Returning to the Histories of the Late 19th and Early 20th Century Immigration

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The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a period of globalisation when migration controls were put in place. As at present, then too, control of migrant labour was not the concern of governments alone. Employers, recruitment agents, labour brokers in sending and receiving countries, lawyers, courts, training institutes, moneylenders and other credit agencies, smugglers and a wide variety of intermediaries sought to gain from the transnational flow of workers. If the earlier period of globalisation marked by industrial capitalism called for massive supply of labour forming its underbelly, the present globalisation marked by unprecedented financialisation of capital and other resources calls for similar supply of labour forming the underbelly of the beast today.

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Fifteen years ago when I published *The Marginal Nation* (1999), I had remarked intuitively that national histories would have to be revised in the light of studies on migration. But I was not sufficiently analytic. Around the same time, studies of migrants (as distinct from migration as a process) began showing how the migrant had emerged as the figure of the abnormal in the context of the circles of insecurity that make our nationalist universe. To understand fully the implications of the emergence of the migrant as the unsettling element of our time, we have to appreciate the significance of the historical question of immigration and the attendant control practices. It will be crucial also for understanding the role that mobile subjectivities play in the modern imperial-national universe. Recognition of the value of two strands of research is necessary towards that.

First, more than any other strand of history writing, labour historians have tried to recognise the political significance of migration in the latter half of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. Since Stephen Castles' and Godula Kosack's joint work, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (1973), some excellent studies have appeared on labour migration and they indicate how a different history of the nation form can be constructed. Such a history would tell us the histories of the trajectory of citizenship (including what Marshall termed "social citizenship") along with histories of inclusion and exclusion.

Second, along with the writing of general labour history we have special studies on export of indentured labour and the growth of the plantation economy, which again suggests a different way of writing the history of the nation-form in the last two centuries, where the extra-nationalist narrative of indentured labour constitutes a different universe. These two facts only show the permanent disjuncture between the history of the nation-form and that of the differentially constituted labour form.

In fact the new crop of historical studies on various aspects of the welfare state and schemes, inspired in some cases by the Foucauldian theme of governmentality, suggests a different way of understanding modern governance, where a study of the nation is not at the centre of our political understanding. In its place we have the still largely unwritten history of governing a mobile, unruly world of population flows occupying a much more critical place of significance. These works, some of which I refer to in course of this article, give us a sense of the hidden histories of conflicts, desperate survivals, and new networks growing as well as old networks being transplanted across great

expanse and zones. Studies of hunger in the 19th century, of itinerant movements, transportations of coolies, spread of famines, shipping of children, adult girls, trafficking in sex, labour, and human organs, and welfare legislations to cope with this great infamy tell us how actually we have arrived at our own time of subject formation under the conditions of empire. This is certainly different from the tradition of nation-centred histories.

Building the West

Take the case of transportation of indentured coolie labour, or of the children. We know something of the transportation of the coolie labour; but we know very little of the ways children were sent across seas and deserts as labour force. In a volume titled *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867 to 1917* (2008) the historian of the transportation of child labour Roy Parker gives us a detailed account of the exportation of hundreds of boys and girls from England to Canada in the second half of the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th century – to work in Canada, to be beaten, sexually abused, slave laboured – all to build up Canada and to rid England of its poor destitute children. This was also roughly the time, immediately after the American Civil War when Chinese labour was imported to the United States (US) to build the Central Pacific Railway Line. People speak of the monumental engineering tunnelling feat amidst snow and rare air at the heights at Sierra Nevada (1867). There are now films, museums, and archives on the railway line construction (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/tcrr/) involved companies, and the enterprise of the businessmen. Yet not much on the details of the immigration of labour, labour forms, labour conditions, etc, except what we get from very few books on the Irish and Chinese labour in railway construction in the US.

Chinese peasants from the Canton province began arriving on California's shores in 1850. Initially, they took five-year stints in the mines, after which they prospected or accepted jobs as labourers, domestic workers, and fishermen. They faced intense prejudice and increasingly restrictive laws limiting work opportunity. Leland Stanford, the California governor, promised in 1862 in his inaugural address to protect the state from "the dregs of Asia". However in early 1865 the Central Pacific railway company started recruiting Chinese labour because of acute labour shortage. Most of the early workers were Irish immigrants. Railroad work was hard, and management was chaotic, leading to a high attrition rate. One official source tells, "The railroad lost uncounted men to snow. Avalanches could cut down dozens at a time." There was one large snow slide at Strong's Canyon known as camp 4. Two gangs of Chinese for tunnels 11 and 12, also a gang of culvert men were in this camp. The slide took it all, and one of the culvert men was not found until the following spring.

