



BURMA, 1942 AND THE ANGLO-INDIAN AND ANGLO-BURMESE COMMUNITY

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1942 in Burma constituted a time when many Anglo-Indians demonstrated the bravery in time of crisis that has been a repeated theme of their longer history. In the dark opening weeks of 1942, the Allies attempted to hold the port of Rangoon at all costs, in the hope that Australian reinforcements might arrive from the Middle East, or that Stillwell's Chinese forces could yet regroup; through the 1930s, the port had been the destination of American lend-lease supplies to the Chinese which were docked there, then transported up-country and across into east-central China by way of Burma's railways and what became the Burma Road. For a total of seven weeks, this Battle of Rangoon produced extreme apprehension for the Japanese Army had already entered Ternasserim and an Allied military withdrawal seemed inevitable. For reasons that will be plain by the concluding pages, British announcements that all was not lost rang hollow, along with those suggesting that the Allied forces would remain with civilians in the event of a Japanese takeover of the rest of Burma.

Remembering the time well, Lt. Col. A.A. Mains has written in a most complimentary way of the Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese he knew and relied upon in Rangoon and elsewhere. Mains' works show a willingness to counter official accounts and also, a singular wish to give credit where due. Tony Mains had arrived in India in 1934 by way of the RMC attached to the 1st Battalion of the Dorset Regiment. He went on to the 2/9th Ghurkha Rifles and at the beginning of World War II was an intelligence instructor at Karachi. He was made chief military security officer in Baghdad before being sent on to Rangoon as assistant military governor. After his escape from Burma in March of 1942, Mains was the chief military security officer in Assam and the 14th Army area, then rejoined the Ghurkhas in Baluchistan and the

NWFP, eventually journeying down into the new India during Partition. Before returning to England in 1953, he served as chief intelligence officer of the central command and as chief staff officer of the Indian Infantry School at Mhow. He continues to live in Surrey and is involved in the Society for Army Historical Research, the Military Historical Society, the 9th Ghurkha Rifles Regimental Association, and the Burma Star association, and has contributed to different television productions on Indian and Ghurkha subjects. My eye was drawn to Mains' 1996 summary of the Anglo-Indians' contributions to World War II, an article inspired after Mains overheard a derogatory reference made to an Anglo-Indian or Anglo-Indians at large at a military function. The article's account of Anglo-Indian origins is incomplete but it is clear that he admired the Anglo-Indian contribution made in Burma and in India and that he had several times relied upon their courage and general reliability. Appended to the article is a note to the effect that when Mains first arrived in India, he found to his delight that Anglo-Indian drivers would often permit a footplate ride if asked. In his *A Soldier With Railways* Mains described his varying experiences in the Middle Asia in addition to South Asia (1994). With regard to his accolades given the Anglo-Indian performance, he should be considered rather a longstanding friend of the community.

Yes, both Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese are described most often as *Anglo-Indians* in this discussion. The anthropological term, Eurasian, denoting persons of combined Asian and European descent, might be accurate in some respects. However, at the risk of offending readers who introduce themselves as Anglo-Burmese, a variety of sources happen to describe the Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese by 1900 or so as communities rather one and the same due to their cultural similarity, roles performed, and the regularity of intermarriage between them. Most of the actual Anglo-Indians in Burma were the kin of service-workers and professionals contracted from South India and sometimes Bengal after the 1850s. It is certainly understood that Burma's own people of mixed ancestry were often of solely Burmese as opposed to Indian descent on the Asian side/s, and that the British in Burma did 'inherit' Portuguese, Armenian and French families of combined descent that had been on the scene from long before the Anglo-Burman War of 1824. After 1602, the port of Syriam attracted occasional Europeans and other foreigners through to the end of Portuguese authority in 1700, and in keeping with more than a dozen other

