8

MARGINALISED VICTIMS OF 1857

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THIS chapter examines some of the lesser-known casualties of the mutiny and uprising in India. When revolt spread from the sepoys to the civilian population and engulfed much of north and central India, large sections of colonial society were caught up in the violence. East India Company soldiers, officials and their families were, of course, the first targets, but many others suffered too, among them Eurasians,[1] Indian Christians, Indians working for the British, and women widowed in the conflict. Some were already victims of British and Indian prejudice, and the mutiny made their position even more vulnerable. Much emphasis in recent mutiny writing has been placed on the Indian protagonists—on their actions, their motives and the context in which they operated—but we are in danger of forgetting their victims, particularly the non-British groups who have, as yet, been largely without a voice in the dominant historical narratives. These were people who, because of race, religion, marriage or occupation, already lived at the margins of colonial society even in relatively peaceful times. This chapter examines the impact of the mutiny on these civilian groups.

Eurasians

Estimates of the number of British civilians killed during the year 1857 range from 1,000 to 1,500, a tiny number compared to the thousands of Indian civilians who were indiscriminately slaughtered. Although the mutiny has attracted more attention than almost any other event during Britain's three hundred year long involvement in India, and has been extensively, indeed, obsessively, annotated, we will never have a precise figure for the British civilian dead. The memorial tablets in All Souls' Church, Cawnpore, record 'more than a thousand Christian souls' who were killed, but these also include some 200 officers and men. Seventy-seven were killed at Jhansi, at least fifty in Delhi and thirty-one at Meerut. During

the four-and-a-half-month long siege of the British Residency at Lucknow about 167 died of illness or malnutrition, or were killed by the mutineers.

There were good reasons at the time why the number of British dead could not be exactly computed. Communications were disrupted, and where Britons were killed or died in isolated areas, accounts of their deaths were confused and contradictory. Some Britons were 'betrayed' to the rebels, after finding safety with minor rulers who had seemed friendly towards them at first.[2] Others who had been given up for dead turned up, in some cases, in the autumn of 1857, having been protected by villagers.[3] There was another reason why the figures did not always agree, however, and that is because there was no clear policy on whether Eurasians should be counted as 'British' or not in the lists of victims.

The history of the Eurasian community is well known, as are the restrictions placed upon it. The British attitude towards the community was ambivalent, to say the least. Eurasians could not, for example, serve in the East India Company army. This policy had been laid down by Lord Cornwallis in 1789, when he was both commander-in-chief and governor general in India, and was ratified in 1795. It was based on racial grounds and the supposed 'injuries' to discipline and reputation that men 'born of Black women' might do if they were admitted to the army.[4] They could only be employed as regimental bandsmen and drummers, and in this capacity a number of them were killed during the uprising, both by the rebels and by the British. Major William Hodson, the founder of Hodson's Horse, is infamous for the murder of the three Mughal princes after Emperor Bahadur Shah fled to Humayun's tomb from the Red Fort, but less well known is that the Christian Eurasian bandsmen of the mutinous 28th Bengal Native Infantry, who had escaped with the emperor's party, and numbered about thirty men, were also killed by Hodson and his troops.[5] Eurasians were also employed by the East India Company as signallers in the electric telegraph offices that were spreading out across northern India. It was two Eurasian men who tapped out the last SOS messages on 11 May 1857 to the British at Ambala, as the rebel sepoys entered Delhi. A memorial was subsequently erected to William Brendish and I.W. Pilkington on the site of the Delhi telegraph office. Although Eurasians were trusted to work as telegraph signallers, and, in fact, this later became a reserved occupation for them, they were not trusted to encode messages sent during the uprising. A secret cipher code had been worked out by October 1857, and was issued to a few selected officials with the warning that 'it is necessary that contents of messages transmitted in Cipher should not be understood by the signallers'.[6]

When the Emergency Act of 20 November 1857 was passed relating to the importation, manufacture and sale of arms and ammunition in India, it was decided that certain classes of people could be allowed to carry arms without a certificate of exemption. These included Britons, of course, but also included 'European British subjects and the descendants of such subjects commonly known as East Indians, or Eurasians and European Foreigners'.[7] It was

convenient to count Eurasians as honorary Europeans, if not actual Britons, in a time of crisis, and this is what the British did during the mutiny. But it also meant that the Eurasian community was regarded by the rebels as part of the enemy, and were treated as such. Joseph Skinner was the grandson of Colonel James Skinner, whose British father had married a Rajput noblewoman. Colonel Skinner had raised an irregular regiment, called 'Skinner's Horse' and had built St James's Church in Old Delhi, near the Kashmir Gate. The large Skinner *haveli* and gardens were just inside the city walls. In spite of, or more likely because of, his family's prominent background, and the fact that he was a Christian, Joseph Skinner was dragged out of the family home and killed in front of the main police thana in Chandni Chowk.

