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Chapter Author(s): Margit Franz and Rachel Lee

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Book Editor(s): Burcu Dogramaci, Ekaterina Aygün, Mareike Hetschold, Laura Karp Lugo, Rachel Lee and Helene Roth

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PART II

PRACTICING THE URBAN

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An Exile's Guide: Ernst Schaeffer's *Pictorial Bombay* and the Construction of Bombay's Touristscape

Margit Franz and Rachel Lee

Our chapter explores the intersections of exile, urbanity and cultural production through the lens of a particular genre of publication: the guidebook. As a type of book that engages with the built environment, urban settings and cultural life, the guidebook offers a promising starting point for explorations of historical portrayals of urbanity.¹ Often written by outsiders, guidebooks offer specific views on places as they seek to be “helpful and tactful companions” (Parsons 2007, n.p.) to tourists and other visitors. The guidebook that we focus on here, *Pictorial Bombay*, was authored by the exiled German journalist Ernst Schäffer, later Ernest Norbert Schaeffer and Ernest N. (Norbert/Nathan) Shaffer (1892–1978),² and published in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1936.³ An unusual example of a guidebook written from an exilic perspective, *Pictorial Bombay* offers insights into both how Schaeffer grasped the colonial city and how he contributed to developing Bombay as a tourist destination.

Long before Bombay became a site of tourist spectacle and consumption, Schaeffer mapped out a landscape for visitors that encompassed colonial institutions and religious buildings, as well as daily life and labour. In doing so, he communicated his particular vision of a touristscape, which is still partially pertinent today. Through a close reading of the texts and images that constitute *Pictorial Bombay*, we examine how Schaeffer's approaches to sensing, experiencing and understanding the city contributed to the construction of Bombay's touristscape. We propose that his commitment to encountering the urban environment in a physical, embodied way inflected the media he produced and

included in the guidebook. Working journalistically with anecdotes and photographs, he created narratives that, rather than reproduce 'objective' descriptions of sites and monuments, evoke the socio-cultural experiences of the city. Embracing his individual perspective and a partial point of view, he encourages, perhaps even emboldens, his readers to explore the city and engage with local culture at street level.

In our analysis, we consider Schaeffer's *Pictorial Bombay* in relation to the *Guide to Bombay* by the newspaper publisher *The Times of India* and *The Bombay Guide & Directory* by J. Contractor, which were published in 1926 and 1937, respectively.⁴ While we posit that Schaeffer's guidebook is a key source for urban exile research, we also hope to establish guidebooks in general as important lenses for reading cities. With their listings, addresses, recommendations, maps, timetables, itineraries and prices, guidebooks hold immense potential for historical urban research. In the following, we reflect on *Pictorial Bombay* through its development, reception and cost, as well as its textual and visual content, suggesting that its hybrid form and particular perspective distinguished it from the other guidebooks, and impacted future guidebook production.

Ernst Schaeffer in exile in Bombay

Almost precisely three years before the publication of *Pictorial Bombay*, on 30 November 1933, the former Ullstein business editor and *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*'s deputy editor-in-chief, Ernst Schaeffer, and his wife Welda Schaeffer, landed at Bombay's harbour. Following a five-week journey on an old cargo ship, the exiled journalist began his new professional life with a six-month contract as a correspondent for the German Ullstein publishing house. After the Nazis banned him from publishing in Germany, he worked as a freelance reporter for Swiss, Czech, Belgian and Dutch newspapers. However, as Europe was fighting rising fascism, the European media's interest in India decreased. The journalist was forced to diversify his activities, and shifted his focus to the local market. He became an English and German tour and travel guide for Thomas Cook, translated German film scripts to English for Bhavnani film studios, and, as a self-taught photographer, started his "Individual Photo Studio" (Shaffer 1971, 48; *The Times of India*, 4 April 1936, 2) in his Colaba living room. With the tagline "The Studio of the European AND Indian Society" (*The Times of India*, 4 April 1936, 2), he specialized in portrait photography. He also introduced the service of advertising photography to the city and became an associate of the Royal Photographic Society (A.R.P.S.) (Schaeffer 1936, first page with author's name).⁵

Continuing to draw on his international network, he combined journalism with photography to establish himself internationally as a photojournalist. With the support of his former Ullstein colleagues, in Bombay Schaeffer received assignments for the New York City-based Black Star photo agency⁶ and *Life* magazine. His networks in India – including members of Indian and British Indian political and economic elites, leaders of the Indian independence movement, Indian royal families and members of Bombay's avant-garde art circles like Mulk Raj Anand and Anil de Silva – enabled him to present English-speaking, international audiences with images from India that they were unlikely to have seen before. Locally he engaged himself in Jewish exile and relief networks in Bombay, and became a founding member of the Jewish Relief Association. Internationally, he contributed to the New York City-based and worldwide distributed Jewish journal *Aufbau*, reporting about the Jewish exile community in India (see Schaeffer 1941).

The Second World War interrupted transcontinental transport, communication and the import of photography supplies.⁷ Tourism vanished, as did Schaeffer's other businesses. Having just received British citizenship, career-wise Schaeffer survived as a print production manager for an American advertisement company for the next three and a half years. Welda Schaeffer's financial contributions supported the couple from the very beginning of their stay in Bombay and her salary enabled Schaeffer to establish his own businesses. She worked first as an assistant to the German emigrant ear, nose and throat doctor Hermann Lämmle, and later as a typist, supporting all of her husband's enterprises with her language, photographic, organizational and typing skills. In October 1943, Ernst Schaeffer became the assistant manager of Oxford University Press, eventually working there for twelve years before returning to freelance journalism. Schaeffer's connection to India remained long after he left the subcontinent in the early 1960s for Germany; he contributed, for example, substantially to setting up the Südasien (South Asia) department of Deutsche Welle (see Shaffer 1971).

During the mid 1930s, Schaeffer combined his photographic and journalistic skills with his experiences as a travel guide to produce *Pictorial Bombay*, an unusual illustrated guide to the city.