Even when the tunnels were done, maintaining them was a monumental task. In the spring of 1868 most of the high-altitude tunnels were completely blocked by ice, which had to be blasted loose and shovelled out. The website says, "When snow wasn't killing men, the work was" (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-tunnels/). Also, we have to remember that all these were achieved by mass murdering the Native Americans so that land could be conquered by businessmen for construction of railways. Then, after the conquest, in 1876 the US celebrated its might, gathered in part from the completion of the railroad, at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Among the exhibits one could see the "very aristocracy of the Indian nation", and the heroic feats of construction of railways. American Indian representatives invited to the exposition found themselves a curiosity for the fair's visitors. "The struggle was over, and Native American tribes had lost it, leaving the world of the West forever changed (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-tribes /).

Again we know very little of the resistance of the Chinese labour except the famous strike in 1876, when on 25 June the Chinese workers left their grading work along a two-mile stretch on the eastern Sierra slope and went back to their camp. They demanded $40 a month instead of $35, and a reduction in hours. A workday on the open Sierra lasted from dawn till dusk; the Chinese labourers wanted to work no more than 10 hours daily. They also asked for shorter shifts in the cramped, dangerous tunnels. The company bosses responded with stopping food supply at the heights and deployed white strong men (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-cprr/). We do not have definite figures of how many workers died before the strike crumbled. In fact we do not have much study on this phase of global labour immigration and the books we have of the construction of the railways in the US are mostly celebratory (for instance, *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* by David Haward, New York, Penguin Books, 2000 and *Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869* by Stephen E Ambrose, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2001). In that age of globalisation, capital and labour both were being globalised. It is difficult to tell which preceded what. Possibly these two phenomena were interconnected.

Similarly during the mass importation of labour for mining in Australia, girls, boys and single women would be transported in the decades of the last half of the 19th century and specially in the first half of the 20th century to the stark Edwardian homes in Australia, where (for instance in Adelaide, today the building being known as the Migration Museum) it would be written on the wall by the charity institutions and city councils, "You who have no place else on earth enter this home – never to look back to the outside world, but to take this as home". There is this astonishing collection of documents and writings, done by Mary Geyer, and published by the Migration Museum on the occasion of the women's suffrage centenary in south Australia (1894-1994), titled, *Behind the Wall – The Women of the Destitute Asylum, Adelaide, 1852-1918* (1994), which tell us of the destitute migrants' lives behind the walls. We have some other studies conducted little earlier, such as *Uprooted Children – Early Life of Migrant Farm Workers* (by Robert Cole and Senator Mark Hatfield 1971). Hunger marches began in the second half of the 19th century and continued in the 20th century – in both new and old worlds, colonial and colonised countries – in search of food and jobs. It is important

to see the exportation of coolie labour as part of this broader history of displacement (with a thin line between internal and international migration), much of which is still concealed. Works like *Coolies, Capital, and Colonialism – Studies in Indian Labour History* (Eds Rana P Behal and Marcel van der Linden, 2007) or the earlier published classic work by Jan Breman, *Taming the Coolie Beast – Plantation Society and the Colonial Order in South-east Asia* (1989) suggest the broader connection that we must diligently pursue in the interest of understanding what is happening today. In another recent diligently reconstructed account of the late 19th century famines in the context of El Nino spells – *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* by Mike Davis (2002) – we again have a different picture of the making of our time marked by famines and massive population movements induced by dry weather, floods, hunger, and the forcible exit of large peasant communities from the emerging global food market. And on the top of that add the histories of formation of large armies to fight wars in distant lands on the basis of recruitment of massive number of men of various nations on earth. This history is to be found in country after country, also at the global level. Another process accompanied this phenomenon. I am referring here to the process of development of the basic technologies of governing population flows and trying to achieve in each case the right composition of the population, "the right mix", as it is termed now, leading to partitions and new boundary-making exercises.

