



LOYALTY, PARITY, AND SOCIAL CONTROL – THE COMPETING
VISIONS ON THE CREATION OF AN 'EURASIAN' MILITARY
REGIMENT IN LATE BRITISH INDIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

This short essay concerns itself with a long-standing controversy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries over whether or not the British Empire should allow the Eurasian community of India to form an army unit of its own.[1] The essay has originated from my broader historical research on a 'politics of whiteness' practiced by the British in their colonial rule of India. The controversy in question, as the essay seeks to show, would be better approached by placing it within a larger picture of the British politics of whiteness under the Raj.[2]

Inspired by the seminal work of Ann Laura Stoler, one major aim of my research has been to expose and then interrogate a fundamental ambivalence with which the colonising British in India defined their collective racial identity, or their 'whiteness'. [3] Of particular importance is to explain how the boundaries of such whiteness were to be guarded from a range of perceived threats, among the most critical one of which being an increasing pauperisation of 'Eurasians', the white people of mixed descent who, along with non-mixed 'Domiciled Europeans', constituted the so-called 'domiciled community'. [4] Both the Eurasian demand to create an army unit of their own and the British response thereto had deeply to do with the pauperism of this community, a community stigmatized for its cross-generational, permanent residence in the colony.

The British—themselves not seen as domiciled in India—treated the domiciled community as a 'degenerate' group of Indianised whites, because of their mixed

descent and/or colonial upbringing, categorically excluding the latter from the sphere of imperial rights and privileges.[5] At the same time, however, the same British would find an increasing pauperisation of Eurasians and Domiciled Europeans as poorly reflecting on the collective self-image of the British as a white ruling race, constituting a political threat to their colonial rule. It was in this context that the British came to refer to the pauperised state of the domiciled community as the 'Eurasian Question', launching measures of social reform which were seemingly inclusionary. They would not merely condemn the poor of the domiciled community for their allegedly 'degenerate' whiteness, but would help them 'regenerate'. Thus the British attitude towards the domiciled community was both inclusionary and exclusionary at once.

The essay tries to demonstrate that it was such ambivalence that continued to inform the debate over the proposed establishment of an Eurasian army unit. There were not just one, but different and competing visions as to why and how the Empire should allow the creation of such a special unit. On the one hand, the imperial authorities would dismiss the plan whenever it emerged as a Eurasian political claim for parity with the British. On the other hand, however, as a social-reform measure against the Eurasian Question, they would recognise its potential use. In the face of such attitudinal ambivalence, what was required of the political leaders of the Eurasian community was to press for the formation of an Eurasian regiment, albeit one which was completely different from the kind proposed by the British authorities.

2. AN OVERVIEW IF THE EURASIAN STRUGGLE

Although the Eurasians of British India were ethnically diverse—including at least those of Dutch, French as well as British extraction—, it was largely by the British attitude towards them that they were to have their prospects determined.[6] Accordingly, the Eurasian community defined its own whiteness principally in its connection, whether real or imagined, to Imperial Britain. Being essentially a landless, urban population, the community had the British colonial state as the most important employer of its members. Its economic dependency on the colonial public sectors (including the railways) was such that the job opportunities in them were regarded as the entire community's means of survival. Up to the early nineteenth century, the East Indian Company, which was the effective ruler of much of India,

employed individuals of mixed descent in large numbers in both its military and civil quarters. In fact, the steady loss of appointments in these two arenas—an irreversible historical current since the end of the eighteenth century onwards—had been one major cause of the very formation of an ‘Eurasian community’. Persons of mixed-descent were no longer seen as part of the white-British establishment, and were increasingly seen as constituting a distinctive community—a perception further facilitated by their rapid economic dispossession.[7] The various ‘associations’ of the community, mushrooming since the mid-1870s throughout South Asia, claimed that the current pauperism prevailing among Eurasians and Domiciled Europeans would never be solved except by re-installing them in the respectable positions of the military and civil services of the Raj formerly occupied by their ancestors.[8]

Elsewhere I have described the history of the associations’ political struggle in regard to civil service employment. Almost as soon as they were established, the associations of the domiciled community sought to get the colonial and imperial authorities to recognize Eurasians and Domiciled Europeans as ‘British’, allowing the latter to seek those civil service positions that had been increasingly reserved for those Britons brought up and educated in the metropole. The authorities would continuously dismiss such a claim, arguing that those people like Eurasians who were born, bred, and educated in the colony were, as it were, ‘not white enough’, deserving no commanding positions of the colonial state.[9] Whilst analyzing such politics of recognition by the associations, this essay keeps its focus on their struggle over the question of military recruitment. The claim of association leaders in this respect can be summed up as follows: the imperial authorities should permit the Eurasians of British India to establish, on a permanent basis, an army unit of their own that would be not merely recognized as British but *remunerated as such*. In what follows, let us briefly observe how the associations brought this claim to the colonial and imperial authorities of the British Empire.