The guidebook market in Bombay and the development of Pictorial Bombay

Although they have existed in different forms for almost 2000 years, guidebooks established themselves as a recognizable, commercial genre in the 19th century (Parsons 2007). During the 1800s, the names of two men – Karl Baedeker, based in Germany, and John Murray of London – became synonymous with guidebooks,

and their publishing houses dominated the growing market. This 19th-century flourishing in guidebooks accompanied Europe's burgeoning tourism industry. In the United Kingdom, the growth of a middle class and the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 had contributed to a consolidation of British power internationally, while new railways and shipping routes opened up lines of mobility, making other places accessible to more people (Epelde 2004, 13). International visitors took advantage of new passenger shipping lines, which started expanding towards Asia after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and sinking travel costs, to explore more distant places. This new accessibility also applied to British colonies, as the rise of mass tourism coincided with Europe's colonial expansion (Fei 2010, 228).⁸

The first guidebook to India was published by John Murray in 1859.⁹ Written by Edward Eastwick, *A Handbook for India* focused on the three Presidencies administered by the British East India Company – Madras, Bombay and Bengal. It presented its intended audience of “travellers, officers and civilians” (Epelde 2004, 56) with an unabashedly colonial perspective that proved popular enough to merit 22 editions, with the final edition published in 1975. The Bombay Presidency volume included a lengthy section on the city of Bombay. The 29 pages, which contain historical context, cultural observations, maps and tour routes, constitute the first guide to the port city on the Arabian Sea. As the economic motor of the British Empire, the closest major Indian port to the Suez Canal and the starting point for expanding rail networks, Bombay was a frequent stop on the itineraries of business and leisure visits to the sub-continent: by the late 19th century, Bombay was the portal for 90 per cent of travellers entering or exiting India (Maclean 1875, 141). Despite the city's prominence, Eastwick was not impressed with what awaited his readers there, writing: “The sights of Bombay, if the traveller confines himself to the island itself, are soon exhausted” (Eastwick 1859, 273).

John Murray's *Handbook* section was soon complemented by guides dedicated solely to the city, including James Maclean's (1875) *Guide to Bombay* and D.A. Pinder's *Visitors' Illustrated Guide to Bombay* from 1904. Around its publication in the late 1930s, Schaeffer's *Pictorial Bombay* was in competition with more recently published guides: J. Contractor's *The Bombay Guide & Directory* (1937), Ben Diqui's *A Visit to Bombay* (1927) and the second edition of *The Times of India's Guide to Bombay* (1926). As both *The Bombay Guide & Directory* and the *Guide to Bombay* are illustrated with photographs, we refer mainly to those when analyzing the impact of Schaeffer's exilic perspective on Bombay's touristscape, which he constructed through both text and images.

Schaeffer was well-equipped to write a guidebook. In addition to his journalistic record in Germany, Schaeffer had already authored two books; one about flying and the other about aviators awarded the “Pour le Mérite” order of bravery in Prussia.¹⁰ In Bombay, Schaeffer's experiences as a professional travel guide and

passionate explorer of the city provided the necessary content to expand his writing skills to include the genre of travel literature in the creation of *Pictorial Bombay*.

His record as a photographer was perhaps less convincing. In Germany, Schaeffer had taken photos as an amateur photographer and as an aviator during the First World War.¹¹ His occasional work as a journalist for the *Berliner Illustrierte* had “refined” his view of photos, according to his own statements (Shaffer 1971, 45). In India, he “threw himself into the specialist literature and began to work systematically with the camera” (ibid., 45f.). After some practice he learned “to work with large cameras and with all kinds of lenses and lights” (ibid., 46).¹² By February 1936, he had developed his photographic skills to the point of being able to hold an exhibition: In collaboration with the Agfa Photo Company, he presented his photos in a *Rolleiflex Exhibition* in the Taj Mahal Hotel (*The Times of India*, 6 February 1936, 1), demonstrating “[t]he value of the small camera for taking pictures, which can be enlarged to almost any size within the bounds of what is reasonable” (*The Times of India*, 6 February 1936, 16).

After completing the manuscript of *Pictorial Bombay*, he presented it to one of the most famous book wholesalers in Bombay: the New Book Co. Pvt. Ltd. in the Kitab Mahal, owned by the Taraporevala family. D.B. Taraporevala & Sons, the “treasure house of books” (*The Times of India*, 19 November 1936, 3), was the first and leading bookstore and publisher in Bombay. It was a hub not only for international literature, foreign periodicals and newspapers, illustrated magazines and pictures, postcards and art publications, but also for artists themselves. They even offered temporary exhibition space when Bombay lacked gallery space (see Dalmia 2001, 53). The company was founded as a bookseller, newsagent and stationery dealer at 190 Hornby Road in 1864 (see Macmillan 1928, 232). In 1936, they ran the bookstore at 210 Hornby Road, with a branch in the Taj Mahal Hotel at Apollo Bunder to serve an elite Indian and high-class foreign clientele.

The owner of the publishing house, Phiroze Framroze D.B. Taraporevala, agreed to publish *Pictorial Bombay* for New Books & Co. as an album with 40 full-page black and white photographs and an accompanying independent text of a similar number of pages. Nine small black and white photos complete the texts’ pages. D.D. Neroy prepared the blocks for publication, and F. Borton printed them for G. Claridge & Co. Ltd. in Frere Road in the Fort area (see Schaeffer 1936, 77). With the financial support of two German-Jewish emigrant businesspeople, Schaeffer was able to contribute a deductible of 2,000 rupees retention, which he quickly repaid after publication (see Shaffer 1971, 28).

Strategically launched in the pre-Christmas period of 1936, *Pictorial Bombay* was first advertised as an “album containing 40 unusual Photographs of the City’s common sights” (*The Times of India*, 19 November 1936, 3). It was praised as “undoubtedly an ideal gift book” (*The Times of India*, 4 December 1936, 2):

“Exquisitely produced on art paper, it is an album that anybody would wish to possess. As a gift to one’s friends and relations in the mofussil or abroad, there is nothing more expressive of life in Bombay” (*The Times of India*, 19 November 1936, 3). The December ads promoted “this little brochure” by focusing on the illustrations, but also added information about the text, describing it as “an intimate, chatty account of the highways and by-ways of the city and suburbs, containing a wealth of information, interestingly retained” (*The Times of India*, 3 December 1936, 3). The guide addressed an Indian audience outside of Bombay as well as foreign readers and lovers of photography. However, the November advertisement tried to draw the attention of the Bombay public by focusing on the overlooked elements of their city: “The well-known photographer here presents for the first time a collection of unique and beautiful photographs of the most common and typical scenes in Bombay which people pass un-noticed. A descriptive text, that offers interesting reading, runs alongside” (*The Times of India*, 19 November 1936, 3).