All these, let us not forget, happened after the manumission of slavery. The post-manumission period was one of several changing modes of labour process – the slave, indentured, the contract, and the free. These modes historically never appeared as pure types, because much of the availability of labour depended on labour's mobility – making the labour mobile. Indeed the truth is that largely on the condition of making labour mobile that globalisation proceeded. This would always be the underside of the official story of globalisation - the subaltern or the primitive aspect. This would always involve, as Marx explained, the primitive mode of capital accumulation. Therefore, mining, construction of railways, and plantation economy appeared as the primary site of mobile labour – precisely because of the particular nature of labour process involved in these sectors. They foreshadow our age when the entire domestic and care economy has come to depend globally on mobile labour recruitment. Transit labour then, as now, occupies a crucial place in capitalist production. Our nation-centric histories give us no clue to this vast process of population formation.

The Abnormal Figure of the Migrant

Through all these, two issues have come closer as marks of modern time – on the one hand mixed up, messy, population flows, provoking desperate governmental responses, on the other hand innovations at a furious pace in humanitarian methods, functions, institutions, and principles. Suddenly governments have discovered why people move: not only due to violence, threat of violence, torture, and discrimination (by now banal causes), but they move also because of natural disasters, man-made famines and floods, climate change, developmental agenda, resource crisis, environmental catastrophes, and the like. The humanitarian response has grown accordingly in range. Governments say that they have to gear up not only to face emergencies but "complex emergencies" – a scenario that alludes to a complicated assemblage of factors and elements leading to the emergency situation. To understand how these two issues of our time have come close, we need to go back to the histories of population movements in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was then that the basic control systems were put in place, such as the introduction of the passport and the visa system (finely chronicled by John Torpey; also for a broader history see Martin Lloyd), recording the foreigner, developing labour market management tools to use immigrant labour for a capitalist market and for control of domestic labour, and finally developing a detailed surveillance system. In this, law, but more than law, new administrative practices proved crucial. The feature of modern democracies practising various social exclusions developed during that time. This is how the societies of the settled with their pre-ordained divisions of labour wanted to return to equilibrium, when the unsettling element had been cured of the problem. By controlling the abnormal, who was generally the migrant, normalcy was to be restored. It was during this time that governing the migrant became a task of attending to pathology. The discourse of abnormality was produced from real life events. Here I want to refer to an event recorded meticulously by a historian of immigration in France, who showed how the following event in Paris produced the figure of the migrant as abnormal,

The hesitation of progressive politicians ended in late 1923. At 4.30 p m on 7 November, an unemployed, homeless man, a Kabyle from Algeria, entered a grocery store at number 43 on rue Fondary in the fifteenth arrondissement. Khemili Mohamed Sulimane grabbed the grocer's wife – a 30-year-old Parisian-born woman named Jeanne Billard, and dragged her out into the crowded street where he threw her to the ground. Brandishing an enormous kitchen knife he had stolen hours earlier, he kneeled over her, tore off her right cheek, and slit her throat, severing her left carotid artery. Covered in blood, he turned next to Louise Fougere, who was calming her waling eight-year-old grandson, Emile, home from school. Sulimane stabbed her. She collapsed, dying on the spot, and it took a quick thinking neighbour to save little Emile by pulling him through her ground-floor window to safety. Sulimane ran across the street and slashed two more people: a young mother, who dropped to the ground, clutching her child, and a 32-year-old shoemaker from Romania. Finally, while Sulimane stood menacing a group of schoolchildren, a construction worker entered the fracas and heaved a paving stone, distracting the madman until a pair of police officers arrived on bicycles and shot him. By the end of the sanguinary episode, two women had died and two more were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. The Algerian was also taken to the hospital and treated for gunshot wounds to his hands and stomach.

The double murder dominated newspaper headlines and set off a series of popular disturbances. Shortly after the murders, an unruly crowd tried to lynch an unsuspecting Algerian who happened upon them. Petitions circulated demanding that 'undesirable' elements be 'expelled' from the neighbourhood. Long articles recounted the lives of the young Billard couple. Recently married and struggling to make ends meet, they had moved into the diverse Grenelle neighborhood from the suburbs about a year before. Camille Billard, the grocer husband, had taken a second job at a nearby brasserie to earn extra money. Reporters tracked down witnesses who claimed that Sulimane took advantage of Camille Billard's absence to woo his wife, frequently stopping by the store to profess his love for her. According to the newspapers, Jeanne

Billard treated Sulimane generously, sometimes giving him leftovers from her table, but she consistently rejected his advances.