Prior to 1791, persons of mixed decent could be admitted into the British military establishment without any discrimination.[10] The series of discriminatory practices that followed were certainly a setback, but even then, their military contribution to the Empire was to continue. Most famously, a number of Eurasian men fought on the British side during the Great Revolt of 1857. In their effort to suppress the revolt, the

British authorities decided to utilise the racial allegiance of the Eurasian community, allowing it to form a few regiments of its own, namely the Lahore Light Horse, the East India Regiment, and the Eurasian Battery of Artillery.[11] Yet, by the time the domiciled community started its association movement in the mid-1870s, all these Eurasian regiments had already been disbanded.[12] The argument of association leaders was that the Empire should simply reverse the clock, permitting once again the formation of Eurasian regiments, which would provide inestimable military service, whilst giving men of the community a stable source of employment.

Just as in the case of their claim on civil service recruitment, it was mainly through deputations and memorials that the associations sought to negotiate the proposed regimental scheme with British authorities (both colonial and imperial).[13] In 1885, for example, the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association held a meeting at the Dalhousie Institute in Calcutta, where it was resolved to urge the Secretary of State for India into moving the British Parliament to sanction an Eurasian regiment.[14] Towards the end of the century, the association movement would continue only with renewed momentum. In 1893, the above Association approached the Government of Bengal, proposing the establishment of an Experimental Regiment of Eurasians to protect plantations in Assam from the Lushais.[15] In 1896, several associations in the Madras Presidency collectively decided to forward their proposal directly to the politicians and officials in London. An executive member, H. K. Beauchamp, sailed to England in the middle of the year bringing with him a joint memorial of the Madras associations to present it to MPs and the high-rank state officials in charge.

Among the British authorities, there were people like the liberal MP, Charles Dilke, who thought that the Indian climate was too harsh for British soldiers, making Eurasian recruits more attractive. But such was a minor opinion, with many agreeing with the argument, authoritatively advocated by Lord Lawrence, that men from Britain were more fit as the soldiers of the white element within the Army.[16] The British perception of Eurasians as 'degenerate' was so deep-rooted, making the associations' claim look hardly plausible. Beauchamp did obtain the support of a sympathetic MP (Sir Soymour King), and through him managed to communicate the claim of the memorial to the Parliament and the metropolitan press. The memorial itself, however, fell short of gaining any substantial recognition.[17] These failures

were to cause much frustration and resentment among the Eurasian promoters of the regimental scheme. In 1896, an anonymous letter to *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]* condemned the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolesly, for his having dismissed the scheme. As the letter put it, 'it was ill-advised for the head of the Army to speak in such disparaging terms of a useful, respectable and courageous body of men'.[18]

The following year, a group of association leaders from Calcutta launched yet another deputation to the Secretary of State for India. The delegates, led by James Wallace and directed from India by the great Eurasian leader W. C. Madge, defined the question of military employment as the most pressing issue (along with that of civil service employment).[19] As one of the delegates, W. H. Ryland, asserted, '[T]here can be no reason why the Government should scruple to give military employment to those who are willing to make it a profession and a means of living, and an additional safeguard to the State'[20]. Neither the India Office nor the War Office, however, favourably responded to such a claim.

A breakthrough seemed be in order in the year 1899. Under the Viceroyship of Lord Curzon, the Government of India obtained a majority assent for a plan of forming a Eurasian regiment on an experimental basis. But, to the disappointment of the association leaders, the imperial authorities in London did not follow suit. The Secretary of State for India did not give permission to this experiment for the reason that such a regiment would not be cost-effective.[21] In protest, the leaders asked Curzon to re-open the question. L. P. Pugh, an executive member of the Association, remarked that the current exclusionary practice was unjustifiable when '[The] loyalty, the genuine loyalty, of the community is undoubted'.[22] Curzon would refuse to liaise with London again because it would not be possible to overturn a decision which had been made at the highest level.[23] The following year, these community leaders took up the question of military recruitment yet again in their memorial to the Government of India. But J. P. Hewett, Secretary to the Government of India, rejected to engage, for much the same reason as Curzon's.[24]

