1942-1946', IOR/L/PJ/7/1816.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Provincial reports on preparedness for war', IOR/L/PJ/7/2579.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Illicit Arms in the Punjab, February-March 1941', IOR/L/PJ/7/4486.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'File 4986: Copy of an Extract from Chief Secretary's report for second half of June 1941 – the Punjab', IOR/L/PJ/7/4795.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'File 5987: Government of the Punjab – The Civic Guards Ordinance 1946, promulgated 30th September 1946', IOR/L/PJ/7/5498.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'File 6462: The Punjab Special Tribunals Act 1947 and Punjab Disturbed Areas Act 1947', IOR/L/PJ/7/5519.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'File 12538: The Punjab Public Safety (2nd amendment) Ordinance, promulgated 19th February 1947', IOR/L/PJ/7/10620.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'File 7418: Secret Print – Survey of the Political and Constitutional Position of British India, for the period August 1946 to December 1946 inclusive', IOR/L/PJ/7/12199.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Letter from the Secretary to the Governor-General (Public) to His Majesty's Under Secretary of State for India, India Office, London, re. The Press (Special Powers) Ordinance, 1947. Dated 9th April 1947', IOR/L/PJ/7/12206.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Punjab Damaged Areas Act, May-July 1947', IOR/L/PJ/7/12303.

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'File 9375: Biographical information on Governors-General, Governors, members of governments and other officials in India and Pakistan, 1947-1948', IOR/L/PJ/7/12408.

c) Civil Lists:

London, British Library, Asia, Pacific and African Collections, 'Punjab Civil Lists, 1925-1946', IOR/V/13/1030-1045.

Primary Source Collections

Carter, Lionel, ed., *Mountbatten's Report on the Last Viceroyalty, 22nd March-15th August 1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2003).

Carter, Lionel, ed., *Punjab Politics – 1st January 1944-3rd March 1947 Last Years of the Ministries: Governor's Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2006).

Carter, Lionel, ed., *Punjab Politics – 3rd March-31st May 1947 At the Abyss: Governor's Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007).

Carter, Lionel, ed., *Punjab Politics – 1st June-14th August 1947 Tragedy: Governor's Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007).

Coates, Tim, ed., *The Amritsar Massacre, 1919: General Dyer in the Punjab* (London: The Stationery Office, 2000).

Mansergh, Nicholas, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 – Volume VIII The Interim Government 3rd July-1st November 1946* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1979).

Mansergh, Nicholas, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 – Volume IX The fixing of a time limit 4th November 1946-22nd March 1947* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Officer, 1980).

Mansergh, Nicholas, ed., *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 – Volume XII The Mountbatten Viceroyalty: Princes, Partition and Independence 8th July-15th August 1947* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983).

Singh, Kirpal, ed., *Selected Documents on the Partition of Punjab, 1947: India and Pakistan: Punjab, Haryana and Himachal-India and Punjab-Pakistan* (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1991).

Books:

Aldrich, Robert, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

Ali, Imran, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Ali, N., Kalra, V. S., and Sayyid, S., eds., *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain* (London: Hurst and Co., 2006).

Allen, Charles, ed., *Plain Tales from the Raj: Images of British India in the Twentieth Century* (Aylesbury: Macdonald Futura Publishers, 1975).

Allen, Charles, ed., *Tales from the Dark Continent: Images of British Colonial Africa in the Twentieth Century* (London: MacDonald Futura Publishers, 1980).

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism – Revised Edition* (London; New York: Verso, 2006).

Bal, Mieke, Crewe, Jonathan, and Spitzer, Leo, eds., *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1999).

Ballard, Roger, ed., *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* (London: Hurst, 1994).

Banton, Michael, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Barker, Francis, Hulme, Peter and Iverson, Margaret, eds., *Colonial Discourse / Postcolonial Theory* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).

Barner, N. Gerald and Singh, Harbans, eds., *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1976).

Bates, Crispin, ed., *Community, Empire and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

Baucom, Ian, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Bayly, C. A., ed., *The New Cambridge History of India, volume II: Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Bayly, C. A., ed., *The Raj: India and the British 1600-1947* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990).