By the same token, Eurasians who joined the rebels, as some of them did, were regarded by the British as almost worse than the mutineers themselves. They were seen as doubly guilty—firstly of not supporting the British, and secondly of actively supporting the rebels. The chief commissioner of Awadh reported in October 1858 that an Anglo-Indian, Mr Felix Rotton of Lucknow, had 'remained with the Rebels until July last, to be the father of rebels and to labour under the strongest presumption of disloyalty'.[8] Felix Rotton's parents were an English officer and an Indian woman, whose name we do not know. Felix had served in the army of the deposed Nawab of Awadh for twenty years. He had fathered about twenty-two children by his Indian wives, and his sons had also served in the Nawab's army. Their loyalties were naturally with the Nawab, their employer. Seven of Felix Rotton's sons joined the rebels and fought with them against the British. Felix Rotton himself, at the age of sixty, joined Begam Hazrat Mahal's troops in April 1858 after she began her retreat north to Nepal, but he surrendered to the British three months later.

After the siege of the residency at Lucknow lists were made of the people who had been trapped in the large compound for four and a half months—or at least of some of the people.[9] No Indian soldiers were listed, or Indian servants, though both categories were present, supporting the British. Mysteriously, there appeared to be no Eurasians either. However, the names of people that we know to be from the local Eurasian community are listed (Campagnac, Gamboa, Catania, Derozario, etc.), but they appear in the category of 'European Women and Children in Garrison', having been given honorary, and probably temporary, European status. The assumption that Eurasians were inevitably Christians is generally, but not always, true. There were Muslims of mixed race, born of a European father and Indian mother; indeed, one of the men who carried out the massacre of British women and children at Cawnpore, Sarwar Khan, was fathered by a soldier from an Irish regiment.[10] Children of such unions were sometimes given two names, one Christian and one Muslim, allowing them to slip from one category to another. This enabled some Eurasians to escape during the mutiny, by 'disguising' themselves as Indians, but at the same time meant that they were vulnerable if caught by the British, The idea of a Kim-like figure

who could suddenly fling off his Indian clothes and be accepted by the British belongs only to Kipling's story. Eurasians who were Christians are described at this period as wearing a distinctive dress of 'smoking cap', like a soft fez with a tassel, a *chapkan* (the long Indian coat) and 'shoes with strings', that is, lace-up shoes.[11] They were thus easily identified and were killed along with the British at Delhi, Cawnpore and Jhansi. Regrettably there is virtually no analysis by Eurasians themselves of their status as a community during and after the mutiny. Their 'racial ambiguity' as it has been described, together with prevailing British attitudes to class, confined most Eurasians to low-income jobs, with little time for introspection or reflection on their position in society. While the majority aligned themselves with the British in 1857–1858, and were treated as British by the rebels, there were, as we have shown, some significant exceptions.

Indian Christians

A precise figure of 112,491 'native Christians' was given five years before the mutiny,[12] i.e., Indians who had been converted by missionaries during the preceding fifteen years. Twenty-two missions were recorded, with numerous 'stations' and out-stations. It was the famine years of 1837 and 1838 that had given an impetus to conversions. Children orphaned by the famine, or more often, simply abandoned, were gathered up by the missions, and settled in 'Christian villages' at Sikandra (north of Agra), Allahabad and Parrukhabad. The children were taught trades, including printing and tent-making. Twenty years later, in 1857, the Sikandra site housed almost a thousand Indian Christians in a self-supporting community..