The theme of the invading, libidinous colonial subject laying waste to 'la douce France' could not be more stereotypical. The whole story sounds too farfetched to be true. The press undoubtedly garbled some of the details, and vulgar prejudice distorted a number of articles. Prurient editors, however, cannot be blamed with dreaming up the entire episode, for much of the story never became public. The precinct report included the testimony of a woman who told the police that she had been present in the Billards' store a few days earlier when Sulimane entered and unleashed a torrent of profanity. Moreover, the building's concierge corroborated published reports that Sulimane had been pursuing Mme Billard for some six months, loitering in the street and hanging around the store. When the police asked Sulimane what could have motivated such a horrific crime, he replied simply, unrequited love. One reporter quoted Sulimane as saying:

My lover for Mme Billard completely changed my life. I could no longer work, eat, or sleep; my existence without her became impossible. I told her over and over again, but, each time, she burst out laughing and threw me out. Yesterday, I went again to beg her to come with me: she brutally rejected me. So I struck.

Whatever the true nature of the killer's feelings for Jeanne Billard, news that an Algerian man had murdered two French women and wounded two others in broad daylight outraged popular opinion and inspired a tremendous response from authorities.

The Foundary murders dominated newspaper headlines as the Moroccan rebel leader Abd el-Krim inflicted a series of stunning blows to the Spanish army in the Rif war, leading to a putsch and the rise of General Miguel Primo de Rivera's authoritarian regime in Spain. The French Communist Party (PCF) only became a mass party at the time of the Popular Front, but it exerted a powerful influence much earlier, especially on colonial matters. The newly formed party energetically supported Abd el-Karim's rebels, especially as it became clear that they would soon attack French positions. Against the 'bankers' and capitalists war', they demanded 'recognition of the independent Rif Republic'. Soon after the rebel leader had demanded complete independence on 10 September 1924, lacques Dorior and Pierre Semard wrote a telegram encouraging Abd el-Karim in the name of the French Communist Party, and Dorior toured the Hexagon in an effort to stir up hostility to the war.

Communist protests outraged Socialists such as Mouter, making them increasingly willing to work with their erstwhile enemies on the right in supporting coercive measures. That willingness only increased with the formal establishment in 1926 of Messali Hadj's Etoile Nord Africaine, an Algerian nationalist movement with close ties to the PCF; nationalist uprising in Indochina, leading up to the revolt at Yen Bey in 1930; the emergence of independence movements in Tunisia, Egypt, India, and elsewhere; and the advent of the Turkish Republic.

Authorities feared that Communists and nationalist revolutionaries would exploit the freedoms of the metropole to prey on Paris's growing colonial proletariat, and then export revolution overeas. A latter report explained: 'Without Paris, Muslim agitation in the three North African territories could be easily contained.'

Shortly after the murders, in March 1924, the Radical minister of the interior, Camille Chautemps, created a special commission to prevent any sequels to the bloody episode, and especially to keep order in Paris. He called together representatives from his own Department of Algerian Affairs as well as others from the Ministries of Colonies and Labor, and the Municipal Council of Paris to devise a strategy to restrict Algerian immigration and to provide assistance to those who, inevitably, would come anyway.

Fearing that a complete ban on North African immigration would incite rebellion in the French colonies and drive immigrants into the arms of the Communist and nationalist opposition in the metropole, the Chautemps commission took advantage of France's colonial authority to impose a series of administrative hurdles that significantly limited freedoms guaranteed by existing legislation. The assembled officials, of various ideological orientations, voted unanimously to require all passengers travelling from Algeria to the metropole in third or fourth class to obtain a contract, approved by the Ministry of Labour; undergo a physical examination from a government doctor before departing, in order to rule out tuberculosis; and to prove their identity by presenting specially created identity cards with photographs.

Humanitarianism

Clifford Rosenberg, the historian, from whose work, *Policing Paris – The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (pp 141-44) I cite these lines, has shown how events like this were used by colonial authorities to give shape to their immigration policies, precisely when part of the colonial political class voiced humanitarian concerns also in order to institute some protection measures for the immigrants. Humanitarianism developed as part of this scenario. As a clinical task classical humanitarianism wanted to change the soul of the "abnormal", therefore there were educationists, pedagogues, missionaries, administrators, and thinkers working on the issue of how to reform the abnormal societies. Modern humanitarianism had to combine the old techniques with new ones of care, protection, information gathering, interference, intervention, and invention of a skewed theory of sovereignty, a one-sided theory of responsibility, and the gigantic humanitarian machines which would liken to the transnational corporations (TNCs). In practical terms today this means managing societies, which produce the obdurate refugees and migrants to stop them from leaving the shores, to keep them within the national territorial confines, and eventually to manage societies in "an enlightened way".