important trading centres of the region, coastal pockets of 'hybridity' were bound to appear, especially when we take into account Pearn's observation that coastal Burma had more salience to old seaborne Asia than interior Goa (1939,10). It may be tempting to view pre-British Burma as an isolated, mysterious place but in conversation with some whose families once resided there, references have been made to long ago ancestors believed to be Malays, Moors, or for that matter, Magyars, in addition to more predictable representatives of the imperial powers in Asia. The 19th century British consolidation gave rise to a decidedly Scottish colony of much ongoing intermarriage between Europeans, Burmese and Eurasians. Distance from British India and a more commercial than martial atmosphere promoted a colonial environment less preoccupied by differences of origin -- with allowance made, of course, for some starchier European exceptions! It was more accepted that Europeans of long residence would have Asian antecedents and perhaps their Asian relations too, in a way which had ceased to be usual or disclosed in India. The early 20th century brought local opportunities for higher education led by medical and engineering studies taken up by domiciled Punjabis, Tamils and Anglo-Indians, and far less numerous by the Burmese elite or middle classes so that by the outbreak of World War II, Anglo-Indian professionals and others were found in all of Burma's sizeable towns, in concentration in Rangoon, and in Mandalay, Moulmein and Tavoy.

The 1931 *Government of India Census* referred to 19,200 Anglo-Indians in Burma and another 20,000 Domiciled Europeans who were considered synonymous with the Anglo-Indian middle classes. Europeans verified by their birth in the West numbered only 11,000 of whom most were rotating infantrymen and not permanent residents. A mere .06% of Burma's population of 17 million was of British birth, as compared to 18% in Ceylon and 35% in Malaya, figures which impart some sense of the reliance of both the Government of Burma and the private sector upon the Anglo-Burmese *cum* Anglo-Indian population (Harvey,1946,11). In 1940, the lowland Burmese majority made up only 12% of Burma's service recruitment whereas members of some minority populations were much preferred and of course, the Anglo-Indians (Steinberg,1982,14). In duplication of the *Government of India Act* of 1935, a *Government of Burma Act* of the same year defined the Anglo-Burmese -- or Anglo-Burmans -- in suitably ambiguous terms which included a good many whose

kin were ascribable more accurately to Madras, Bangalore, Coimbatore or for that matter, Calcutta. By this time, Anglo-Indians were the most visible managerial and other staff of lumbering and processing concerns. They were among the colony's educators, medical and legal professionals and religious, and as would prove vitally important in the fateful year of 1942, they predominated in the communications and transport services, and the more reliable police and auxiliary forces. As the 15th Japanese Army advanced through Malaya and Thailand, Anglo-Indians continued to staff Burma's rail, road and marine transport systems including the Irawaddy Flotilla Company. They operated the urban tramways and were the organizing talent of the immense port of Rangoon and other dockyards. In a colony whose road network remained undeveloped, without many all-weather roads, the approach of the Japanese meant that responsibility was heaped upon the rail and river systems in particular, following their north-south axis of old, dictated by the waterways and extraction industries. When the Japanese took Victoria Point in southernmost Burma on December 15 1942, there were still officials to believe that the Japanese would advance no further, leaving Burma as a buffer between Allied and Axis areas of control. However, on December 23, more than 1000 perished on the first day of a surprise raid on Rangoon that heralded the departure of tens of thousands. Collis thought that the first attack killed 2700 and wounded 1700 (1966, 56-57). Successive raids prompted thousands of residents to leave the city in the hope of reaching India. Tavoy fell in mid-January of 1942, and on January 20, Mandalay sustained a 3-day intensive raid which sent thousands more into flight, as fires raged for a radius of 20 miles.

RAF air-cover permitted retention of Rangoon for 75 days as the Japanese pushed through southern Burma and Thailand into parts of the Burmese interior. After the first raids on Mandalay and Rangoon, The Daily Express's anglophobic South African correspondent, O'Dowd Gallagher, commented that the civil government took little initiative in assisting civilians who seemed left to their own devices in contending with a colony that was destined to fall, in due course. At different points, official effort was made to prevent the colony's many thousands of ordinary Indian labourers from leaving from points where they were needed. Gallagher was not the only observer to criticize the lack of a systematic plan for civilian evacuation, as it is commented upon in various survivor's accounts. Helen Rodrigues recalled groups of disoriented and

ill-prepared refugees that later passed through Taungi where she remained for most of the Japanese occupation (1983). In Mandalay, Hyman's informants observed those embarking for the Indian frontier as they attempted to convert goods to cash while those who had decided to stay on in Burma gathered stocks of tobacco, medicines and other saleables (1995,160).