Bayly, Susan, *Caste, Society and Politics in India: From the eighteenth century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Bénéï, Véronique and Fuller, C. J., eds., *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India* (London: Hurst and Co., 2001).

Bhasin, Kamla and Menon, Ritu, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

Blunt, Sir Edward, K.C.I.E., O.B.E., *The I.C.S. – The Indian Civil Service* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1937).

Bolt, Christine, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).

Boyd, William, *A Good Man in Africa* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1981).

Boyd, William, *An Ice-Cream War* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1982).

Brah, Avtar, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Brander Rasmussen, Birgit, Klinenberg, Eric, Nexica, Irene J. and Wray, Matt, eds., *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001).

Brass, Paul R., *The Politics of India Since Independence*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Brendon, Vyvyan, *Children of the Raj* (London: Phoenix, 2006).

Brown, Judith M. and Louis, Wm. Roger, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV – The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Buettner, Elizabeth, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Burnett, Frances Hodgson, *The Secret Garden* (London: William Heinemann, 1911).

Burton, Antoinette, ed., *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003).

Burton, Antoinette, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Burton, Antoinette, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

Butalia, Urvashi, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (London: C. Hurst, 2000).

Butler, L. J., *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2002).

Cain, P. J. and Hopkins, A. G., *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, Second Edition (Harlow and London: Longman, 2001).

Cannadine, David, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Penguin, 2002).

Chatterjee, Partha, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Chatterjee, Partha, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York, NY.: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Chaturvedi, Vinayak, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London: Verso, 2000).

Chester, Lucy P., *Borders and Conflict in South Asia: The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009).

Chrisman, Laura, *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism and Transnationalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

Clarke, Peter, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-1990* (London: Penguin, 1996).

Cohn, Bernard S., *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale Nota Bene, 2005).

Colley, Linda, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003).

Collingham, E. M., *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001).

Crane, Ralph, *Inventing India: A History of India in English-Language Fiction* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1992).

Cubitt, Geoffrey, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

Darling, Malcolm Lyall, *At Freedom's Door*, introduced by Ian Talbot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Darwin, John, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

Daunton, Martin and Rieger, Bernhard, eds., *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001).

Dawson, Ashley, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

Dewey, Clive, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambleton Press, 1993).

Du Gay, Paul and Hall, Stuart, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996).

Farrell, J. G., *The Siege of Krishnapur* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).

Fischer-Tiné, Harald and Mann, Michael, eds., *Colonialism as Civilising Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London: Wimbledon Publishing Company, 2004).

Forster, E. M., *A Passage to India* (Penguin Classics: London, 2000).

Foucault, Michel, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, translated from the French by Robert Huxley (London: Penguin, 1976).

Frankenburg, Ruth, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (London; Minneapolis: Routledge, University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

Gilmour, David, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (London: John Murray, 2005).

Gilroy, Paul, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

Gorra, Michael, *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Gould, William, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India: Society and the State, 1930s-1960s* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

Greenberger, Allen J., *The British Image of India: A Study in the Literature of Imperialism 1880-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Hall, Catherine, ed., *Cultures of Empire: A Reader – Colonisers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

Hamid, Major-General Shahid, *Disastrous Twilight: A Personal Record of the Partition of India* (London: Cooper in association with Secker & Warburg, 1986).

Hansen, Thomas Blom and Stepputat, Finn, eds., *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001).

Harrison, John and Hunt, Roland, *The District Officer in India 1930-1947* (London: Scholar Press, 1980).

Hasan, Mushirul, ed., *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Hasan, Mushirul, Khosla, G. D., Moon, Penderel, Singh, Anita Inder, and Page, David, *The Partition Omnibus* (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terence, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Hodson, H. V., *The Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1969).

Howe, Stephen, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918-1964* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

Hutchins, Francis G., *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967).

Hyam, Ronald, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation 1918-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Hyam, Ronald, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Inden, Ronald B., *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

Jalal, Ayesha, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Kaye, M. M., *The Far Pavilions* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

Kennedy, Dane, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1987).

Khan, Yasmin, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2007).

Khilnani, Sunil, *The Idea of India* (London: Penguin, 2003).