The sales were good enough for a second edition to be considered in 1939. However, these plans were shelved when the Second World War brought all tourism to a standstill. It was not until British and American soldiers and sailors came to Bombay for recreational leave or furlough from the South East Asian battlefields that a new type of tourism developed in the metropolis. In a travel guide for these soldiers, *Pictorial Bombay* was again named “An invaluable souvenir! An ideal gift!” (*Welcome to Bombay* n.d, n.p.).

Pictorial Bombay cost three rupees and twelve annas in 1936 (*The Times of India*, 19 November 1936, 3) and 1937 (*The Times of India*, 19 May 1937, 2).¹³ Compared to other travel guides, which were co-financed by advertising and printed on less opaque, lower gauge paper, *Pictorial Bombay* was more expensive; the *Guide to Bombay* by *The Times of India* cost one rupee (Anonymous 1927, 14), and Diqui’s *A Visit to Bombay* two rupees (Anonymous 1933, 1). At the other extreme, Murray’s *Guide to India* cost eighteen rupees, almost double the cost of a more expensive book such as the ten rupees edition of *The Indian Who is Who* (*The Times of India*, 19 May 1937, 2). In terms of production quality, *Pictorial Bombay* could be compared with richly illustrated magazines such as *The Times of India Annual*, which was sold for two rupees in 1936 and also contained advertising.

With its almost square format and the high-quality photo reproductions, *Pictorial Bombay* also generated the impression of an artbook. Larger than a pocketbook or a more typical guidebook, it is a smaller, cheaper, more egalitarian version of a coffee table book: a coffee table guide booklet to Bombay. While Schaeffer compared *Pictorial Bombay* to other guidebooks, he also acknowledged that he had taken a different approach, using a different “recipe” (Schaeffer 1936, 1).

Schaeffer's exile experience as a mediator (see Reiter 2006) made it possible to create *Pictorial Bombay* as a kind of hybrid publication, in both form and content. It is a guidebook without maps or timetables; an artbook with restaurant recommendations and insider tips; a coffee table book with tour routes, excursions and a programme of evening entertainment. Its portrayal of the city includes photos from unusual angles, anecdotes and journalistic texts from the perspective of a stranger.

*Pictorial Bombay's foreign view and a
new touristscape for Bombay*

At the very beginning of *Pictorial Bombay*, Schaeffer is identified as a foreigner; the book's foreword presents it as a "graceful tribute from a stranger within our gates, who has made Bombay his home in the truest sense" (Taunton 1936, n.p.). Schaeffer himself underlines his position as an outsider:

When you arrive in a city as a stranger, desirous of getting to know it, not merely of having a nodding acquaintance with it, but of making friend of its character, its peculiar quality, a part of your being, you endeavour to draw aside the veil which separates you from this entirely unknown environment. You listen with both your ears to unaccustomed sounds and noises, you strain every fibre of your being to grasp this new experience.

(Schaeffer 1936, 1)

Schaeffer accustomed himself to this strange environment by walking through the lanes, streets and squares of Bombay and its surroundings, interacting with locals, tasting local food and drinking refreshing beverages. In slow strolls he takes possession of all these new places, habits, customs, smells and colours. Even 35 years later he compared his arrival in Bombay to "landing on a strange planet" (Shaffer 1971, 18). *Pictorial Bombay* seems to mirror his personal explorations and experiences during his first weeks and months. Like other migrant authors in Bombay, including Willy Haas or Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Schaeffer recorded his impressions, using ethnography and writing as his personal psycho-analytical process of understanding the Self in this new environment by observing and describing the Other (see Krishnamoorthy 2003, 115–140).

In *Pictorial Bombay*, the author capitalizes on the foreigner's view, describing the unknown, the exotic, the unfamiliar to him. With admiration and an explorer's interest he observes everyday Indian habits, such as drinking water:

The buyer who is just drinking does not put the goblet to his lips, but lets the water pour straight into his open throat. How hygienic! But you must learn how to perform this feat. We, the uninitiated, would clumsily spoil it or else get choked.

(Schaeffer 1936, 9)

With a Western eye and a positive, open, interested and empathic attitude, Schaeffer views Indian culture. But despite his exuberant enthusiasm throughout his journeys, “he chooses to remain an observer” (Krishnamoorthy 2003, 126) of Indian life. He remains neutral, accepting the hierarchy between colonial power and colonized subject; he seems to be only biased in his favour for Bombay as a city and its surroundings: “But I must admit that I am biased, for I love this city! I love Bombay!” (Schaeffer 1936, 2) Schaeffer is unabashed about his partial perspective, and makes no claims to objectivity or scientific distance in *Pictorial Bombay*. “If this bias does not deter you, follow me!” (ibid.), he proclaims. Another winning feature of the book, which allows the reader to follow Schaeffer’s text easily and on ‘virtual’ foot, is his way of addressing the audience directly: “Let us wander on” (ibid.) he implores. It feels like a friend is taking you by the hand through Bombay’s sites, inviting you for a beer at VT station, and sharing a chat, letting you in on a secret and reminding you to drink again: “we are thirsty once more”, he asserts (ibid., 20).

While most of the other emigrants and refugees who had fled from National Socialism to Bombay tried to assimilate with the British ruling class, whose status symbol was a private vehicle, Schaeffer explicitly neglects this comfort and prefers to go on strolls; owning a dog probably supported his initiative. Schaeffer’s approach is individual, and can be seen as a precursor to “slow tourism” as he uses walking as his method of exploring. On the other hand, he presents himself as a world traveller by comparing his Bombay impressions with those of other major cities, like New York, London, Berlin and Paris. He constructs himself as a world citizen, always in favour of Bombay: “There is a saying which runs: ‘See Naples and die.’ I take it up and re-coin it. ‘See Bombay and live!’” (ibid., 23), he announces. By suggesting modern improvements, like the illumination of the Municipal Office building (ibid., 19) or using the potential of window-shopping to advertise highlights of the city (ibid., 11), Schaeffer identifies himself as a present, engaged citizen of Bombay. He portrays himself as a man from the West with an open interest in the local. At the same time, he distinguishes himself from other Westerners without any local interest or knowledge, describing them in a pitying tone.