For some weeks it had been possible to leave by ship from Rangoon on a 750 mile journey to Calcutta or the 1000-mile alternative to Madras and by March, some 70,000 Indians had left Burma by these means. Availability was limited as the Indian-owned Scindia Company decided to remove its ships from Rangoon; those who did manage to leave by ship were prone to air attacks, and as the collapse of lower Burma became more imminent, the deck travel extended to hundreds of ordinary migrants was impeded by periods of six or more hours that were needed to load passengers, especially during Japanese air attacks. Middle-class residents could also avail themselves of air transport from Shwebo, Magwe and other airfields, again, in great contrast with what befell other migrants who went north and westward from Prome through the Arakan in the hope of boat delivery to Chittagong. In time, these alternatives were blocked so that later travellers had no choice but to pursue the practically impossible routes leading towards different points on the 700-mile Indo-Burmese frontier.

Gallagher made much of the contrasting reactions of the Anglo-Indians and Europeans in lower Burma in the opening weeks of 1942. Mains and Geoffrey Tyson also noted Anglo-Indian resolve, and in the case of Tyson, through the course of the evacuation, too (1945). In lower and central Burma, official uncertainty escalated as messages did not reach their destinations or produced conflicting responses. Mason described how every aspect of administration, civilian and military, came to involve improvisation, and the lack of a comprehensive evacuation scheme was aggravated by contention between authorities in Burma and New Delhi (1985). The Government of Burma failed to provide estimates as to the numbers in transit and the Government of India failed to respond with adequate arrangements when figures could be supplied or when requests had been made. As more than 100,000 struggled towards India in February and March, New Delhi dictated that no more than 500 at a time should be permitted to move through Indian border points, a

directive producing much loss of life. Some officials filed condemning reports of inefficiency and apathy with which they contended in Burma ... some of which later 'disappeared' from collections of records in which they ought to be found.

On February 15, Singapore fell as the Allies continued to fight delaying operations in Burma. On February 17, a turning point arrived as the Sittang Bridge was blown in order to block an immediate Japanese advance at the cost of hundreds of Allied soldiers left on the Japanese controlled bank. On March 1, the military and official focus continued to be one of retaining Rangoon, but Gen. Sir Howard Alexander arrived and immediately ordered preparations for a complete Allied withdrawal. By this time, Tony Mains had been leading the Field Security division in a Rangoon of numerous fires, stray snipers and much looting. It was plain that the Japanese Army would soon appear and refugees from elsewhere continued to stream through the city's outskirts or awaited rail transport. Due to a confused order from New Delhi, Rangoon's prisoners and psychiatric patients were released into the streets, some 5000 persons, sometimes joining in the activities of looters whereas the aim had been to make these releases while soldiers were still on hand to escort them elsewhere. The Government of Burma seemed in a state of seclusion at Maymo, sensitive to criticism or suggestion, and martial law was not declared and in contrast with the official account of the last days of Rangoon, not even a formal curfew was instituted. Amid this chaos, Mains commended the contributions of the Rangoon Town Police whose responsible levels were almost entirely Anglo-Indian, part of a total of 75% of Burma's Class I police officers who belonged to the Anglo-Indian population and had generated a reputation for reliability in a colony of much dacoiti and other violent crime; Furnivall referred to these officers as, "incorruptible" (1956,136,170). Mains commended the Anglo-Indian policemen's sense of duty all the more as the lower levels of the force were beset by desertions. Looting continued to a point where Mains had to deal ruthlessly with thieves engaged in gang warfare atop Rangoon's docks. As the port's Indian labourers of old became less available, incoming cargo often could not be unloaded despite the efforts of soldiers, police and volunteers. Lower level policemen vanished for they feared Burmese reprisals and word circulated as to how the Japanese had handed over their counterparts to the mob in Tenasserim. Mains was enraged to encounter more than 100 uniformed Indian policemen at Rangoon's station attempting to jump the barriers. However, it