Again, it was the period I am referring, when policies in place of laws and directions from popularly elected assemblies started to become critical in governmental functioning. Both colonial and metropolitan experiences show how in this period policies on control and management of societies were enunciated. Relief organisations emerged, which technically would mean an end to vulnerability. Managing moving population groups became the *deux ex machina* of modern governmentality. Governments began showing awareness of the paradoxical task they faced: how much to keep these groups beyond the pale of visibility and how much to allow them to be visible. Mary Dewhurst Lewis shows in *The Boundaries of the Republic* (2007) that to the extent to which migrant labour became crucial for expansion of industries, it had become visible. On the other hand in a nationally constituted polity and market, keeping immigrant groups confined to almost invisible spaces also acquired high priority. Governments had to deal with enormous confusion. (a) Who was a refugee? (b) What to do with the displaced due to famines, disasters, and epidemics? (c) What was the extent of government responsibility? (d) Was mitigating hunger a task of the government or was this a sign of inefficient and abnormal population groups? The attempt to solve these dilemmas found expression in various lawmakings, regulations, directives, new manuals about care, camps, shelter, food, water, and medicine, while even more initiatives were taken to anticipate the arrival of migrants in order to keep them at bay, and therefore to build up specially trained forces to prevent the latter's entry. The main body of new humanitarianism emerged during this time. "Destitute asylums" resembling prison houses were set up by charitable institutions to welcome survivors, particularly girls

and elderly female survivors. In all these one common feature appeared, possibly for the first time, that of treating the migrant as the source of insecurity. The victim of forced migration was now an active body, whose soul no longer needed to be saved because the destitute, wretched body would soon and inevitably die, but because this was now an unruly body requiring management and control. This is the point where the migrant emerged as the subject.

Let us also note one more paradoxical aspect of our time first noticed in this period. If the production of the labouring subject has thus its dark and illegal side, often representing what we have come to call the primitive mode of accumulation, and this complicates the scenario, yet there was also the fact that governments around this time started to pass laws and take steps towards making the immigrant a natural part of the society, because by and large the reorganisation of labour market must happen within a free juridical space, and that is when various provisions for naturalisation, domicile rights, citizenship laws, etc, began to be made, and the relation between blood and territory was sought to be defined or clarified. It was hoped that such naturalisation would help in the multiplication of labour, at the same time retain the heterogeneity of the global space of capital without which global domination of capital was impossible. What all these implied in simpler terms was that labour flows, which migration flows ultimately are, must be controlled and regulated with laws and governmental techniques, though these techniques had to be underwritten by a capitalist rationality, which must be housed and sourced back therefore to a sort of sovereign power. In short it was in this period that the marriage of two different rationalities – state and governmental – took place. Humanitarianism became part of governmental rationality. Rights and risks were combined in this period.

This was an anarchic process and not a thought-out and deliberated one. Even though this period was marked by intense administrative centralisation, yet the administrative centre could do things only to a certain extent, while police, municipal clerks, local politicians decided at the ground level in the suburbs and distant frontier towns on how and to what degree to execute those directives because they had to have always the primary task in mind – that of ensuring the society running. The fate of the migrant in various parts of the world was not therefore uniform. Migrants' rights did not develop primarily through any human rights norms; no guarantee was secured from an altruistic civil society and well-informed public sphere. They evolved through contentious claim makings of various collectives, and equally complex constitutional and jurisdictional battles. Refuge, refusal, discourses of security and insecurity, and consequent actions by governments and social collectives made this process extremely contingent. It happened in India also. In the period between the establishment of rule of law in 1860s and passage of various national security provisions in the 1930s and early 1940s we have all the sure indications of an emerging democracy that would be marked by inclusions and exclusions, and a differentially constituted national labour market. The nationalist history we read is therefore one but only in a mythical way, because this myth hides at the same times other turbulent processes of population formation and development of control techniques, only the final signs of which we get in the passage of the Citizenship Act, the Foreigners Act, and the finalisation of the immigration rules. This is perhaps what Theodor Adorno termed "negative dialectics" (*Negative Dialectics*, translated E B Ashton 2000) – a case wherein the more we try to think of the nation form distancing ourselves from the material process of labour, the more we are hurled back to the violent history of the labour form.