As the rebellious sepoys from the Rajputana cantonments of Neemuch and Nasirabad approached Agra at the end of June 1857, the Europeans shut themselves up in Agra Fort. Several hundred Indian Christians attempted to follow them, but found the gates shut in their faces. According to William Muir of the Intelligence Department, a deeply religious and learned man, there was 'some doubt as to whether there was room for them in the Fort'.[13] The situation was only resolved when Thomas Valpy French of the Church Missionary Society, who later became Bishop of Lahore, threatened to remain outside the fort with the Indian Christians, a move which would certainly have ended in the deaths of everyone. Expediency won the day and the Indian Christians were allowed entry. The Europeans had not been allowed to bring their own Indian servants into the Fort, so, as Muir reported, 'in their absence the native Christians were of great use'. But he added that 'it required all the influence' of his wife and her friends 'to keep them from being harshly treated, for the unkindly feeling towards natives had already begun to spread'. Outside the fort, the printing presses, from which the Christian community had earned its living, were completely

destroyed, together with stocks of new books. At Farrukhabad the tents ready for sale were destroyed, and everything belonging to the Indian Christians looted. Eight American missionaries were murdered.

In Delhi, Dr Chaman Lal, one of the personal physicians to the Mughal emperor, had been converted to Christianity in 1852 by Rev. Jennings, the Delhi chaplain. At the time, the conversion of such a prominent man had caused some unease. Now, when the mutineers arrived in Delhi on 11 May, Dr Lal's neighbours pointed him out, and he was shot in front of his dispensary after confirming in his own words that he was a Christian.[14] There is a memorial tablet to him in St James's Church, near the Kashmir Gate, recording that he fell 'a martyr to his faith'. A fellow convert from Hinduism, Ram Chandra, had escaped from Delhi, and on its recapture by the British in September 1857 he returned and worked as an assistant to the dreaded Prize Agents who were looting the capital. But now he faced a different kind of threat, from the British, who beat him up. He wrote that his faith had sustained him throughout the uprising, but that was hardly any comfort 'when a native Christian is in danger from Christian officers themselves, merely because he was not born in England and has not a white skin'.[15]

Indians Working for the British

The question is still sometimes asked how a comparatively small number of Britons could rule over half the vast Indian subcontinent, that is, the non-princely areas. The answer is that even before 1857, when the East India Company was working as the 'local agent' for the British government, Britain could not have maintained civil power without the active assistance of Indians in administrative roles. The collection of land revenue, the most important source of income for the Company, was coordinated from the tehsils, the district headquarters, where the land records were held. The official in charge was the *tehsildar.* Law and order were maintained through the kotwal, a man who combined the offices of town mayor and chief police officer, and who was in charge of the thanas (police stations). Prisoners were locked up and overseen by the jail *daroga* (the superintendent) and the jail *naibs* (armed guards). All these administrators needed their own clerks and chaprasis. Some of these posts were replicated in the princely areas, but in states annexed or conquered by the British the post-holders were government employees, that is, employees of the British government and were part of the Bengal Native Civil Service.

When the mutiny started, these men reacted in a number of different ways. Some managed to escape, like the two extra assistant commissioners at Daryabad in Awadh; Ali Raza Beg and Abdul Hakim both fled to Lucknow when the 5th Oudh Infantry Force mutinied, and they were both trapped in the Residency during the siege. Interestingly Abdul Hakim is reported as having hidden from his

'personal enemies' in the town of Daryabad for nearly two weeks, before reaching Lucknow, about forty miles away.[16] The chaotic milieu of the uprising gave many people a chance to settle old scores, which had nothing to do with expelling the British from the country. Other officials decided to stay and fight the mutineers. Devi Prasad, the *tehsildar* at Mandla, fortified his office and repulsed an attack by 300 rebel cavalrymen. The *tehsildar* at Chandauli in Benares persuaded a group of Rajput thakurs not to plunder British government property. Bakhtawar Singh and Ibrahim Khan, both *tehsildars*, initially escaped from the mutineers, but were subsequently besieged by Gujars who had joined the rebels. Both men were murdered at Shamli in September 1857. Bhure Khan, *tehsildar* at Rohtak, was murdered by rebels 'while attempting to defend the treasury'. Ram Bakhsh, the tehsildar at Etah, died from wounds and injuries inflicted by mutineers. Nand Lal and Piyare Lal, both *tehsildars*, together with Kishen Singh, a lawyer, fled from Hissar and were murdered by rebel villagers the following day.