Khosla, Gopal Das, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1949).

Kincaid, Dennis, *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937* (London; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

Kipling, Rudyard, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, 3rd Edition (London: Macmillan and co., 1891).

Kirk-Greene, Anthony, *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services, 1837-1997* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999).

Kutzer, M. Daphne, *Empire's Children: Empire & Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books* (New York; London: Garland Publishing Inc., 2000).

Lahiri, Shompa, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

Levine, Philippa, ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Ludden, David, ed., *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalisation of South Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2002).

MacKenzie, John M. ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

MacKenzie, John M., *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009).

MacKenzie, John M., *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Mahajan, Sucheta, *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India* (New Delhi; Thousand Oaks; London: Sage Publications, 2000).

Major, Andrew J., *Return to Empire: Punjab Under the Sikhs and British in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1996).

Mangan, J. A., ed. *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Marangoly George, Rosemary, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Masters, John, *Bhowani Junction* (London: Souvenir, 1954).

Menon, V. P., *The Transfer of Power in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1957).

Metcalf, Thomas R., *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Misra, B. B., *District Administration and Rural Development in India: Policy Objectives and Administrative Change in Historical Perspective* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Misra, B. B., *Government and Bureaucracy in India: 1947-1976* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Moon, Penderel, *Divide and Quit* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961).

Moore, R. J., *Endgames of Empire: Studies of Britain's Indian Problem* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Moore, R. J., *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government & the India Problem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

Moore, Robin, *Paul Scott's Raj* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1990).

Morey, Peter, *Fictions of India: Narrative and Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2000).

Nayar, Baldev Raj, *Minority Politics in the Punjab* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966).

Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography* (London: John Lane, 1936).

Orwell, George, *Burmese Days* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968).

Orwell, George, *Collected Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961).

Orwell, George, *Coming Up For Air* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1986).

Owen, Roger and Sutcliffe, Bob, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972).

Pandey, Gyanendra, ed., *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today* (New Delhi; New York: Viking, 1993).

Pandey, Gyanendra, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Pandey, Gyanendra, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Parry, Benita, *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination 1880-1930* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972).

Pearce, Bill Channing, *Indian Copper* (Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild Ltd., 1990).

Perrin, Alice, *The Anglo-Indians*, Third Edition (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1912).

Porter, Bernard, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Potter, David C., *India's Political Administrators 1919-1983* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Prakash, Gyan, ed., *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Pugh, Martin, *State and Society: A Social & Political History of Britain, 1870-1997, Second Edition* (London: Hodder, 1999).

Rich, Paul, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Riddick, John F., *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport, Connecticut; London: Greenwood Press, 1998).

Robb, Peter, ed., *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Roediger, David R., *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, 2nd edition (London; New York: Verso, 2007).

Rubin, David, *After the Raj: British Novels of India Since 1947* (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1986).

Russell, Penny, “‘A Wish of Distinction’: Colonial Gentility and Femininity” (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994).

Said, Edward W., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995).

Sandbrook, Dominic, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2005).

Scott, Paul, *Staying On* (London: Granada, 1978).

Scott, Paul, *The Alien Sky* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953).

Scott, Paul, *The Raj Quartet, volumes I and II* (London: Everyman, 2007).

Settar, S. and Gupta, Indira Baptista, eds., *Pangs of Partition: Volume I – The Parting of Ways* (Manohar: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2002).

Settar, S. and Gupta, Indira Baptista, eds., *Pangs of Partition: Volume II – The Human Dimension* (Manohar: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2002).

Sherman, Taylor, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

Singh, Gurharpal and Talbot, Ian, eds., *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent* (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Singh, Pritam and Thandi, Shinder S., eds., *Globalisation and the Region: Explorations in Punjabi Identity* (Coventry: Association for Punjab Studies (UK), 1996).

Singh, Wazir, ed., *Sikhism and Punjab's Heritage* (Patiala: Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, 1990).

Singh Maini, Tridivesh, Malik, Tahir Javed and Malik, Ali Farooq, *Humanity Amidst Insanity (Hope during and after the Indo-Pak Partition)* (New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd., 2009).