was futile to retain them and they were sent on to Prome, all in marked contrast with the example set by Anglo-Indian railwaymen who through to the very last hours of Allied control in Rangoon continued their over-loaded runs out of the city. When workers vanished, drivers and firemen did their own coaling, going for days without sleep, in the face of worries to families who might be upcountry or en route to India. Mains wrote that, "there is no doubt that without the courage of the Anglo-Indian drivers and firemen... all railway movement in Burma would have been halted well before the evacuation of Rangoon" (1996, 124).

At odds with the official report, Mains recalled that Rangoon's power, water and sewerage systems continued to function practically till the moment of the military evacuation, as did the government telephone exchange, two private exchanges and the telegraphs. The ongoing processions of refugees accentuated the Anglo-Indians' most precarious position but they carried on, forfeiting chances for their own departure in long weeks of pressurized toil. Gallagher wrote that lingering British civilians seemed passive or indifferent beyond their own prospects of departure, and he described a conversation with a 'refugee' who corrected his diction to identify herself as an 'evacuee', not to be confused with the ordinary Indians and others who plodded along the colony's roads and tracks. Gallagher suspected that morale had deteriorated in Burma early on, in awareness of how the Japanese dealt with those they overtook, and by official reticence, then vacillation, as to whether a full-scale evacuation would take place. When The Gazette, Rangoon's only English-medium daily closed down, no official effort was made to offset the sway of hearsay or Japanese propaganda and the director of news services had gone northwards. Two Anglo-Indian men named Lazario and daCosta took it upon themselves to produce leaflets made up of scraps of news from army headquarters and radio sources. All in all, Gallagher believed that the Anglo-Indian community displayed, "a loyalty that was lacking among the white population" (1942,170). He saw that Anglo-Indians were similarly effectual at Mandalay where heavier air bombardment commenced on February 18, and of the Rangoon Anglo-Indians concluded that they worked under conditions worse than he had seen at Shanghai in 1937, or France in 1940 (1942,77).

Gallagher had been in the Strand Hotel in late 1941 as bombs fell a short distance away and patrons took to the floors. When a seriously injured Indian was brought indoors, it was an Anglo-Indian employee who took control by calmly directing any who knew first aid to come forwards. This man then went about the rest of the hotel, chatting with guests as though perfectly confident that good sense would prevail. He also admired Anglo-Indians at the grossly over-burdened telegraphs office, a prime Japanese target, where work resumed promptly after a large bomb exploded nearby. Gallagher knew that no special provision had been made these workers who seemed expected to carry on, as they did, along with other service-workers and those making up the skeleton staffs of private firms (1942,79-80).

January 30 had been the last day of civilian evacuation from southern Burma to Rangoon. Crozier wrote sympathetically of teachers and others who saw their relations aboard the train on which he travelled, recalling an air of great false cheerfulness: he had agreed to look after an Anglo-Indian woman on the journey and described how her husband held her hand through the window as the train departed, his composure finally breaking down as the moment came when he must let go. Typical of the marvels of human nature, another Anglo-Indian pronounced that she would not travel 3rd class, inducing her brother's explanation that she happened to be boarding the very last train bound away from the Japanese (1994,18). At this time, and at odds with the criticism lodged by Gallagher, there do seem to have been some officials on the scene to recognize the contribution being made by various Anglo-Indians. According to Mason, the deputy commissioner of Moulmein, W.I.J. Wallace (ICS), did what he could to assist civilians and is said to have been appalled when the order arrived to prepare for the evacuation of all military and officials. Wallace visited the telephone exchange, the telegraph office and hospitals to wish their staffs well, delegating some of his duties and seeing that three months' wages were provided to those still intending to leave. He went on to a total of six stations, repeating a set of procedures which ranged from shredding documents to disposing of supplies of gold and silver. He saw that Thaton's air raid sirens were repaired and paused at Pegu, depressed by the crowds of Indian refugees and others he saw commencing their journeys, those who were sure to travel with the Japanese more or less on their heels (1985,322-323).