Men in lesser government positions were also in danger from the rebels. Lala Bhaokhun Lal was a clerk earning ₹100 a month as translator and examiner in the Judicial Commissioner's Office in Lucknow. After the battle of Chinhat, where British troops led by Sir Henry Lawrence had been defeated and retreated to the Residency, Bhaokhun Lal shut himself up in his house and lay low. But a week later, his house was surrounded by mutineers, as he described them, and he writes: 'I was obliged to fly from a hind wall at 3 am and return to Allahabad. It took 37 days to reach this City because I was compelled to fly from one village to another for the sake of protection.' When he eventually got to Allahabad his troubles were not over. He reported to the British officials and asked for his back pay, because he had only been paid up to the end of May. Although the governor general had announced that people working for the government were entitled to pay during the months when they could not work, through no fault of their own, it was not until the end of September that wages began to be paid out.[17] This might seem a very trivial matter when so many people had lost their lives, but the sudden lack of wages, which were paid at the end of each month, did cause extra hardship, during a time of great disruption, to those who could least afford it. Girish Chander Banerjee was the fourth clerk in the deputy commissioner's office at Sitapur, and he told a similar story: 'I as well as other govt. Servants were obliged to rescue our lives in flight. On the night of 5 June last, disguising myself in the habit of a fukeer, [*faqir*] I departed from the town and roving continually with great difficulty for eight days arrived at Bittoor.' From Bithur he went through Allahabad and Benares, before arriving at Calcutta on 28 July. On the road, he said he was 'subject to frequent enquiries from the Budmashes ... but being penniless and in a very wretched condition, I was treated with coldness and indifference'.[18] Banerjee had been on a salary of ₹50 a month, and he was also requesting his back pay for May, June and July. There are a number of petitions from people in similar circumstances. A fellow worker in the judicial commissioner's office was a Eurasian, Joshua Francis.

He managed to escape at the same time as Bhaokhun Lal, 'in the disguise of a Mohamedan with my mother'.[19] Francis walked from Lucknow to Raniganj and then travelled to Calcutta, which he described as 'this foreign place'. He had been given some money from the Relief Fund, an appeal that had been set up in London by the Lord Mayor.[20] But Francis said he had used this money to buy clothes and medical treatment for his swollen legs. He asked humbly for his back pay of ₹40 per month. Kali Charan, a treasury officer, writing from Allahabad, also escaped from the mutineers at Lucknow. He said he did not want to enlarge on 'the manner in which I was treated by the ungrateful sepoys of the 22nd Native Infantry and of 1st Oude Infantry by whose rapacity I was robbed of all I had.' The sepoys took some of his money, and the rest was confiscated by the kotwal of Lucknow, on behalf of Birjis Qadr, who had been crowned as the boy king of Awadh. Kali Charan had also been robbed of his school certificate, and certificates given to him by the former British Residents. Without these, he was helpless. He could not prove his identity, and he could not draw his salary until he could prove who he was.[21]

British officials were caught off balance by the speed of the uprising, and while this had serious military implications for them, it also led to a collapse in civil administration. There was no contingency plan, and it is clear that the desk-bound British officials in Calcutta were quite unable to comprehend the scale of the breakdown for several months, in spite of the number of refugees who managed to reach the city. There was an extraordinarily unsympathetic reaction from company officials to people like Bhaokhun Lal, Joshua Francis, Kali Charan, and other government servants who did manage to escape and went to report back for duty at temporary headquarters. Perhaps it is not surprising that other officials simply threw in their lot and joined the mutineers. Safdar Ali was a pleader at the Sadar Diwani court and the Nizamat Adalat in Agra. He joined the rebellious armed police and 'raised the green flag' of Islam. He took part in the looting and burning of the civil station on 5 July 1857. He was probably one of the men involved in destroying the Christian village at Sikandra. In November 1857 the governor general ordered descriptive rolls to be drawn up of people who had taken part in the uprising, and this was published the following April, before the revolt had been fully put down.[22] Among the civil officers who were named in these descriptive rolls as 'rebels' were senior and junior judges, a head police chief, law court aides, lawyers, stewards, jail *darogas*, and a draughtsman in the government survey department at Jhansi who, it was said, 'with his subordinates in office joined the mutineers and opened the fort gate where the Christians had taken refuge'.[23] Thus personal experience of British administration through their employment, had not only given these men the means to subvert their employer, the East India Company, but had given them the reason to rebel too.