Into the twentieth century until the end of British colonialism in India, the successive leaders of the domiciled community continued to seek permission for the

establishment of an Eurasian regiment, but to no avail. The only exception was the formation during the First World War of the 'Anglo-Indian Force', which by the September of 1917 had drawn more than 950 men.[25] Yet the establishment of this regiment emerged only out of the special circumstances of the war, and when these circumstances disappeared, the regiment was also gone. The Force, therefore, cannot be said to have fully satisfied the Eurasian claim, which demanded the establishment of a regiment on a more permanent basis. During the turbulent decades towards the end of the Raj, the demand for a regiment would only increase. The question of military enlistment was always high on the political agenda of Henry Gidney, the single most powerful Eurasian leader from the 1920s onwards. Along with the civil service question, Gidney always placed a heavy weight on the proposed Eurasian regiment, presenting the case in the deputations he led and in the series of national commissions on Indian constitutional reform, namely the Statutory Commission, the Round Table Conference and the Joint Committee for Indian Constitutional Reform. His claim was that the Empire should sanction the establishment of an Eurasian Unit or one or two Eurasian Batteries of Artillery.[26] The communal leadership under Gidney succeeded in occasionally influencing the colonial officials in India, but just as in the previous decades, did not gain any radical concessions from the imperial authorities in London.[27] The frustration of the community leaders was immense. As Gidney remarked before the Secretary of State for India during the Round Table Conference, 'I look upon this [rejection to form a regiment] as a slur on the community, and as a body we strongly resent such treatment'.[28]

3. COMPETING VISIONS: ANTI-PAUPERISM OR ECONOMIC PARITY?

Having briefly chronicled the British rejection of the proposed establishment of an Eurasian regiment, let us move in what follows to a synchronic analysis of the ground and rhetoric of such rejection. Exactly which aspects of the Eurasian claim did the British authorities find hard to accept? It is important to launch such inquiry all the more because a number of Britons had actually seen the idea of a regimental scheme itself in a rather favourable light. By the late nineteenth century, collective social discipline had emerged as one vital component of the British politics of whiteness that sought to monitor and control the lives of the 'degenerate' elements of India's white population. A regimental scheme was widely believed to have a great

potential for transforming the moral and physical constitutions of Eurasian men in a highly effective manner. Then why reject it? In fact, the imperial authorities and the Eurasian leaders found the idea of a Eurasian regiment equally attractive. It was just that their respective reasons were completely incompatible from one another, eventually leading to the abolition of the whole idea. The controversy would revolve around such incompatibility, which, in my view, had its origins in the specific ways in which the racialised and class-oriented modes of social difference were hierarchically arranged in the British construction of whiteness in India.

To many Britons engaged in an imperial effort to domesticate the pauperised state of the domiciled community, the government-sanctioned formation of an Eurasian regiment appeared highly promising. This view was shared and expressed by members of the Pauperism Committee (appointed in 1891), which for the first time conducted comprehensive investigations into the lives of the Eurasian and Domiciled European poor in Calcutta. According to the Committee, military training was one of the few ways to discipline Eurasian youths in a sufficiently total way (with another being marine training).[29] As will be discussed below, the Government of India did not adopt the Committee's recommendation to form a special regiment for the poor of the domiciled community. However, the fact should be registered here that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Charles Elliot, considered, as reported by the Resolution of 1892, that the Committee was 'doubtless right in holding that military discipline would be of the greatest advantage to young men of this class'.[30] Such a view was prevalent among those Britons concerned with the Eurasian Question. In an influential article (1900), known to have influenced Lord Curzon's attitude towards the Eurasian community, a commentator named A. Nundy asserted,

...the Government must see that this class [the poor class of Eurasians] is daily increasing, and their destitution is still more on the increase. The highest authorities have predicted that, unless something is done to relieve them, they will become a source of anxiety. The Government has therefore to face this difficulty, and resort to the only remedy available, that of organising a number of Eurasian regiments.
[31]

For this self-appointed expert on the Eurasian Question, only a regimental scheme—neither agricultural settlement nor emigration—would suffice as a means to eventually solve it.

Such British belief in the potential use of a Eurasian regiment proved enduring well into the new century. Most importantly, it was rearticulated by the Calcutta Domiciled Community Enquiry Committee (1918-19), which was yet another effort, after the Pauperism Committee, to grasp the condition of the domiciled poor in the slums of Calcutta. Its Sub-Committee on Employment expressed its regret that the Government of India had vetoed the Pauperism Committee's proposal thirty years before: 'All the arguments brought forward by the Pauperism Committee in favour of military employment appear to have acquired added strength during the lapse of years'. There was no doubt that 'very great advantage would accrue from the raising of one or more regiments of military units'.^[32] About a decade later, the Secretary of the District Charitable Society (H. B. Whitham) was reported to express a similar view, advocating military discipline for the Eurasians of Calcutta:

Boys must go straight from school into the Army before they have time to come in contact with the very poor moral type of Anglo-Indian whom you find in Calcutta [...] They only become morally weak through disappointment at not being able to get work and partly through contact with the type of men which is always to be found in the purlieu of a big port.^[33]

The views above clearly indicate that the British attitude towards the regimental scheme was not always a negative one. So long as it was intended as a social-reformist measure to tackle the Eurasian Question, many Britons were willing to give the idea a try. By the last few decades of the nineteenth century, the solution of the Eurasian Question had emerged as a challenging goal of the politics of whiteness under the British Raj. Such politics, as Elizabeth Buettner has shown, was inseparable from how the ruling British defined the whiteness of their own. To be recognised as 'white' under British colonial rule, one had to belong to a class of 'respectable' families which were economically secure enough to allow its members to keep connected, not imaginarily but practically, to the bourgeois social space of the metropole. Most importantly, the whiteness of these families was supposed to be reproducible only by educating the children in Britain, and never in India. It would be by positively avoiding the colonial environment of India as a place of upbringing and education, the next generations of these families would become 'white'. It was against this background that Eurasians, along with Domiciled Europeans, came to constitute a perceived contradiction to imperial whiteness: they were seen as

colonial degeneration incarnate, not just because of their mixed descent but because of their education in a 'wrong place', which allegedly made them morally contaminated, work-shy, and thus deservedly poor.[34]

One crucial corollary of such class-specific, hierarchical edifice of whiteness was the prevalence of an ideology that the Eurasian community had no right to claim parity with the British. In fact, under the British politics of whiteness, the alleged tendency of Eurasians to mimic the bourgeois-white ways of life was identified as the very cause of their 'degeneration', and, by extension, their collective pauperisation.[35] A military regiment would be useful precisely because it was thought to eradicate such problematic tendency among the Eurasian poor.

Given such a reformist vision of those British concerned, there is small wonder that the regimental scheme proposed by Eurasian leaders proved hardly acceptable. Whereas the imperial version of the scheme purported to clarify and discipline the inequality between the British and the Eurasian community, the alternative version of association leaders explicitly aimed to level such inequality. As W. C. Madge asserted, the proposed regiment would succeed, only if the Government gave its soldiers 'British, and not sepoy pay, and housed and fed them as Europeans.'[36] For the promoters of the Eurasian association movement, mere formation of a communal regiment would never suffice unless all its soldiers were to be paid as British. Such was the consistent claim of the Eurasian community. Madge's view was to be repeated by Henry Gidney in the late 1920s and early 30s. According to Gidney, what Madge called the 'sepoy pay' would attract 'only Indian Christians and the dregs of the Anglo-Indian [Eurasian] community', and not 'those splendid lads' in the same community.[37] If a full 'British pay' was too much, then at least about 75% of it should be given to the domiciled community so that it could survive as a unique 'white' community.[38] The Eurasian 'cannot enter the Indian Army for the practical reason that he cannot live on the pay of a Sepoy'.[39] It would be only by the material equivalence between the British and Eurasian community that the latter would be saved from its chronic state of poverty. As Gidney cried out in his 'Memorandum' to Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform:

Surely, it is not the intention of the Government to render our economic position worse and drive us into a Depressed Class, by refusing such

excellent material an honourable place in the defence of its own country.[40]

The Eurasian vision of the regimental scheme as a means for economic parity and protection was fundamentally at variance with the vision of the imperial authorities. As noted above, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had shown an understanding for the Pauperism Committee's recommendation. It must be remembered, however, that by doing so he never meant the proposed Eurasian regiment to be recognised as a 'British' one in the sense that its members were to be remunerated on a par with the British soldiers recruited from the metropole. As the Resolution made it crystal clear:

The Lieutenant-Governor is prepared to recommend to the Government of India the formation of a Eurasian regiment, *on the understanding that it takes the place of a native, not an English, regiment in the present army*. Whatever capacity individuals may develop, it cannot be contended that at present, or within any appreciable time, such a regiment could as a whole be looked on for the purposes of fighting as the equivalent of a British regiment.[41]

In designating its soldiers as 'native', the Lieutenant-Governor's support for an Eurasian regiment was seamlessly in line with the wider politics of whiteness under British colonialism. Such politics both reproduced and was reproduced by the racialised and class hierarchies of the white population in India. By demanding the regiment to be treated as a 'British' one, the Eurasian campaign was challenging such hierarchical structure of whiteness.