By mid-February, tens of thousands of refugees had congregated outside of Mandalay where they registered for evacuation by way of routes laid out by government. It should be known that these were based upon an inadequately mapped Indo-Burmese frontier that remains little known to this day by other than its indigenous peoples. As Hyman explained, at that time few could know really what the Evacuation would mean (1995, 60). Anglo-Indians were sometimes too among the teachers, missionaries, forest officials or other local residents who assisted refugee parties through transit camps. When routes across the Chindwin into Manipur were blocked by the Japanese advance, migrants followed routes into Assam which by the end could bring them to points as far north as Ledo. Civilian arrivals in northeastern India peaked from the end of February through to May and continued in a trickle into the autumn, and of the Trek's conditions which produced such high fatalities, Frank Anthony later wrote that British official negligence and misconduct were features of which London and New Delhi had every reason to be thoroughly ashamed (1969,137). Wherever ordinary Indians and Chinese civilians moved they were set upon by gangs of Burmese who had resented the relative wealth of the few in Rangoon or Moulmein, and the role played by some Indians as the colony's money-lenders, for whose past profiteering thousands of ordinary labourers 'paid' (Tinker, 1975). Anglo-Indians were attached to an array of parties following different routes, from the well-supplied expeditions organized by private firms as in the Burmah Oil Company or Steel Brothers, or the higher services, through to the larger collections of strangers that came to be encountered at intervals throughout northern Burma before an arduous frontier that was all too often approached just as migrants had reached the very bottom of their reserves. Those having remained at their posts to the beginning of March and the formal evacuation of Rangoon walked into the Trek's worst weeks, on routes of limited or nonexistent supply, having already sustained long weeks of strain. Survivors were noted as by no means always the youngest, the best equipped nor the fittest, for a large element of Luck was required in addition to a stubborn determination to complete the journey, not to mention the blessing of an uncomplicated recovery.

On March 1 the military authorities had planned to begin the destruction of Rangoon. Tony Mains had been ordered to prepared for evacuation by sea on March 7, but on that day he and his men were informed that they would go northwards by road.

Notices about Rangoon advised that cars were to be destroyed and supplies of petrol poured out as part of a general scorched earth policy. On March 9, the city's power station was blown at 3 p.m and at half-past 7, the last train pulled from the city's station at half-past 7. The 15th Japanese Army entered Rangoon at noon on the following day, finding a strangely quiet Asian port city. Mains own experience of reaching India includes mention of his able Anglo-Indian interpreter and bodyguard, Sgt. Rivers, of the Mandalay District Police. Behind them were the heavy Allied stopgap operations at Hensada, Letpadan and Shwedaung, and on April 1, the Chinese forces broke out from Tounghou. A final and desperate retreat commenced from Prome. Ava's bridge was destroyed and the exhausted Burma Corps proceeded to India leaving an array of tanks and lorries in its wake and a non-migrant civilian population whose emotions possibly cannot be described (1973, 1996).

Starting in mid-December of 1941 and before mid-May 1942, the Japanese had covered almost 1000 miles to take Burma beyond Myitkyina. Put another way, in a longer than 4-month period since the initial attacks on Mandalay and Rangoon, neither civil nor military authorities had managed a systematic and supplied evacuation of Burma, nor had they kept the public informed as to what was expected to occur, or options that might be considered. It seems that many civilians simply knew to depart, many of them responding to rumour, and among the arrivals in northeastern India were a good many who had had no news in weeks, who believed they moved with the Japanese immediately behind them, and some demanding that the reception camps be moved further from the Burmese border. It had not been publicly announced till February 20 that civilians unencumbered by official duties should prepare to leave Burma. Logically, some of the evacuation's most tragic developments belong to its later stages. For instance, shortly before Stillwell's acclaimed Walkout from Shwebo in early May, Anglo-Indians were among those who intended to board the last flights from Myitkyina at the northern terminus of Burma's railway network. Informed that if they could reach the town by hook or by crook that air transport was available, they made up an array of officials, civilians and military casualties. Alas, the aerodrome was bombed and the able-bodied had little alternative but to proceed overland, though prepared only for a short hop to Calcutta.