Spangenburg, Bradford, *British Bureaucracy in India: Status, Policy and the I.C.S. in the late nineteenth century* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1976).

Stoler, Ann Laura, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

Stoler, Ann Laura, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

Suleri, Sara, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Talbot, Ian, *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and the Partition Movement in North-West India* (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Talbot, Ian and Thandi, Shinder, eds., *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial, and Post-Colonial Migration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Talbot, Ian, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (Riverdale, Md.: Riverdale Company, 1988).

Talbot, Ian, ed., *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947-2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Taylor, Gary, *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip Hop* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

Thackeray, William Makepeace, *Vanity Fair*, edited by J. I. M. Stewart (London: Penguin Books, 1968).

Thomson, Alastair, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Thompson, Andrew S., *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000).

Thompson, Andrew, *The Empire Strikes Back?: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the mid nineteenth century* (Harlow; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005).

Tuker, Sir Francis, *While Memory Serves* (London: Cassell, 1950).

Von Tunzelmann, Alex, *Indian Summer: The Secret History of the End of an Empire* (London: Pocket Books, 2008).

Webster, Wendy, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Wolpert, Stanley, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Woodruff, Philip, *The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians* (London: J. Cape, 1954).

Yong, Tan Tai, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005).

Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Articles:

Basu, Aparna, 'Uprooted Women: Partition of Punjab 1947', in *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicising Gender and Race*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 270-286.

Bridge, Carl and Fedorowich, Kent, 'Mapping the British World', in *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, edited by Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (London; Portland, O.R.: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 1-15.

Brown, Judith M., "'Life Histories" and the History of Modern South Asia', *American Historical Review*, 114, 3 (2009), pp. 587-595.

Buettner, Elizabeth, 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Post-colonial Britain and India', *History & Memory*, 18, 1 (2006), pp. 5-42.

Buettner, Elizabeth, "'Going for an Indian": South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 80, 4 (2008), pp. 865-901.

Buettner, Elizabeth, 'Problematic Spaces, Problematic Races: Defining 'Europeans' in Late Colonial India', *Women's History Review*, 9, 2 (2000), pp. 277-297.

Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan, 'Customs of Governance: Colonialism and Democracy in Twentieth Century India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 41, 3 (2007), pp. 441-470.

Darwin, John, 'British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12, 2 (1984), pp. 187-209.

De Caro, Francis and Jordan, Rosan A., 'The Wrong Topi: Personal Narratives, Ritual, and the Sun Helmet as a Symbol', *Western Folklore*, 43, 4 (1984), pp. 233-248.

Ellinwood, Dewitt C. Jr., 'An Historical Study of the Punjabi Soldier in World War I' in *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh*, edited by N. Gerald Barner and Harbans Singh (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1976), pp. 337-362.

Gallagher, John and Seal, Anil, 'Britain and India between the wars', *Modern Asian Studies*, 15, 3 (1981), pp. 387-414.

Kabir, Ananya Jahanara, 'Gender, Memory, Trauma: Women's Novels on the Partition of India', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25, 1 (2005), pp. 177-190.

Kabir, Ananya Jahanara, 'Subjectivities, Memories, Loss: Of Pigskin Bags, Silver Spittoons and the Partition of India', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 4, 2 (2002), pp. 245-264.

Moore, R. J., 'Jinnah & the Pakistan Demand', *Modern Asian Studies*, 17, 4 (1983), pp. 529-561.

Nardocchio-Jones, Gavin, 'From Mau Mau to Middlesex? The Fate of Europeans in Independent Kenya', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 26, 3 (2006), pp. 491-505.

Oren, Stephen, 'The Sikhs, Congress, and the Unionists in British Punjab, 1937-1945', *Modern Asian Studies*, 8, 3 (1974), pp. 397-418.

Sayer, Derek, 'British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre 1919-1920', *Past & Present*, 131 (1991), pp. 130-164.

Sherman, Taylor C., Gould, William and Ansari, Sarah, 'From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies*, 45, 1 (2011), pp. 1-6.

Washbrook, D. A., 'Orientals and Occidentals: Colonial Discourse Theory and the Historiography of the British Empire' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume 5 – Historiography*, edited by Robin Winks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 596-611.