Particularly important in such Eurasian challenge was to try and abolish the so-called 'colour bar' in military recruitment. The institution of the colour bar was known to have prevented a great many Eurasian men from being recruited into the British Army. Only Eurasian men of fair complexion—those whose looks allowed them to 'pass' as white—could find their ways into the British Army. As W. C. Madge observed, commanding officers were so racially biased that they would 'object to any violent contrasts of complexions and other oddities' within a supposedly 'all-white' army.[42] It was in this way that the on-going system of military recruitment engendered grim and unreasonable inequalities within the Eurasian community, the skin colour of whose members could vary greatly even among brothers of the same family. As J. H. Abbott, an enthusiastic Eurasian advocate of the regimental scheme, lamented, 'what of the unfortunate who can not boast a fair complexion? The colour

bar indeed separates brother from brother and parent from child'.[43] Even the establishment of the Anglo-Indian Force during the war was not seen as successfully removing the colour bar. For many Eurasian men of fairer complexion had already chosen to 'pass' as white, joining the war not as Eurasian but precisely by hiding their Eurasian identity. Such a tendency was seen by the promoters of the Force as a regrettable loss. As the anonymous editor of the commemorative booklet, *The Anglo-Indian Force, 1916* (published in 1918), deplored in retrospect:

Only members of the Community can correctly gauge the strength of the temptation the Anglo-Indian [Eurasian] to be considered a European and while it was possible for Anglo-Indians to join British Regiments as Europeans the wonder is that any of the fairer men came forward for the Anglo-Indian Force at all.[44]

For the associations, it was of vital significance that Eurasian soldiers were treated not merely as British but *collectively* so.

It was these two conditions—economic parity and collective recognition—that constituted the Eurasian claim over the question of military recruitment. The political goal of the associations was to achieve the granting of these two conditions at once, and nothing short of this, if not more, would suffice.

For the Eurasian community, the goal of its demand for a regiment was clear enough, but, when it came to the means to achieve it, it faced difficulties that would not be so easily surmounted. As observed in Charles Elliot's view, the British objection to the Eurasian cause derived from an assumption that Eurasian men were not fit enough in terms of military prowess: it would not be cost-effective to remunerate their regiment as a British one. Also, the report of an association meeting in Madras revealed that the highest authorities in the Presidency had been persuaded by the view of Eurasian soldiers as too frail. The Governor had told the community that 'the main objection that has been offered to the scheme if that you could not get a sufficient amount of materials to form a regiment of the requisite physical standard'.[45] A similar criticism came from a commentator (Dr. John Smyth), whose harsh judgement was not certainly welcomed by the members of the community. As reported in 1897 by *The Friend of India & Statesman*, the South India branch of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association complained:

Dr. Smyth treats the proposal for a Eurasian Regiment as one made

solely for the benefit of the indigent poor, and assuming that only the “real poor chap” would enlist and then goes on to argue that this “real poor chap” cannot replace the British soldier.[46]

And more importantly still, Lord Curzon also challenged the Eurasian claim by arguing that the frailty of Eurasian soldiers was such that they did not deserve a British pay. Curzon, as we observed in the first section of the essay, supported the idea of an Eurasian regiment. Upon a closer look, it was obvious that his vision was just as incompatible with the Eurasian one as other British proponents. As I have shown elsewhere, Curzon angered the leaders of the Eurasian community by asserting that Eurasians were entitled to seek civil service jobs only if they regarded themselves as ‘native’ and accepted the corresponding standards of remuneration.[47] For him, Eurasians were simply non-British, and this view constituted the backbone of his vision of the regimental scheme. As he made it clear:

...it has been felt unfair to place this increase of burden upon the Indian tax-payer, unless a responsible assurance could be given that there would be a commensurate increase in our military strength. So far this assurance has not been forthcoming [...] you will do well to look facts in the face, and to realise that Governments are compelled to regard this question to a large extent from the utilitarian point of view; and that a Eurasian regiment, which would cost quite as much as, if not more than, a British regiment, will be at least as efficient for military purposes, they are hardly likely to give it to you for the sake of sentiment, or even of political expediency alone.[48]

It was in the face of such criticisms that Eurasian leaders were required to refute the British assumption of Eurasian military frailty.

There was another stream of criticism which the associations were forced to contemplate. In 1891, *The Statesman and Friend of India* pointed out that the regimental scheme could lead the community towards a ‘calamity’ by taking away the better-off portion of men from an already impoverished population.[49] In the same vein, W. Forbes-Mitchell, a self-appointed expert on the Eurasian affairs, criticised the scheme in his book on Eurasian poverty, and so did W. H. Arden Wood, an influential educationalist, in his article on Eurasian education published in 1928.[50] In the eyes of these reformers, the very idea of military recruitment appeared as a source of economic instability rather than stability.