As was stated in passing, events surrounding the fall of Burma to the Japanese and knowledge of the Trek remain part of public memory in different parts of India. A great many ongoing Anglo-Indian families were directly affected by the migration and it is altogether possible that some readers are former evacuees or the relations of those who made the journey. I argue that no principled researcher would seek to extract information from survivors of the evacuation that is not directly volunteered, no matter how valuable recollections might be in terms of what we eggheads applaud as Oral History.

In India, former evacuees were once encountered regularly in Dehra Dun and environs and in the south's Bangalore and Coimbatore, where resettlement was encouraged. Sargent wrote of several thousand Anglo-Indians from Burma who appeared in Bangalore's Cox Town in late 1942, and Subramaniam referred to other trek survivors in Madurai (1987,62;1970,70). Many went to Bombay or remained in Calcutta where they were engaged in munitions or other war-related work; Sen wrote of 40,000 Calcutta Anglo-Indians contributed to India's war effort alone (1983,40). We cannot know how many youths reached India only to be conscripted and sent on to points many more miles removed from Burma, and as all figures pertaining to the Trek and its casualties continue to be estimates, we cannot know how many Anglo-Indians died en route, or how many made their journeys only to be lost to a regular state of psychological and physical exhaustion, malnutrition and disease. In general terms, the health of both civilians and soldiers deteriorated with northward movement and rates of disease and fatality were raised by the way in which the monsoon of 1942 arrived a fortnight ahead of expectation. Many of us are aware of accounts of the Evacuation which stress its human drama, but post-War medical outlines can be better indications of the occasion's widespread suffering in their crisp descriptions of just what was found in migrant survivors, the severe limitations which existed with regard to medical care, and the often remarkable job that was done by civilian volunteers in Assam as they dealt with hundreds of arrivals at a time in generally impaired states of health. These sources do illuminate, all these years later, just how shoddy preparations were for an exodus of the evacuation's volume through areas known only to be well nigh 'impossible' (Raina,1990; Jones,1983; Bertram,1953).

Perhaps predictably, Anglo-Indians were among those noted for practical approaches and determination. Tyson spoke with a woman widowed in transit who brought her large family to safety without mishap: she attributed her children's health to her having insisted that they take whatever food they had at fixed intervals each and every day of the journey. Tyson also wrote of Norman Richardson, an Anglo-Indian of 14, who brought his sisters and brothers to Assam after their parents had succumbed to disease; for many miles, he had carried an infant brother who eventually died too. Upon settling his siblings in camp, he used to walk 'back in' for a few miles in the evenings to encourage his grandmother who followed in a later party (1945,74-79).

A resounding lore also surrounds those Anglo-Indians who remained in Burma through the Japanese occupation of whom it has often been said in India that "not a one" collaborated. Actually, there were cases of Anglo-Indians having the misfortune to fall in love with Japanese officers -- and who were instantly ostracized. A more usual scenario was one of the Anglo-Indians being regarded with arch suspicion by the Japanese ... to put it rather mildly. Anglo-Indians continued to be needed for their service expertise but detentions and interrogations carried on through the length of the occupation. As in other parts of occupied Asia, to avoid employment was to invite accusations of espionage for wages and provisions deliberately kept at subsistence level; fear continued to be promoted and such items as sulfur or iodine aided the usual Japanese methods of compromising civilians.