Minor European employees were treated equally badly. The story of Charles Elliott, who had been the head assistant in the deputy commissioner's office at Jalaun, is one of several sad cases. Having reached Calcutta, Elliott wrote to

the under secretary to the Government of India and asked for his back pay. He was told to submit proof of having held his appointment and to produce his last pay certificate. He replied that he was unable to do so, having lost everything when he and his wife had fled on hearing of the uprising at Jhansi, only 36 miles away. 'Had the other European residents taken the same precaution and acted as I did very likely they would all have been in the land of the living today!!! I and Mrs Elliott are the only survivors from the ill-fated District, the office records are destroyed, [and] the officers killed.' Elliott added that he was 'quite a stranger in Calcutta, and living in one of the Refugee houses supported by the Relief Fund and if government would grant me my arrears of pay due it would be of great Service'.[24]

Widows of Soldiers and Civilians

Pensions and compensation for widows whose husbands had been killed fighting in the uprising differed widely. On 13 Zulqada 1273 hijri (equivalent to 5 June 1857), Dhondu Pant (better known as Nana Sahib) issued a proclamation stating that the female relations of men killed in battle would be entitled to a lifetime pension for one generation.[25] Obviously he was not in a position to make good this promise and the mothers, daughters, sisters and wives of the Cawnpore rebels must have led wretched lives after 1857. Some are likely to have fled northwards towards Nepal, where they were described in the summer of 1858 as in 'terrible distress ... the road strewed with the dead and dying women imploring mercy ... almost all their animals are dead'.[26] These were women whose menfolk had been fighting on the side of the rebels, but the women of those who fought for the British did not seem to be much better off either.

The Malwa Bheel Corps, an auxiliary infantry regiment that had been raised in 1840, remained loyal to the British during the uprising and had fought with them when the Residency at Indore was attacked on 1 July 1857. A *havildar*, a bugler and nine sepoys were reported killed. Because the Malwa Bheel Corps was an irregular corps, that is, not part of the East India Company's regular army, its soldiers and their dependants were not entitled to pensions. The governor general admitted: 'Neither the men of the Corps or their families being entitled to the benefits of the pension establishment, these poor women and children are now left destitute.'[27] The soldiers had been killed fighting against rebellious troops from Indore, Dhar and Ajmer, and the officer commanding the corps, Colonel Stockley, thought that these states should be made to pay compensation in the form of pensions or a donation.

Encouraged by the support of the commanding officer, the families of the dead soldiers put in a claim for compensation to the company. However, the military auditor objected to this, saying that 'the Corps were ineligible for family pension' and that during the action of 1 July 'the Corps did not apparently

render such service as to deserve the boon of family pension', because nearly 200 officers and sepoys had deserted or run away. It could be argued that the men who 'hadn't' run away, and who had died defending the British Resident, Colonel Henry Marion Durand, were entitled to some recognition and that the actions of the deserters should not detract from those who stayed to fight. This was a difficult argument for company officials, and in the end, six months later, the governor general decided that although there was no report from the commanding officer that the *havildar*, the bugler and the nine sepoys had 'behaved with becoming gallantry' nevertheless, as a 'special case' he was authorising a gratuity of six months pay to the widows of these soldiers. But how many other cases there must have been where the widows and children of volunteers to the irregular units received nothing when their menfolk were killed fighting for the British.

It often took a determined petitioner or petitioners to change company rulings, which in turn had been handed down from the Court of Directors in London. The last case in this chapter is that of the widow Mrs Bell, who was seeking 'pecuniary assistance' from the company after the death of her husband, Mr J.E. Bell, head clerk in the Allahabad Arsenal.[28] He had been on sick leave in the hill station of Landour, when the mutiny broke out, leaving his wife and four children in Allahabad. The family house was plundered and burnt. Mr Bell tried to get home, but died at Meerut in November 1857, from 'grief and anxiety aggravating his complaint,' said his widow. Without his monthly salary of ₹200 the family were reduced to a state of destitution, and she requested a pension for herself and her three younger children. (Her eldest son had joined the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, a volunteer group set up in 1857 and disbanded in 1861.) The military department decided that as Mr Bell had died from natural causes, the family were not entitled to the 'pecuniary advantages authorised in the cases of Uncovenanted Servants who had lost their lives in consequence of the mutinies'. Uncovenanted servants usually occupied the lower levels in the company's service, and were recruited from people born in India, i.e., Eurasians or people of European descent. Mrs Bell was, however, a determined woman. She thought that her husband's death had certainly been hastened by the mutiny, and that if a pension was not to be awarded, then at least the company ought to pay for the education of her younger sons. Back came the answer that this was inadmissible, and under the rule of 1837 the family were not entitled either to a pension or a donation. Again the matter was referred up to the governor general, who ruled that destitute families like Mrs Bell's should be given some financial relief. An additional rule was made allowing that, '[g]rants of money will be given to the destitute families of persons who though they did not lose their lives in consequence of the mutinies, have died after the loss of all or nearly all their property by the mutinies.' Again, the governor general had overturned the company regulations and the unbending military department who interpreted their orders in an inflexible manner.