Schaeffer’s in-between status and his interest for the local urban landscape, the inhabitants of Bombay, the surrounding districts with their rice-fields, beaches, coconut plantations and farms, enabled him to create this unique guidebook. The emigrant Schaeffer mediates between the different classes of Bombay. He creates

virtual access to the Taj Mahal Hotel as well as to the Willingdon Club, the sugarcane vendor at Null Bazar, the smokers in the Jogeshwari Caves or to sailors at their small boats. He even builds a bridge between the Municipal Commissioner and the *mali* (gardener) of the Prince of Wales Museum: After Schaeffer shares the insider tip of buying flowers from the *mali*, the civil servant wishes the gardener “continued prosperity” in his foreword (see Schaeffer 1936, 19f; Taunton 1936, n.p.) – usually, the *mali* was a person the dignitary would be unlikely to address because of the difference in their social positions.

Schaeffer’s premier interest in the people of Bombay draws his attention away from the monuments, but towards the city’s social life. With this self-generated knowledge of the by-lanes of Bombay and its inhabitants, he remaps Bombay as a tourist location. He recreates the social space of Bombay as a touristscape through text, photos and his individual perspective.

A partial perspective grounded in motion

I led a Scottish woman to the table who greeted me with the words: “I already know you, sir.” I could only reply: “That must be a mistake, because I’ve only been in Bombay for barely two weeks.” She smiled at me: “Oh yes, I know you. You are the European who walks in Bombay.” That, as the saying goes, struck me. All I could say was: “Madam, I am a journalist, and as such I have to walk to get to know the country and its people. Unfortunately, this is not possible from the window of the tram or the bus or from the car.” “One doesn’t drive the tram or bus here, one drives a car,” she replied briefly.

(Shaffer 1971, 18)¹⁴

As the above anecdote reveals, walking around the city was not an activity that Bombay’s colonial community encouraged. It was not, as Schaeffer recalled, what ‘one’, as a member of the city’s social and economic elite, did. Instead, in order to mark a separation between everyday life on the street and themselves, the elite travelled in private vehicles. As well as shielding them from the weather and unwanted interactions with locals, this isolation also recognized that streets and other public spaces were potentially volatile. An accumulation of violent encounters marked them as sites of protest and sometimes militarized confrontation between local groups and the colonial authorities (Metcalf 2013, 767). And following the *Dandi Satyagraha* (Salt March or Dandi March) led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, walking had also been acknowledged as an anti-colonial act.

Despite the friendly warning, Schaeffer continued walking. He walked in central Bombay, through the suburbs, and around more distant destinations, often with

his camera. Walking, and documenting what he experienced, was vital to his practice as a journalist. In colonial Bombay, streets were central to the urban public culture that Schaeffer wished to communicate to readers within India and in other parts of the world (Kidambi 2007, 240). Although Schaeffer may not have expressed it as such, his urban rambling was also a creative act: from Walter Benjamin's *flânerie*, through the Situationists' unplanned *dérives* and Lucius Burckhardt's strollology, walking has consistently been connected with artistic practice.¹⁵

Reflecting Schaeffer's commitment to experiencing the city in an embodied way, throughout its pages *Pictorial Bombay* portrays the city from the pedestrian's perspective. The cover image illustrates this positioning. Standing at the busy junction of Hornby Road and Mahapalika Road, Schaeffer aimed his camera squarely at the Municipal Corporation building, the seat of Bombay's governing civic body since 1893 and an urban landmark. A key part of colonial administrative infrastructure, the Municipal Corporation underwent a series of reforms to render it more 'representative' of the enfranchised population (Kidambi 2007). Nonetheless, the building, designed by the English architectural engineer Frederick W. Stevens, who authored several of the city's other colonial institutions, was a marker of colonial power.

In the cover image, instead of representing the building iconically, Schaeffer used his street-level perspective to situate the Municipal Corporation within the urban fabric (fig. 7.1). He complicates the frontal perspective by introducing different elements into the picture plane. A cropped arcade of Victoria Terminus, a major rail hub in the city, juts into the image on the left, creating depth. It is obscured by the horse-drawn carriages that dominate the foreground and forge a dynamic diagonal space that emphasizes the focal point of the image. Here men walk on the road. One carries an umbrella that echoes the form of the building's domes. Heightening the sense of movement on the street, a man casually mounts a bicycle that appears to have already been pushed into motion. A tree, possibly a Burmese or Siamese cassia, frames the shot. Its blurred compound leaves interfere with the sharp lines of the building; the leaves' lack of definition perhaps suggest a breeze. Sharing Schaeffer's view through the proxy eye of his camera, the viewer is immersed in the scene that surrounds them. The colonial building forms a static backdrop to the bustling urban life unfolding around it. It is the angle of the bike, the drape of a man's hands joined loosely behind his back, and the lift in the horse's hoof that capture the viewer's attention, making them conscious of a dynamic urban environment.

Perhaps the cover image was chosen to appeal to I.H. Taunton, who endorsed the publication in his foreword. As the municipal commissioner, Taunton directed the work of the Municipal Corporation and worked in the building. In his foreword, Taunton highlighted the "unusual viewpoint[s]" from which Schaeffer took

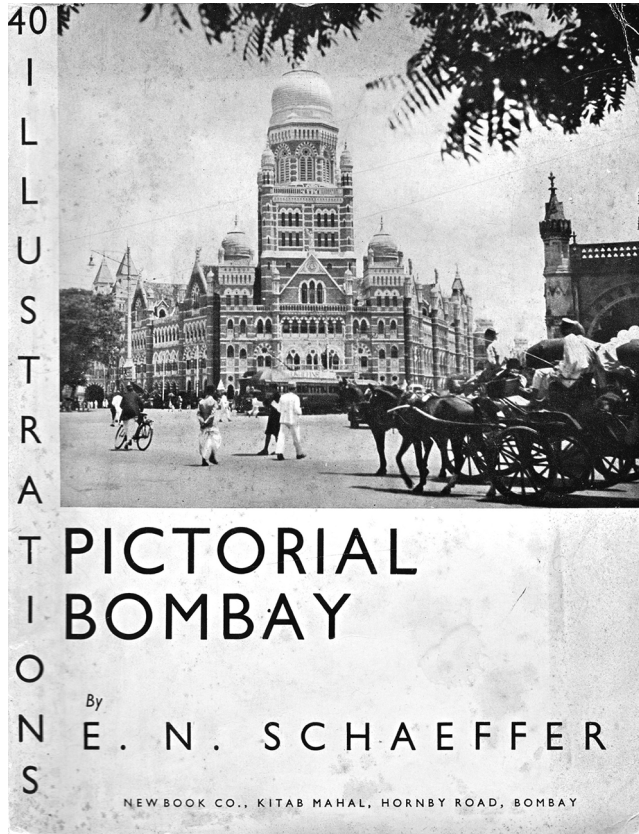


FIGURE 7.1: Ernst Schaeffer, Cover of *Pictorial Bombay* (Schaeffer 1936, cover).