In any case, however, among the British reformers were many who endorsed the

idea of an Eurasian regiment though their vision was different from the community's. In the reformist vision, the regiment had to be fashioned in ways that would help Eurasian young men *acquire* a measure of discipline precisely because it was thought to be lacking in them. Predictably, however, such a philanthropic motive was hardly appealing to the military authorities who demanded martial prowess as a *prerequisite criterion*. From the Eurasian perspective, it was certainly the case that their community was so poor as to be in need of philanthropic aid, but at the same time, it was emphatically not the case that the proposed scheme should be intended as a philanthropic programme. It was economic parity that they claimed, and as such, the community needed to be regarded as so robust, efficient, and loyal as to deserve equal treatment in military recruitment.

One rhetoric that empowered such an argument was to point to the past military record of Eurasians and their ancestors. For more than one hundred years, persons of mixed descent had contributed to the military efforts of the British Raj, and it was not so long ago that the Eurasian regiments had fought for the British during the Great Revolt.[51] In the meanwhile, it was important to stress, as against the British perspective, that the proposed scheme was not an anti-pauperism measure but was a respectable form of military contribution. As one association leader, Ryland, addressed to the members of the community, 'it must be made clear that Government does wish us to produce our best goods, and is prepared to appreciate them at their fine value'.[52] Or, in the words of W. C. Madge, the community must make sure to keep the Government from being swayed by 'the vagaries of theoretical philanthropists'. But Eurasian leaders like Madge were also well-aware that the British demand for 'proof' of Eurasian martial fitness was mere rhetoric: it was part of the British politics of whiteness they sought to challenge. Thus rather than succumbing to such demand, Madge insisted that the Empire should simply sanction an Eurasian regiment *first*, because that alone would 'arouse a responsive earnestness in the only class of Eurasians and domiciled Anglo-Indians who can make local European troops a success in India'[53].

4. CONCLUSION

The British attitude towards the 'loyalty' of the Eurasian community was an ambivalent one. On the one hand, the Empire found it expedient to elicit the racial

allegiance of Eurasian people whenever the internal security of the Raj was concerned in the face of nationalist insurgence. For instance, in the so-called 'security services' (customs, telegraphs, and railways), a substantial presence of the Eurasian element was regarded as vital because of its potential to serve as a buffer between colonial rulers and anti-colonial nationalists. The most explicit example of such British utilisation of Eurasian loyalty was observed in railway employment, where the authorities made it virtually compulsory for Eurasian employees to enlist in the 'Auxiliary Force'. One of the most important roles assigned to these Eurasian men were to crack down on strikes by native employees.[54]

On the other hand, the Empire found the same allegiance of Eurasians problematic whenever it was seen as leading to their claim for parity with the British. It is crucial to note that, even when Eurasian railway workers were forced to do military-like service, such mobilisation never amounted to a bridging of the material gap between Britons and Eurasians. As Henry Gidney rightly complained:

...for economic purposes we are called statutory natives of India, and as such we are expected to work amicably on an equality with our Indian fellow-workmen. Suddenly a railway strike develops, as has so often happened during the past decade, or a riot breaks out. Promptly, the Anglo-Indian [Eurasian] and domiciled European employee on the railways (still classed as "statutory Indian") has to don his uniform, carry his rifle, and turn out as a member of the Auxiliary Force [...] he is suddenly metamorphosed into a European British subject.[55]

As this essay has demonstrated, the same contradiction permeated the British attitude towards the regimental-scheme question. The British occasionally appeared in favour of the idea of a regiment for Eurasians. At the same time, however, they made sure not to allow it to become a Eurasian political platform for claiming equivalence with themselves. Moreover, whereas the Eurasian advocates of the scheme appealed to the community's racial allegiance to the Empire, its British proponents did not even seem concerned with it. What they were concerned with, instead, was how the scheme could be possibly used as a social-reform measure to alleviate the pauperism among Eurasians. It was as one possible means to tackle the Eurasian Question that the British appreciated the idea of an Eurasian regiment. It was conceived as part of their wider politics of whiteness, whose aim was not to level the racialised and class inequalities within the white population, but to domesticate the effects of such inequalities in order to maintain British racial prestige

in the eyes of India's native subjects. The British were interested neither in a mobilisation of Eurasian loyalty nor in the elevation of their status onto 'British': what they wanted was nothing more than an institutional means of social control. Through claiming the 'Britishness' of their community, the Eurasian proponents of the regimental scheme were challenging such racist and bourgeois politics of whiteness that had reduced the community into a mere 'problem' as perpetrators of the Eurasian Question.

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NOTES

[1] Throughout this essay, I use the term 'Eurasian' to refer to persons of mixed European descent in India under British rule. As the readers of this journal would know only too well, the term was perceived to be loaded with derogatory connotations, being eventually replaced by the term 'Anglo-Indian' in 1911. (Before then, 'Anglo-Indian' had been used to refer to Britons living in India.) My use of the term derives from a purely practical motive to avoid confusions when dealing with a historical period the bulk of which falls within the pre-1911 years.