One thing is particularly noticeable in many of the cases related above and that is the rigid and hierarchical nature of the East India Company in its dying days. The spirit of adventure and innovation, whether you like it or not, that characterised the earlier years of the company, had gone. This led to absurd situations where few civilian officers seemed prepared or able to take decisions or issue orders, when faced with the extraordinary events of 1857. Even quite petty matters were referred up to the governor general and his Council, which is why trawling through the India Political Consultations at the British Library and the Home and Foreign Department Consultations at the National Archives in Delhi are such fruitful sources of mutiny related stories. Decisions affecting the lesser known victims of 1857 were generally ad hoc decisions, because nothing on the scale of the 1857 Uprising had been seen before. But it was certainly not the Company's finest hour, and no one could accuse it of being sympathetic towards the people whose livelihood and often life itself had been sacrificed to Company policies instigated during the decades preceding the mutiny. Although some claims for compensation for loss of property during the mutiny were accepted, others were often disputed, and sometimes rejected. The company's attitude to civilians who suffered in the uprising meant that there were many 'hidden' victims, not only among those fighting against the British, but among those fighting for the British too.

Notes and References

1. The term 'Anglo-Indian' to describe people of mixed race was not officially adopted until 1935. Eurasian or East Indian or 'country-born' were the usual descriptions in the mid-nineteenth century. East-Indian had originally meant British-born white men who worked for the East India Company, but subsequently came to mean those born in the Indian subcontinent.
2. Sir Mountstuart Jackson, Captain Patrick Orr and Sergeant Major Morton fled from Sitapur when troops mutinied at the beginning of June and they were given shelter by the Raja Loni Singh of Mitauli. When Sir Henry Lawrence's troops were defeated at Chinhat on 30 June, the Raja arranged for the Britons to be taken to Lucknow, where they were killed on or about 16 November supposedly on the orders of Ahmadulla Shah, the Faizabad maulvi. After the Raja was eventually captured by the British, he said he had 'sold' the refugees to Begam Hazrat Mahal for ₹8,000. The Lucknow memorial to the murdered men, and others, is inscribed 'Victims of 1857', and it is from this inscription that the title of this essay is taken.
3. Captain Holland escaped from Delhi on 11 May 1857 and was discovered by Ahir villagers the following day. He was fed and sheltered in various villages including Jahangirpuri, which is now a suburb of north Delhi. Holland wrote, 'I had nothing to reward these poor people with and though at that time every thing seemed going against the English still they stuck by me and behaved most kindly.' He was eventually helped by the villagers to reach Harchandpur, where the Anglo-Indian Cohen family got him to the safety of Meerut at the end of May. (Captain W. Holland's statement to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Government. Home Department 4 June 1857 Nos. 28–29. National Archives, Delhi.) Captain Gowan, who had escaped from Bareilly at the same time, did not come out of hiding until 1 October 1857.
4. Christopher Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India 1773–1833* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996), p. 64.