his photographs, also recognizing the effects they had on the perception of the city, stating “his skill can invest a homely scene with unsuspected glory” (Taunton 1936, n.p.). His colonial stamp of approval likely added to *Pictorial Bombay*’s appeal to the English-speaking civic elite. While Schaeffer may have been committed to communicating everyday urban life, he was also aware of his potential market, aiming to please them without compromising his artistic vision. In *Pictorial Bombay*, Schaeffer imagines his readership as being European, aligning himself with that perspective when he writes “us in Europe” (Schaeffer 1936, 29).

Schaeffer carried his commitment to street-level photography through the book, as images such as the photograph of Victoria Terminus show (fig. 7.2). Here, in contrast to *The Times of India* and Contractor, both of whom present the Bombay Gothic station building from an elevated perspective (perhaps taken from the roof of a nearby building) and attempt to show as much of the enormous edifice as possible (figs. 7.3 and 7.4), Schaeffer focuses on the entrance. Taken from the road



FIGURE 7.2: Ernst Schaeffer, *Victoria Terminus*, Bombay, n.d. (Schaeffer 1936, 18).



FIGURE 7.3: Unknown photographer, *Victoria Terminus*, Bombay, n.d. (*The Times of India* 1926, 3).

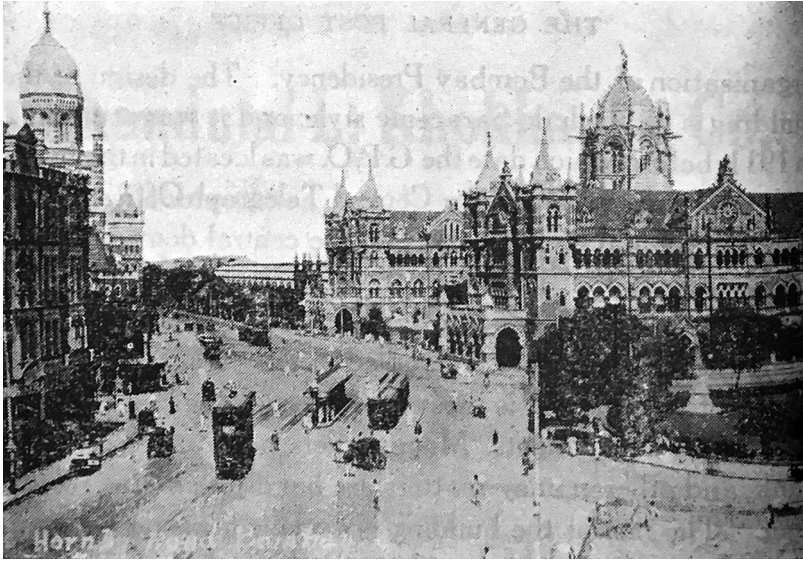


FIGURE 7.4: Unknown photographer, *Hornby Road* showing Victoria Terminus on the right, n.d. (Contractor 1938, 22).

outside, he again manages to capture the social life of Bombay. A *tonga* (a light horse-drawn two-wheeled vehicle) and a bullock cart move towards the left of the frame, a motor car and bicycle occupy the centre, and individuals and groups of people walk towards the right. While showcasing the station's clock tower, topped with a soaring octagonal masonry dome and a sculpted figure of *Progress*, Schaeffer also successfully draws the viewers' attention to the ground level and the lived experience of the city. Likewise, in his depictions of religious buildings – including Hindu and Parsi temples, churches and mosques¹⁶ – the foregrounds are populated with unstaged local people, the vast majority of which are men, moving through their daily lives. His photograph *Jumma Masjid Entrance* (fig. 7.5) shows the mosque at the end of a narrow street, its domes illuminated by brilliant sunlight. Buildings on either side of the street both frame and obscure the view of the mosque, the canopies on their facades jut into the centre of the frame, bearing Urdu signage. Under the canopies are men wearing different types of head coverings. Some stand while others walk. In the foreground, a *dabbawalla* (a person who delivers lunch-boxes) is moving towards the mosque, carrying a tiffin box on his head and another in his hand. Schaeffer locates the mosque within a culturally diverse urban environment that, like him, is on the move.

Schaeffer's enthusiasm for discovering the city on foot permeates the whole book. Chapter titles, including "A Stroll Round the Town" or "Roaming through

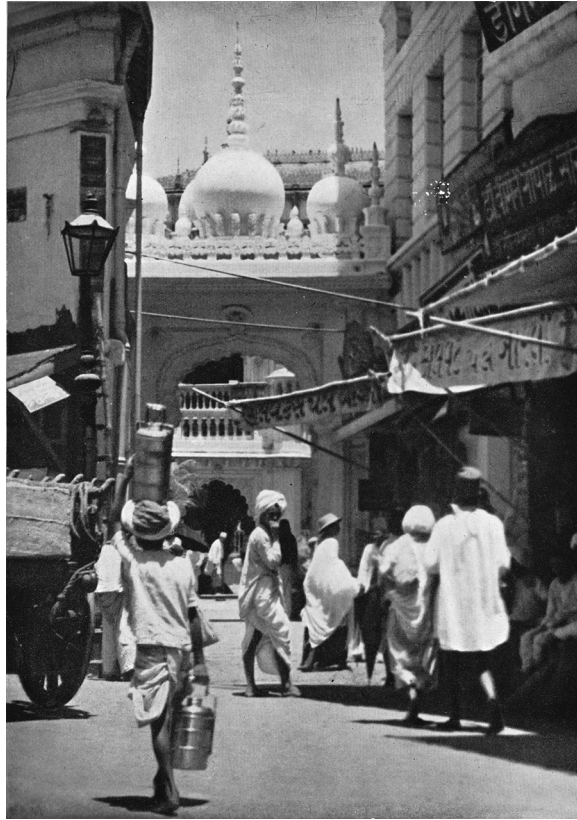


FIGURE 7.5: Ernst Schaeffer, *Jumma Masjid Entrance*, Bombay, n.d. (Schaeffer 1936, 32).