Some Anglo-Indians sold all they had in order to hole up in their lanes or 'disappear' by other means for a period of almost 3 years. Some were interned, and perished, at interior stations or in the colony's prisons of old. Others were executed as obvious dissidents. Along with some of Burma's other residents, Anglo-Indians could be incorrigible 'tossers' of food and supplies to prisoners who might be civilians or soldiers. I was once privileged to meet a gentleman originally of Mandalay who when an adolescent had combined bits of railway work with underground message-carrying. Some 55 years later, he related matter-of-factly and with humour his long experience of never quite knowing who was aware of what he did. Other Anglo-Indians 'ignored' curious Goings On related to stray Allied soldiers who attempted to cross into India long months after the Evacuation had ended. In time, they also

'ignored' the Allied intelligence units which came to be afoot. Some memoirs of the new Allied offensive back across the Indo-Burmese frontier include references to Anglo-Indians encountered here and there. For example, Hedley remembered venturing into All Saints' Church at Maymo on St. Patrick's Day of 1944 where several Anglo-Indians had appeared for service, clad in presentable clothing rather miraculously saved for just such an occasion (1996,82). Elsewhere, the reclamation of Burma brought often emaciated Anglo-Indians into view, sometimes bearing equally miraculous containers of tea.

It would be some years after 1945 before the outside world understood the fascinating progressions of The Forgotten Theatre, and by this time many of Burma's Anglo-Indians had packed up, having made perfunctory returns to Burma to settle their affairs before re-establishing themselves in India and beyond. A retired teacher of north India who walked out as a girl remarked that her family had never revisited Rangoon for they were certain that their property was gone, and they preferred to think of the city as they had known it before the terrible Christmas of 1941. For those who did return, or had remained there through to 1945, the colony's independence in 1948 brought forced decisions related to citizenship. Life had a most tentative feel and after 1962, anti-Western socialism placed the writing firmly on the wall for Burma's minority middle classes at large and notably, for a Christian and English-speaking community perceived to belong to the departed British. The early 1970s brought the end of private commerce with which a few remained associated. The scene changed completely in less than a generation, a family of now Canadian Muslims related who belong to a Rangoon trading family. People adjusted and then had to depart in haste.

There remain several motivations for exploring the Wartime contributions made by the Anglo-Indians of Burma, as the general subject of Anglo-Indian contributions made during World War II has been neglected generally. In the Burmese case, research efforts stand to reveal some remarkable responses to a most dismal chapter in the history of modern South Asia. Furthermore, in the contemporary state of Myanmar much does remain as it was in 1941, as assorted Shans, Kachins, Karens and other of the country's almost 100 minorities remain pitted against the 2/3 lowland Burmese majority's smorgasbord of generals (Smith,1991; Lintner, 1990;

Rottier,1986). Rather like the Anglo-Indians, and to the disgust of some Allied veterans, peoples that had consistently supported the Allies in Burma were "dropped" in 1948 as Burma was handed to the majority Burmese community. Indeed, there were smiles in high places in the 1980s, as two British retirees were apprehended in Calcutta, attempting to arrange a shipment of donated arms to Kachin insurgents in northern Burma!

At any rate, in 1999, the SLORC regime's smorgasbord of generals remains countered by the descendants of those who also opposed the Japanese invasion, through times in which the majority population believed Tokyo's promise that Burma's independence would be granted. Visitors to the not so fair Republic of Myanmar comment that wreckage and other reminders of World War II abound, that development of benefit to poorer citizens has more or less 'reversed', and with dissidents once again prone to prison or the labour camp. Stray Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese have been absorbed into The Christian Minority that was once seen as an horrific threat to the state on account of its members' ability to read the Roman alphabet. In order to account for Burma/Myanmar's experience of repressive governments, Edward Said has ventured that we must thoroughly research the past experiences of her minorities. (1994,316) Clearly, the roles and observations of the Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese promise to indicate a good deal, and as they have been overlooked similarly in studies of contemporary India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in spite of the Anglo-Indian 'window' offered upon relations between divergent communities and through the rise of colonial systems, policies, and their usually pervading results. Finally, it seems a sad loss that Anglo-Indians are so often omitted from work pertaining to World War II in Asia, that they remain lumped in with a sweeping "British" designation, just as American accounts of World War II do err by describing Canadians or Australians in this incorrect and rather infuriating way -- in the Anglo-Indian case, to the expense of an Anglo-Indian experience that promises to be of appeal and of value to those aiming to preserve the community and its remarkable history into the next centuries.

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