

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

Tape 884 Finding Aid

INTERVIEWEE NAMES:

Right Reverend Lesslie Newbigin 4700.0604 Tape 884.1 (Tape 2 of 2)
Arthur Barlow 4700.0605 Tape 884.2 (Tape 2 of 4)

IDENTIFICATION: Britons in Pre-Independence India

INTERVIEWERS: Frank de Caro, Rosan Jordan

SERIES: British Voices from South Asia

INTERVIEW DATES:

Newbigin: 6/21/1978
Barlow: 7/5/1978

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 32 minutes

Newbigin: 46 minutes
Barlow: 46 minutes

OTHER MATERIALS: None

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Tape 884, Side A

Newbigin (Part 1 of 2) (884.1)

- 001 Righteous Reverend Lesslie Newbigin worked in Indian missions; de Caro states the
purpose of the interview is to talk to him about why he went and the kind of work he did
004 unlike other interviewees Newbigin not of Anglo-Indian origin, but rather his interest in
India began at Cambridge University
010 in 1936 Newbigin went to South India as old style District Missionary and was there
twelve years before Indian independence in 1948
012 lived in city of Kotturpuram, one of the most distinctive Hindu cities, untouched by
western influence
017 duties were teaching in high school, village schools, and congregations
019 Brahmin boys in high school
020 spent Wednesday evenings in the Rama Krishna mission discussing Hindu and Christian

gospel
024 tension in city because of transition to independence
028 British social remoteness from Indians especially in rural areas, but not in the
Christian college where his colleagues worked
032 although the number of British civil servants was low, they were still a kind of ruling
race
038 rode his bike to school and boys shouted, “White dog, get out!”
041 realized that resentment of white foreigners dated to the Crusades; they called him
[Peringhee?] which is a Tamil term that means Frank
045 he camped out in Indian village mud huts, fell in love with India, and decided to stay for
the rest of his life
050 hostility not personal, but rather official
052 story about students chanting, “Quit India” but telling his colleague at Christian college,
“You didn’t think we meant you, sir? Did you?”
063 missionaries allowed in country on condition that they didn’t partake in political
activities, but he and his colleagues sympathized with the national movement
078 immediate consequence of independence was an increase in British population in India
087 British who interacted with Indians included ICS officials, merchants, and missionaries
095 levels of Anglo-Indian interaction differed
098 he stayed in the Indian pastor’s home two days a month, friendship grew
103 he was looked up to as a powerful person (“Sahib”) in the villages
110 difference between district missionaries in the 1970s and 1930s; he was monarch of all
he surveyed and had more responsibilities and authority
138 district missionaries in the 18th century established schools
150 no preparation before going to India although his wife had a year in a missionary college
154 undergraduate course in Cambridge from 1928-1931, two years in Glasgow, three years
of theology on his return to Cambridge
160 language training, becoming a child in order to master Tamil
170 because of a bus accident, he had two years of language study rather than requisite one
184 Indian colleagues argue that most education should be from Indians in the field
187 contemporary pre-training includes programs to educate people about cultural diversity
and interacting with different world views
195 Long-standing British-Indian relationship; British were in Madras over 300 years before
he arrived, deep love-hate relationship
213 the culture shock of moving to India was not as intense as when he worked three years in
Geneva, Switzerland, for the World Council of Churches
217 in 1930s and 1940s missionaries were more culturally cushioned in mission compound
226 differences between south Indian states and north Indian states
229 South Indian languages are non-Aryan, Muslim influence in the north but remote in the
south; British connection is longest in the Bengal and the south
258 Tamil poster that read, “English alone is the language of rule”, but English is rejected in
the north
284 18th Century Mughal Empire and British Empire had established a trade relationship,
men married Indian women, but there was not much culture change so that trade relations
would not be affected
293 19th Century; Opening of Suez Canal strengthened British-Indian ties and evangelical
women and children of the Enlightenment influenced India

- 314 the British in India; Macaulay Education Minute of 1834, the rise of the national movement and decolonization
- 381 two stages of decolonization: rising native leadership throws out the invading culture with tools of the aggressor, and then revitalizes society with native culture
- 388 1947 to 1956 were “honeymoon years” of independence; Suez ruined friendship
- 426 he was one the first bishops of the United Church
- 433 in 1947, he was in the extreme south of India where business men and some ICS stayed on, but most British left
- 457 Indian Mutiny of 1857 had traumatic consequences for British
- 487 British and Indian culture blended on familial, economic, and political levels
- 531 British and Indian reaction to the Hindu world view that regards outsiders, such as the British, as untouchables

Tape 844, Side B

Barlow (Part 2 of 4) (884.2)

- 005 arriving in India; people conjuring, diving off ship for pennies, and making dubious proposals
- 011 F.P. Baker, tropical clothes outfitter for the services
- 013 he still has five tropical suits, wore one a few days before interview
- 021 climate, covering your head in the heat
- 024 Americans going to the highest deck of the ship and stripping clothing, Indians and British would never do this because of negative health consequences
- 040 Voyage to India, met friends
- 047 first posting in Agra, one of the hottest places in India
- 052 six months in Moradabad, a school for cadets to receive revenue, language, and legal training
- 054 subsequently posted to Lucknow, in charge of subdivision called Malihabad
- 061 cadet was an official term once used by the East India Company that remained over time to refer to first-year military/administrative men
- 084 Punjab Province, favorite province because of climate and friends he met on ship
- 093 upon arrival, he got on a mail train to [Grinda’s?] Bank in Bombay where he got a prize
- 100 Agra was a large station with doctors, engineers, educators, and missionaries
- 102 although his subdivision was in the countryside he lived in the city of Lucknow, which was a larger station than Agra where he also had responsibilities at headquarters
- 132 Phillip Mason, author of autobiography, lived in the rural areas
- 138 Barlow was keen on Foreign Service
- 157 he was with the ICS from 1929-1933 and switched to Political Service in western India
- 172 he arrived in West India as an undersecretary
- 188 military on the frontier
- 192 lived in [Rajkot?] in western India
- 205 traveled in central and western India
- 233 sent to inspect jail, but couldn’t gain entrance because prisoner had key and was at a bazaar buying food
- 250 state rulers’ ceremony
- 262 part of his job was to inspect prisons, schools, colleges, canals, and bridges
- 281 people liked personal rulers as long as they were reasonable and sympathetic to the people

290 ICS looked after rulers and institutions
300 stereotypes of Maharajas as eccentric, but rather rulers came in various forms
327 he had many Indian friends, particularly in the services
344 leaving West India to live at a listening post in the Northwestern Frontier province in
Chaghcharan
378 Chinese and Russians making journey on the frontier difficult
407 little preparation for this post
428 the journey took six weeks
444 traveling through the land of the [Mirs?] and [Hunsa?]
456 going over the Kilik Pass, past the borders of Afghanistan, and into the province where
Chaghcharan was located
461 difficult crossing of the Hindu Kush, a notorious mountain range
506 the British-India Consulate in Chaghcharan
522 Peter Fleming and General Kahn
547 the political situation was confusing
553 the local Chinese were troops that had been driven out of Manchuria by the Japanese and
were consequently anti-British, as were the Soviets