the Bazaar”, underscore his pedestrian approach. He encourages his readers to take to their feet:

We could, of course, make it a drive round the town, but a little exertion will not hurt us; it is worthwhile, for, as has already been remarked before, we get to know the town far better if we are on foot, letting the stream of other pedestrians flow past us, and looking at the shops and everything else pertaining to the life of a city. (Schaeffer 1936, 11)

For the cultural historian Rebecca Solnit, walking can be a “state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned” (Solnit 2014, 5). The rhythm of walking generates a “kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts” (ibid., 5f.). The body’s motoric and sensual responses to moving through the environment and

engaging its kerbs and potholes, signboards, street foods and sounds, cohere to form a more profound attunement to the place. In Schaeffer's case, absorbing the rhythm of the city, or the "multifold melody" (Schaeffer 1936, 2), as he calls it, and thinking with it while he walked perhaps also induced him to reproduce it in his presentation of places in *Pictorial Bombay*.

Crawford Market, built in 1869, is mentioned in *The Bombay Guide & Directory* and the *Guide to Bombay* (on pages 38 and 18, respectively). Contractor describes it as "Bombay's largest Market for all types of household necessities" (Contractor 1938, 38) and includes a photograph, taken from the opposite side of the near-empty junction, showing the building's clock tower and pointed gables. Professing that there are no "architectural features worthy of mention",¹⁷ *The Times of India* acknowledges dryly that "the management stock a wide selection of home and colonial food products" (*The Times of India* 1926, 18).

Schaeffer, in contrast, opens the chapter with a formula that centres Bombay's economic life – from cotton merchants to representatives of American firms, to housewives and medical doctors – within the "complexity" (Schaeffer 1936, 24) of the bazaar, of which Crawford Market is a part. He continues with a vivid description of the experience of shopping at Crawford Market, outlining the visiting times of different types of customers – cooks in the early morning, housewives later in the day – and guiding the reader on a tour through the wares, from "all possible and impossible kinds of fruits", flowers "of almost incredible colours", fish and meat (this section of the market has a "vile smell"), and "all manner of living creatures", including deer and monkeys (Schaeffer 1936, 24ff.). He peppers his tour with humorous anecdotes that connect the market to his acquaintances' experiences in Bombay, anchoring them to the spaces he describes.

The photograph that Schaeffer includes contrasts starkly with the image in Contractor's guidebook (fig. 7.6). Rather than squeezing the whole building into the frame as Contractor did, Schaeffer portrays the interior space (fig. 7.7). Observing a busy scene through one of the market's arches, Schaeffer captures the building's materiality: a metal drain cover, tarpaulins suspended across an external space to temper the bright sunlight, ornate ironwork and dressed stone. Rather than an abstract, static monolith, the architecture appears as a mediator and container of the daily activity that fills it. One man carries a large woven basket on his head, others sit behind their stalls engaged with their merchandise, a man in the centre of the frame walks towards the camera, casually putting something into his shirt pocket. Two people appear conscious of the camera's gaze and stare back at it. The majority, however, seems not to notice. Although he carefully frames the shot, Schaeffer seems uninterested in directing the figures he portrays. Schaeffer's photograph draws the reader into the experience of a spatial environment in flux, in which the actions of the people in the picture dictate its visual outcome. The

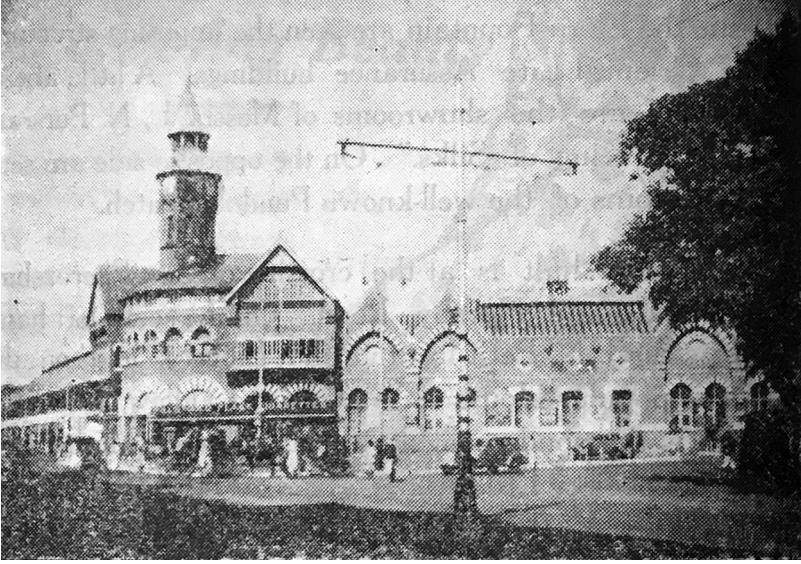


FIGURE 7.6: Unknown photographer, Crawford Market, Bombay, n.d. (Contractor 1938, 38).



FIGURE 7.7: Ernst Schaeffer, *Crawford Market*, Bombay, n.d. (Schaeffer 1936, 25).

city's rhythms and Schaeffer's observations quicken to co-produce an image that immerses the reader in the belly of Crawford Market. Unlike Contractor's image, which places the viewer tens of metres away from the subject, Schaeffer dissolves the distance, locating the viewer within the space.

Schaeffer's interest in conveying Bombay's essence through observing and capturing interactions at street level can be read analogously with the work of other exiled photographers in other cities. Burcu Dogramaci and Helene Roth have proposed photography as the "diasporic medium *par excellence*" (Dogramaci/Roth 2019, 3) with several photographers, like Schaeffer, artistically documenting their new surroundings in photographic form shortly after arriving in the new environment.¹⁸

In *Pictorial Bombay*, beyond shooting street scenes, Schaeffer also depicted street life more individually, portraying people engaged in their professions. With an empathic, ethnographic eye, Schaeffer documented street vendors offering beverages, cleaning ears and shaving beards. In these images he strove for candid portrayals. The figures appear unposed. Some are conscious of the camera while others appear entirely unaware of its presence as they go about their daily business. Schaeffer probably used a Rolleiflex camera to take these images (*The Times of India*, 6 February 1936, 16). With the viewfinder located on top of the relatively compact middle format camera, the photographer did not have to hold the camera in front of their face when composing the shot. Held at waist or chest height, the Rolleiflex was perhaps less intrusive than other cameras, allowing the photographer to maintain eye contact and communicate better through body language with their subjects.