5. Major Kendall Coghill wrote to his brother from Delhi on 22 September 1857: 'Hodson pursued the princes; (he) had only 100 men and they had 10,000, but they gave up their arms—the three princes, the band of Christian (Eurasian) drummers of twenty-eighth NI and the English sergeant-major of 28th NI .... The (Christian) band were all killed on the spot, but the three princes were brought with the sergeant-major to an open spot... and [the princes] were mercilessly killed and stripped and laid flat on the open ground till the dogs and jackals walked off with them.' Quoted by Lt. General S.L. Menezes, *Fidelity and Honour: The Indian Army from the Seventeenth to the Twenty-first Century* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, third edition, 2004) p. 177.
6. The secret cipher code had been compiled by Sir William O'Shaughnessy, who was appointed Superintendent of Telegraphs in India in 1853. The cipher books were apparently compiled in Britain and distributed to the commander-in-chief, the two secretaries to the Government of India and various chief commissioners. India Political Consultations, 2 October 1857 No. 21. India Office Records, (hereafter IOR), British Library (BL).
7. It was presumed that East Indians or Eurasians and European foreigners would be found 'on the side of order and not of rebellion' and that they would not need certificates of exemption 'their appearance being always reasonable proof'. A.R. Young, secretary to Government of Bengal to Cecil Beadon, secretary to Government of India. India Political Consultations, 20 November 1857. No. 232. IOR, BL.
8. 1 first came across the Rotton family while researching European families in Lucknow and have subsequently met a descendant of the family. Felix Rotton's father was Major Richard Rotton, who had served in the Maratha army until 1803. His grandsons all had names starting with the letter J. They were described as 'illiterate and perfect natives in every sense of the word'. T.D. Forsyth, secretary to the chief commissioner. India Political Consultations, 29 October 1858. IOR, BL.
9. The lists are given in *The Defence of Lucknow* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, London, 1858). The author, a staff officer, who chose to remain anonymous, kept a diary from 31 May to 25 September 1857. The lists, in Appendix V of the book, are described as: 'A complete nominal list of the officers, members of the uncovenanted service, and women and children of the Lucknow garrison, and as the return proceeded from an official source the authenticity may be fully relied on.' Separate lists are given for the 'Ladies and Children in Garrison' (the officers' wives, sisters and children), and the 'European Women and Children in Garrison'. As soldiers were strictly divided into officers and men, so their female relatives were divided into 'ladies' and 'women'.
10. Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the India Mutiny of 1857* (London: John Murray, 1996) pp. 415–416.
11. J.W. Sherer, *Daily Life during the Indian Mutiny: Personal Experiences of 1857* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1898) p. 30. Sherer was the magistrate and collector at Fatehpur. One of his neighbours was a man called Joseph Emmanuel de Bourbon, described as a French half-caste with an Armenian mother 'now very old, apparently infirm, and capable, moreover, of passing as a native without difficulty'. He was dressed in 'that curious compromise affected by native Christians' of smoking cap, etc.
12. Reverend William Butler, *The Land of the Veda; being Personal Reminiscences of India; its People, Castes, Thugs and Fakirs; its Religions, Mythology, Principal Monuments, Palaces and Mausoleums; together with the incidents of the Great Sepoy Rebellion, and its Results to Christianity and Civilisation* (Cincinnati: Walden & Stowe, 1871), p. 530.
13. Sir William Muir, ed., William Coldstream *Records of the Intelligence Department of the Government of the North West Provinces during the Mutiny of 1857 etc.*, vol. I (Edinburgh: T&T dark, 1902) pp. 14–15.
14. Noah Chick, *Annals of the Indian Rebellion Containing Narratives of the Outbreaks and Eventful Occurrences, and Stories of Personal Adventures, During the Mutiny of 1857–58* (Calcutta: Sanders, Cones & Co, 1858), pp. 210–211.
15. William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 414–416.