[2] The final results of this research are to appear in Satoshi Mizutani, *Boundaries of Whiteness under the Raj: Race, Class, and India's 'Domiciled Community', 1858-1930* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming), though it will not contain any discussion of the present theme due to a lack of space. I am therefore grateful of this opportunity kindly given by Professor Lionel Caplan and Susan Dhavle. I would also like to thank all those involved in the creation and maintenance of *The International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies* and 'Anglo-Indian Homepage': the recourses contained in these proved to be indispensable, especially when I first started my doctorate research in England in 1999. It is my honour that I can contribute my humble piece to this issue of *The Journal*.

[3] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Duke University Press, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (University of California Press, 2002).

[4] Along with the destitute class of the domiciled community, the so-called 'poor white' groups—which were not seen as domiciled in India—were also seen as constituting such threats. For a masterful account of the British attitude towards these groups, see Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Low and*

Licentious Europeans: Race, Class, and 'White Subalternity' in Colonial India (Orient Blackswan, 2009).

[5] On the gap—both real and ideological—between the non-domiciled and domiciled portions of India's white community, see Satoshi Mizutani, 'Constitutions of the Colonising Self in Late British India: Race, Class and Environment', *Zinbun: Annals of the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University*, vol.38 (2005), pp.21-75. On how the non-domiciled British sought to cultivate their whiteness in their daily lives, see E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800-1947* (Polity, 2001).

[6] On the ethnic diversity of the community, see Adrian Carton, 'Beyond "Cotton Mary": Anglo-Indian Categories and Reclaiming the Diverse Past', *The International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies*, 5 (2000)[<http://home.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/carton.html> (accessed on 23 Dec. 2009)]; Adrian Carton, 'Hanging On British Coat-tails: Women's Pleas, Cultural Difference and Liminal Worlds', *History Australia*, vol.1, (2004), pp.229-44.

[7] For these points, see Christopher Hawes, *Poor Relations: the Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773-1833* (Routledge Curzon, 1996).

[8] For a brief account of the birth and evolution of these associations, see Satoshi Mizutani, 'Contested Boundaries of Whiteness: Public Service Recruitment and the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association, 1876-1901', in H. Fischer-Tiné and S. Gehrman (eds.), *Empires and Boundaries: Rethinking Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings* (Routledge, 2009), pp.86-106, pp.91-2.

[9] Mizutani, 'Contested Boundaries of Whiteness', pp.92-101.

[10] Frank Anthony, *Britain's Betrayal in India: the Story of the Anglo-Indian Community* (Allied Publishers, 1969), p.122.

[11] John Alexander Ewart, *The Story of a Soldier's Life; Or, Peace, War, and Mutiny, Volume II* (Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881), p.354.

[12] The first two were disbanded in 1864-65, the third in 1870. Hira Lal Singh, *Problems and Policies of the British in India, 1885-1898* (Asia Publishing House, 1963), p.189.

[13] Meanwhile, they also tried, through public meetings and the press, to get their cause known both to the members of their own community and to the wider Indian society. In 1884, for instance, a 'lecture on Anglo-Indian Recruiting' was held at Dalhousie. According to W. C. Madge, the gathering was 'filled to overflowing with a large gathering of all classes, among them leading merchants, tradesmen, clergymen'. The audience 'unanimously' agreed to bring the case before the Government, 'pleading for a sacrificed community' (W. C. Madge, 'Letter to the Editor: Anglo-Indian Recruiting', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 31 May 1908, p.10). In 1891, F. Rowlandson, the president of the Madras branch of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association, published an advertisement in the press, asking willing members for sending their names, so that a list of regimental members would be drawn up for the time when the Government would actually sanction the regimental scheme. F. Rowlandson, 'To the Editor, Eurasians as Soldiers', *The Statesman and Friend of India [Weekly]*, 24 Oct. 1891, p.1.

[14] Anthony, *Britain's Betrayal in India*, p.122.