In a photo titled *Shoe Repairer* (fig. 7.8), sitting cross-legged on a low bench under a foldable, lightweight canopy, a cobbler seems engrossed in his work. Directly behind his repair shop, leaning her upper arm against the wall, a woman scrutinizes Schaeffer. On the ground, in the canopy's shade, sits a second man, possibly a customer or an apprentice. The three figures could be engaged in conversation. Schaeffer's photo of the local street-corner appears casual and unaffected, as if he had encountered the scene on one of his strolls through the city and spontaneously photographed it. Portraying local people 'authentically', and positioning snapshots of their lives and livelihoods as integral to Bombay's character, could be part of his attempt to "draw aside the veil" (Schaeffer 1936, 1) that separates him, as an outsider, from the new environment. On the other hand, there is an exoticizing element in these photos, as was the case with the pictures by the famous travel photographer Alice Schalek (see Manojlovic 2012) and the socially critical paintings by the Russian painter Magda Nachman, who was married to an Indian communist politician in Bombay.¹⁹ They all created their portraits of local people with a Western eye, but empathic look.



FIGURE 7.8: Ernst Schaeffer, *Shoe Repairer*, Bombay, n.d. (Schaeffer 1936, 28).

Periphery in central focus

The success of *Pictorial Bombay* generated income for Schaeffer and an increase in customers for his photo studio, in addition to general recognition. A short time later, in 1939, he also gained international appreciation through his photo-journalistic work for the US magazine *Life*.²⁰ The individual chapters of *Pictorial Bombay* could be seen as a precursor to this work – as photojournalistic reports held together by the spine of the book.

Schaeffer developed his own style of street photography and created a unique coffee table guide booklet, which takes his readers along on his strolls through different parts of Bombay. His anecdotal writing combined with journalism gradually revealed individual parts of the sociocultural environment of Bombay, without ever turning too academic or falling into the familiar descriptive tropes of other guidebooks. With 40 full-page black-and-white photographs he visually

documents the social environment of Bombay's famous sights and adds a few lesser-known sites, as well as places distant from the centres in Colaba and Fort, and portraits of people at work. In the nine small photographs that conclude his chapters, he mainly depicts the everyday life of local residents or creates photographic still lives in the urban landscape, adding faces to places and to his stories while documenting the diverse social fabric of the metropolis (fig. 7.9).

With his in-between status as a forced European emigrant in British India, a Westerner but without British colonial origins, equipped with a great interest in exploring his new place of refuge and its people, he put Bombay's side-lanes, outskirts and peripheries on the tourist map. His narratives create a new tourist map of Bombay that focuses on the local population and reflects the social complexity of the city. All of Bombay's social spaces become part of Schaeffer's interest and generate his unique touristscape, which he presents in *Pictorial Bombay*. He flips the colonial power structure by placing the local people at the centre of his attention, through his texts, his photos and his perspective. His street-level photography documents the vibrant daily movements of the residents of Bombay while placing the colonial architecture, as representative of imperial rule, in a static background.

Initial research suggests that Schaeffer's approach quickly impacted future Bombay guidebooks. A small travel guide for the armed forces, published by the Government of Bombay for visiting army members on recreational leave or furloughs during

of discovery on your own, because you are busy. So take up this little book. It attempts to impart to you the manifold melody of this city of Bombay.

There are people who opine that Bombay is not India and not Europe, that it is a not always happy mixture of both. Do not believe these people. You can find the real purest Indian India here—if you will only seek it, and know how to find it. Trust me, and I shall be your guide. And I say to you: just because two and more than two cultures jostle each other in this port, for this very reason Bombay, and the melody of this city, are not monotonous, but a symphony.* And not only a symphony of sounds, but one of colours too, for we are in India with her motley street life, motley in the truest sense of the word. Whoever has an eye for colours, can revel in them here!

"And what about the smells?" I seem to hear by way of further objection. "This terrible stink, are these the famous perfumes of the Orient?" And I reply: Fortunately a human being can grow accustomed, if not to all, at least to very much. And besides, just go through many a district in other cities, in Europe and America—and not even only their slums—well, even there it does not smell of roses and lavender.

But I must admit that I am biased, for I love this city, I love Bombay! If this bias does not deter you, follow me!



2

BY BOAT—BY TRAIN

We arrive in Bombay, or, to be more exact, we approach the city; the engines of our steamer have already stopped, and we are being towed, so that we have ample time to contemplate the grand scenery.

We know the entrance to the harbour of New York, if not in reality, at least from pictures and the cinema. It is, no doubt, a superb picture, the Statue of Liberty in the foreground and a row of skyscrapers looming heavily in the background. Of course, it is a matter of taste. The picture is too heavy, too objective, too businesslike, for my taste.

I am more in favour of beauty! And in this respect we get our money's worth here. Uniformly beautiful whether we arrive at sunrise, at sunset or at noon when the sun is shining in all her brilliance. Indeed, even by night it is an inspiring view, it looks as though interminably long strings of pearls had been laid gleaming and glowing on the seashore.

We are torn rudely from this poetical contemplation. For small steam-tugs are already pushing against their big brother, like my dogs when they want me to play with them. The little steamers tow the big ship to Ballard Pier. The gangway is laid down. We are in Bombay!

Now we are far too excited for any reflections unconnected with the examination of passports, Customs or welcoming friends and relatives. But at last even this is over and done with. As we are in the harbour, we may as well have a look around it. It need not be this very moment. We can take a refreshing drink first (no alcohol before sundown, please, we speak from sad experience!).

So, this is the port! We may wander at leisure through the docks, Prince's Dock, Alexandra Dock, Victoria Dock, etc. It is well worth while, and is at the same time a little cross-section of international commerce, hence most instructive: machines from England, ones from Sweden, chemicals from Germany, automobiles from America and all kinds of things from Japan: a display of imports. And India's exports are worthily represented by cotton. It is brought to the docks in bales on small sailing craft or large motor lorries to be transferred to the big steamers.

