

## **Nadia Arditti**

In England, if I feel comfortable and how do I feel here? In fact, the best thing in England is that you can express yourself and nobody censors you. Because in Turkey, when I got married, I lived in Turkey for 40 years and then we came to England. Because of the government of Erdogan and for some time we had a problem of expressing ourselves and telling what we want to do. In fact I even had an exhibition called, 'Do Not Eat Me'. That was just after the Gezi situation. Finally, I had a stomach pain all the time in Turkey and I said to Ralph, 'We have to go.' and because our children..., my son is in London and my daughter was in London too and then she went to Paris. So, I said, 'We're leaving. We'll go to London.' So, I think English people accept people of different countries, and you then can tell what you think. Nobody is telling you what are you doing? You are free to do what you want. And then the culture, the culture is very important, the museums. You have something happening every minute in London. Of course, now, we are at home, but that's very important. You wake up and you feel you want to go to an exhibition. You just go and study things and come back. So, this is so nice. I like English people because they are free. They feel free and you also feel free in England.

## **Maisie Meyer**

The fact is the Baghdadis when they came, they decided, they were pragmatic. The British owned the world really, the Empire, and you identify with the British and that was a very good move because it gets security and lots of privileges. So, they distanced themselves from Bene Israel. So, they had all the benefits of being under the British umbrella and supporting that. So, when in 1947, India got its independence, these people had so identified with the British, you'd see them; they dressed like them, the curricula in school were all absolutely British, English history, poetry, literature. It didn't do anything Indian.

And then in 1947 there was swing of the pendulum. Many, many, Baghdadi Jews left India. Because they were working in British firms. They didn't know how they would get on in India. There was no antisemitism, none of that, but nationalism became very rife sort of thing and why did we leave? The prospects in England seemed better. The fact of the matter is my parents decided they didn't want this Indian culture for us. They were very, very worried about Abu Dasara. You'd see idols all over the place and they just were unhappy with that sort of thing. And, as I say, we were brought up with a very British education. It was seamless coming here to Britain. Apart from the fact that most of the community had come before I'd come. I had done most of my degree in Calcutta in English. We had a ready-made community by that time and it was fine.

We had our own house, my sister had set up house- my older sister and my other- I've got two sisters - that set up house in Temple Fortune, an apartment in Temple Fortune, Hallswelle Road. And then my other sister, near Pioneer, she bought the house across the road here, Holmdale gardens. And then my husband, who I met in India, we lived on the same street, but he was studying engineering and he was working as an engineer in England. He was already here. We got married within a year of me coming, and my family, my mother and father and my younger sister came.

### **Haim Algranati**

When I was learning to make guitars, I worked in a supermarket as, you know, broken eggs...that kind of stuff. Now, I didn't get on so well with the white workers, because I was a bit of an odd one, cause I wasn't with the whites. The only people that I could speak to, and they were happy to speak to me, were all the Indian ladies. So, I would ask them, 'How do you do biryani? How do you do this?' They would give me the whole list and they'd tell, they'd show me, 'You go to this shop.' So, slowly I found all the things and that's how I learned. All my Indian comes from a supermarket called 'International' in 1980 in North Finchley.

Well, what happened was, I didn't want to be in the supermarket. I mean I'd rather be in the studio working, only I had to find some money. So, I knew that I was to be in the supermarket like, say, 8 hours, so I was happy to do everything they gave me, to keep busy, because I didn't want to sit down, and the manager, he was an Irish guy, he really adored me, so he would come downstairs at 3 o'clock instead of 5 and say, 'You can go home now.', you know, or he'd say, 'This cheese, you can get a special deal on this cheese.'... you know, he would give me all these perks, and I was his darling. After a while, because I was really working my arse off for him, but I didn't care. But the whites ... none... because I was ... almost felt as if like I'm below them. Do you know what I'm saying? You know like they looked at me, like even below the cashiers, you know, I was the one that clears the egg... but I've learned a lot, I've learned a lot there. Because, when, when you're unseen, you see lots, because I was unseen.