16. The information about Ali Raza Beg, Abdul Hakim, and the *tehsildars* is taken from a list of men in the Bengal Native Civil Service, in the Mutiny Scrapbooks at SOAS Library. The compiler of these extensive scrapbooks is unknown. The scrapbooks were presented to the Library in 1990 by Sir Cyril Philips, former director of SOAS, but he gave no provenance for them and there are no internal clues.
17. Bhaokhun Lal, clerk, to Cecil Beadon, secretary to Government of India, India Political Consultations, 2 October 1857 Nor. 149. IOR, BL.
18. Girish Chander Banerjee, clerk, to G.F. Edmonstone, secretary to Government. India Political Consultations, 20 November 1857 No. 241. IOR, BL.
19. Joshua Francis, assistant to judicial commissioner, to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Government. India Political Consultations, 6 November 1857 No. 177. IOR, BL.
20. The India Relief Fund was set up on 25 August 1857 by the Lord Mayor of London, after a meeting at the Mansion House. By January 1858 the sum of £24,995 (equivalent to nearly £2 million today) had been raised from donations. It was sent in boxes as silver bullion 'for the relief of sufferers from the Mutiny'. Money was also donated to the Fund from the mayor of Port Louis, Mauritius; the colonial secretary, Cape of Good Hope; the governor of St Helena; the consul at Batavia, and the New South Wales Committee. The Shah of Persia indicated his intention to contribute to the Fund. Home Department, 8 January 1858 Nos 82–86. National Archives, Delhi.
21. Kali Charan, former treasurer at Lucknow, to R. Simson, under secretary to Government of India. Two of Kali Charan's brothers, also working for the government escaped from Lucknow to Allahabad. India Political Consultations, 6 November 1857 No. 179. IOR, BL.
22. A request went out from the Foreign Department of the Government of India in October 1857 to the Government of Bombay, and the lieutenant governors of the North-west Province, and the Central Province that each should provide 'descriptive rolls of the leading persons concerned in the present rebellion, whose apprehension may be desirable' and 'indicating at the same time, the parentage of the parties'. This is a highly useful resource, giving the 'Names, Designation, Parentage, Place, Remarks' for the rebels, by city or district. A manuscript list of 406 people was drawn up. Of the people whose 'designations' are given, 25 were rajas, 80 were zamindars, 12 were taluqdars and 11 were military men. Foreign Department, Foreign Consultations, 30 April 1858 Nos. 355–362. National Archives, Delhi.
23. Foreign Department, Foreign Consultations, 30 April 1858 Nos. 355–362. National Archives, Delhi.
24. Charles Elliott, head assistant deputy commissioner's office, Jalaun to R. Simson, under secretary to government. Punctilious to the last, the Civil Auditor's Department finally agreed to pay Charles Elliott the money due to him, but insisted that he either produce his last pay certificate, which he had already said he could not do 'or a sufficient guarantee of refund in case of overpayment.' India Political Consultations, 16 October 1857 No. 54. IOR, BL.
25. 'Copies of three proclamations in Urdu issued by Nana Sahib of Bithur to incite the civil population to rebellion and troops to mutiny' were sent to G.F. Edmonstone, secretary to government, from the magistrate at Allahabad on 26 July 1857. He had got them from a Mr Wilcock at Cawnpore. Two of the proclamations are in the National Archives file, printed on thin glazed paper and in remarkably good condition. They are headed 'Ishtiyar' which means 'Proclamation' or 'Notice'. Foreign Department, Secret Consultations 31 July 1857 Nos. 86–89. National Archives, Delhi.
26. Report from the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times* on 18 June 1858. The number of soldiers and their families who had fled towards Nepal was estimated at the time to be 6,000 strong.
27. Colonel Stockley, commanding the Malwa Bheel Corps to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Government. India Political Consultations 15 January 1858 No. 52. IOR, BL.
28. Office Memorandum issued by the Home Department, Government of India from the Proceedings of the Military Department, dated 7 June 1858. No. 229 requesting 'pecuniary assistance' by Mrs Bell. India Political Consultations 25 June 1858 No. 81. IOR, BL.

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MARGINAL WHITES AND THE GREAT UPRISING
A Case Study of the Bengal Presidency[1]

Sarmistha De

LET me state from the very beginning that I am rather an intruder in the arena of the rich historiography of the 1857 Uprising. My interest is in the history of the 'low Europeans' and their various derivatives in the colonial era. They played a significant role in the tumultuous events of 1857 and conversely the uprising played a significant role in their lives. This encouraged me to record their role, which has not, as yet, been adequately represented in the history of the uprising. Significantly, Bengal and Eastern India have largely remained on the margins of the history of 1857 and have hitherto been relatively little explored. It is true that this region was not at the epicentre of the upheaval, but, contrary to common perceptions, it was not immune from its shockwaves either, and the uprising had a significant impact on the lives of the ruling elite, marginal Europeans and Indians in this region.

The news of the uprising flew around Calcutta, the seat of the empire, while direct and violent actions took place in different parts of the Bengal Presidency. All these had deep and abiding impact on the administration's mindset, all the more because 'hardly a single district under the Government of Bengal has escaped either actual danger or the serious apprehensions of danger'.[2] Actual incidents of rebellion occurred in some parts of western, southern and eastern Bengal and Assam, and the dark cloud of fear, distrust and anxiety shrouded the entire Bengal Presidency. This rebellious environment had generated fear and apprehension. The Uprising of 1857 was not an organised affair and the rebels did not have the benefit of modern military organisation, or control over the administrative and communication network that the empire had at its disposal. But if we scratch the surface and read between the lines of the communications among officials, as well as numerous reports and petitions, the most intimate thoughts of the administration and the European population are revealed.