Here in Bombay harbour all races of the world meet, and fortunately it is a peaceable meeting. A student of ethnology could find material here

3

FIGURE 7.9: Ernst Schaeffer, Double-page spread of *Pictorial Bombay* (Schaeffer 1936, 2f.).

Second World War, shows a similar photographic style (see *Welcome to Bombay* n.d., n.p.). The photograph of the magnificent Taj Mahal Hotel (fig. 7.10), for example, was taken from the square in front of the Gateway of India. As with photographs in *The Bombay Guide & Directory* and *Guide to Bombay*, the photographer attempted to depict the immense size of the grand building while focusing on its main facade towards Apollo Bunder and the sea promenade. However, in the foreground of the image, the photographer shows two figures lying on their backs on the pavement, while another simply dressed man heads towards Apollo Bunder. A car is travelling in the same direction. More people are seen in the vicinity of the hotel. The photo appears like a snapshot in motion taken by a person standing in front of the arches of the Gateway of India. Unfortunately, we do not know anything about the photographer. But we can see that Schaeffer's approach of using street photography to centre the actions of local people while famous buildings merely provide the backdrop, was also adopted in the Bombay government's official wartime travel guide.

Beyond contributing to the construction of the local touristscape, *Pictorial Bombay* can also serve as an illustration of how an exile-authored guidebook can provide valuable insights into exilic experiences of urban environments. In terms of professional advancement and economic survival, it was a medium for generating



FIGURE 7.10: Unknown photographer, *Taj Mahal Hotel*, Bombay, n.d. (*Welcome to Bombay* n.d., 30).

income. As a kind of portfolio, it served as a reference for future commissions. It enabled Schaeffer to establish himself as a photographer in Bombay and as a photojournalist internationally. The making of the book allowed him to expand his networks and build relationships with central figures in Bombay's publishing scene. As a creative medium, *Pictorial Bombay* functions as a conduit for expressing Schaeffer's embodied experiences of the city in a self-imagined hybrid form. It documents how he determinedly met the city on foot, danced to its rhythms and developed an artistic method of practicing the urban. Perhaps it even opened a way to artistically process his initial impressions of his new home, allowing him to arrive fully. It could also be read as a love letter or a thank-you note to the city that provided him with refuge and gave new impulses to a career that had witnessed a massive rupture.

Schaeffer's texts and photographs are valuable witnesses to 1930s Bombay, providing information about the city's people and places, and mapping out fragmentary socio-cultural environments within the larger urban fabric. They form a kind of psycho-geographical interpretation of the city that also functions on a practical level. For those interested in urban exile in Bombay, *Pictorial Bombay* is a vital resource that uniquely bridges the intersection of urbanity, exile and artistic production. While there may not be many other guidebooks to cities authored by exiles, it can perhaps be compared to related media, such as photobooks and almanacs.²¹ It may also signpost ways of exploring exile elsewhere, thereby continuing to serve as a guide.

NOTES

1. For a history of the guidebook see Parsons (2007). And for more on guidebooks in India, see subsection below.
2. Ernst Schaeffer changed his name several times during his lifetime. In the following, we refer to him as he chose to refer to himself during the period in which he authored *Pictorial Bombay*. For more about his names, see: Anonymous. "Schäffer (1892–1978)." *Kalliope-Verbund*, kalliope-verbund.info/gnd/117099600. Accessed 30 Jun 2021. In 1971, he published his autobiography: Shaffer (1971).
3. As the book does not contain a publication date, we used advertisements in *The Times of India* to locate its publication in November 1936.
4. For other guidebooks on Bombay from the same period, see: Contractor (1938), Diqui (1938), Newell (1920), *The Times of India* (1926) and *Welcome to Bombay* (n.d).
5. For biographical information, see: Shaffer (1971), Voigt (1991).
6. For more information on Black Star Agency, see the archive of the METROMOD research project, www.archive.metromod.net/.
7. Photographic supplies were mainly imported from Germany.

8. It should be noted that before the establishment of guidebooks as a genre, there were other forms of travel writing, including reports, diaries and almanacs. These have been shown to have benefitted colonial expansion. See, for example: Bhatti (1997).
9. Thomas Cook followed, in 1889, with the publication of *Cook's Indian Tours*, and Baedeker's German-language guidebook was published 55 years later in 1914.
10. See Schäffer (1931a, 1931b).
11. Schaeffer was a First World War decorated aviator, see Vogel (1977, 188).
12. Translation by the authors. "Ich kniete mich in die Fachliteratur und began systematisch mit der Kamera zu arbeiten." Shaffer 1971, 45f.; "zu lernen, mit einer großen Kamera und mit allen möglichen Linsen und Lichtern zu arbeiten." Shaffer (1971, 46).
13. The price dropped to two rupees and eight annas during the Second World War.
14. Translation by the authors from original German:

Ich führte eine Schottin zu Tisch, die mich mit den Worten begrüßte: 'Ich kenne Sie schon, mein Herr.' Erwidern konnte ich nur: 'Das dürfte wohl ein Irrtum sein, denn ich bin erst knapp zwei Wochen in Bombay.' Sie lächelte mich an: 'O doch, ich kenne Sie. Sie sind der Europäer, der in Bombay zu Fuß geht'. Das haute mich, wie man so schön sagt, hin. Mir blieb nur zu sagen übrig: 'Madam, ich bin Journalist, und als solcher muß ich zu Fuß gehen, um Land und Leute kennenzulernen. Vom Fenster der Straßenbahn oder des Autobuses oder vom Auto aus ist dies leider nicht möglich'. 'Man fährt hier nicht Straßenbahn oder Bus, man fährt Auto,' antwortete sie kurz.
15. See Benjamin (2002), Burckhardt (2015) and Debord (1956).
16. Interestingly, Schaeffer does not include photographs of either of Bombay's synagogues, although he mentions them in the text.
17. The building was designed by William Emerson in a 12th century Gothic style, and features large bas-reliefs by John Lockwood Kipling that depict scenes from everyday life in rural India (Chopra 2011, 39).
18. For examples of the work of exiled photographers in New York, see also Roth (2019, 2021) and the contribution by Anna Messner and Helene Roth in this volume.
19. For more on Magda Nachmann, see Bernstein (2020) as well as the METROMOD Archive and Bombay Walk on www.metromod.net/.
20. See for example Schaeffer (19 June 1939).
21. See for example the chapter by Ekaterina Aygün in this volume.

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