- [15] Lal Bahadur Varma, *Anglo Indians: A Historical Study of Anglo Indian Community in 19th Century India* (Bhasha Prakashan, 1979), p.110.
- [16] *Ibid.*, p.108.
- [17] 'Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association: South India Branch', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 14 Oct. 1897, p.18.
- [18] Anonymous ('SUMMER'), 'Letter to the Editor: Eurasian Regiments', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 4 Nov. 1896, p.11.
- [19] On this deputation, see Mizutani, 'Contested Boundaries of Whiteness', pp.96-7.
- [20] See 'Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association: Deputation to the Secretary of State', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 25 Aug. 1897, pp.19-20, pp.19-20.
- [21] *Ibid.*, p.21.
- [22] *Ibid.*, p.20.
- [23] *Ibid.*, p.21.
- [24] 'The Anglo-Indian Association's Memorial: the Government of India's Reply', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 10 Oct. 1901, pp.19-20, p.20.
- [25] Anonymous (ed.), *The Anglo-Indian Force, 1916* (Allahabad, 1918), p.40.
- [26] *Indian Round Table Conference (Third Session)* (London, 1933), p.176.
- [27] For instance, in 1930, the Government of India submitted to the Secretary of State for India a recommendation to form an 'Anglo-Indian Signal Unit' but it was dropped. See, Kenneth E. Wallace, 'Letter to the Editor: The Anglo-Indians and the Army', *The Statesman [Weekly]*, 15 Aug. 1937, p.18.
- [28] *Indian Round Table Conference (Third Session)* (London, 1933), p.128.
- [29] See Satoshi Mizutani "Degenerate whites' and their spaces of disorder: Disciplining racial and class ambiguities in Colonial Calcutta (c.1880-1930)' in A. Tambe and H. Fischer-Tiné (eds.), *The Limits of British Colonial Control in South Asia: Spaces of Disorder in the Indian Ocean Region* (Routledge, 2009), pp.155-91, pp.166,175-6.
- [30] *Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, General Department, Miscellaneous* (Calcutta, 1892), p.4.
- [31] A. Nundy, 'The Eurasian Problem in India', *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, vol. 9 (1900), pp.56-73, p.73.
- [32] *Report of the Calcutta Domiciled Community Enquiry Committee, 1918-19* (Calcutta, 1920), p.138.
- [33] 'Anglo-Indians in the Army: Scheme for Military Units, Relief Measure', *The Statesman [Weekly]*, 25 Jun. 1931, p.19.
- [34] Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford University Press, 2004). See also Mizutani, 'Constitutions of the Colonising Self'.
- [35] See Mizutani, "Degenerate Whites' and their Spaces of Disorder", pp.170-4.
- [36] 'Local Anglo-Indian Regiments', *The Statesman and Friend of India [Weekly]*, 16 Ap. 1892, p.2.
- [37] Henry Gidney, 'Letter to the Editor: Anglo-Indian Soldiers', *The Statesman [Weekly]*, 31 Mar. 1927, p.6.
- [38] Henry Gidney, 'Letter to the Editor: Anglo-Indians and the Army', *The Statesman [Weekly]*, 7 Ap.

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[39] *Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, vol. Ila: Minutes of Evidence* (London, 1934), p.1994.

[40] *Ibid.*, p.1978.

[41] *Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal*, p.4 [my italics].

[42] 'Local Anglo-Indian Regiments', p.2.

[43] 'Anglo-Indian Regiments: Mr. J. H. Abbott's Scheme', *The Statesman [Weekly]*, 1 Aug. 1912, p.19.

[44] *The Anglo-Indian Force, 1916*, p.8.

[45] 'Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association: South India Branch', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 14 Oct. 1897, p.18.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Mizutani, 'Contested Boundaries of Whiteness', pp.98-100.

[48] 'Imperial Anglo-Indian Association: Deputation to the Viceroy', *The Friend of India & Statesman [Weekly]*, 29 Mar. 1900, pp.20-1, p.21.

[49] *The Statesman and Friend of India [Weekly]*, 14 Nov. 1891, p.46.

[50] W. Forbes-Mitchell, *The Gospel of Regeneration of the Anglo-Indian and Eurasian Poor* (Thacker, Spink & Co., 1900), pp.21-3.

[51] See Herbert A Stark, *The Call of the Blood; or Anglo-Indians and the Mutiny* (British Burma Press, 1932).

[52] 'Eurasians as Soldiers', *The Statesman and Friend of India [Weekly]*, 7 Nov. 1891, p.4.

[53] 'Local Anglo-Indian Regiments', p.2.

[54] David Arnold, 'Industrial Violence in Colonial India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 22 (1980), pp.234-255, pp.249-253; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.7-9. On the employment of Eurasians on the railways and its implications for colonial history, see Laura Gbah Bear, 'Miscegenations of Modernity: constructing European respectability and race in the Indian railway colony, 1857-1931', *Women's History Review*, vol.3, (1994), pp.531-548; Laura Bear, *Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy, and the Intimate Historical Self* (Columbia University Press, 2007).

[55] Henry Gidney, 'The Future of the Anglo-Indian Community', *The Asiatic Review*, vol.30 (1934), pp.27-42, p.33.

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