Empire, Borders and the Migrant

There may be one more reason in this relative neglect of labour history. We ignored the fact that a good part of the nation form we were studying had been based on imperial structure/s. And, that the state that this nation was attempting to build was already leaning on imperial traditions and contexts to grow up. The particular constellations of territory, authority, and rights which supported the emergence of the nation state had imperial lineages in more than one way. Empires had been characterised by several kinds of population flows. Barbarians had appeared periodically in history against empires. Barbarians represented migratory movements, and in the context of our time we may say they had a decisive impact on what Sandro Mezzadra calls "borders/confines of citizenship" ("Borders, Confines, Migrations, and Citizenship", May 2006 – http: //observatorio. fadaiat.net/tiki-index.php? page=Borders%2C%20Migrations% 2C%20Citizenshp). Thanks to the joint work by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (*Border as Method*, 2013) we now have greater insights into the contemporary economy of governmental methods relating to the institution of border and its conceptual relevance in labour migration studies.

As we know, the classic concept of borders arose in the wake of the emergence of the modern state and its geopolitical dimensions, within which the individual was historically constructed as a citizen. Nation, state, citizen, border – all these seemed to unite in an excellent fit. Now two things have thrown this fit into disarray: the emergence of empire and the transborder migratory movements, which have collectively put our understanding of citizenship into doubt. Sovereignty in the beginning was not always strictly territorial, and imperial sovereignty was not so much indicative of the borders of the empire (though Hadrian was the first known ruler to have territorial markers put in place to indicate the imperial reach), but more of exceptional powers to be above law and execute lives as and when the emperor felt necessary. However, in this case too, the power to execute was to be moderated to fit with governmental necessities of the empire – for instance in relation to the Christians in the Roman imperium. Who was Roman, was a problem then too, and transborder incursions of people into Rome made things only difficult. It was these incursions and the intrinsic difficulties of defining citizenship under imperial conditions that made empire as a form of the state increasingly impossible. The problem as we know was temporarily solved with the emergence of modern political society, where citizenship, territoriality, borders, and sovereignty were combined in

the form of modern nation states – but we have to note here, that this was possible not only because of popular democracy (the dream of Rousseau, and a scenario every liberal political philosopher has looked forward to), but also because of colonialism, which meant in this respect several things.

Colonialism meant (a) clear territorial distinction between the sovereign state and the subjugated areas known as colonies, (b) clear legal distinction between participants of the polity, that is citizens, and the subjects, (c) clearly demarcated sites of developed sectors of economy and the production of primary goods, (d) and, finally an effective way of combining territorial conquest, subsequent annexation, and the long-distance control of economies of the world. In this way the imperial form was taken over by the modern nation state; and the imperial form of the nation was the historically arrived solution to the twin problems of the empire having borders, and the need to negotiate the territorial limits of the legitimacy of the power of the state. As if politics had solved the question of the distinction between internal and external, which was supposedly the only thing required to guarantee order and peace. Yet as I have suggested in the preceding pages immigration flows in the second half of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, possible because of colonial-imperial structures, made the solution of the border question in the form of nation states only partial. Migration history is thus to use the words of Saskia Sassen, "the shadowy cone over the history of Europe" – that contains the unreported histories of masses of errant, deported and eradicated individuals who live in a foreign land, in countries that do not recognise their 'belonging". These migratory movements have fractured the national, ethnic, and linguistic features of polities and political societies. In a defensive move the empire now speaks of meta-borders indicating the division between the imperial land and that of the barbarians, and not the boundaries between its constituent units.

Yet as a strategy it has had mixed fortunes. While in the last 15 years, this institutionalisation of meta-borders as a strategy has served the function of locating and defining the imperial land better, it has ill served the function of stopping the raids of what the empire considers the extra-planetary animals. Thus for instance, labour flows from "New Europe" to "Old Europe" (or, from Mexico or Puerto Rico to the us) threaten the imperial-civilisational core of the Euro-Atlantic continent, and consequently put pressure on the internal confines of the empire. The border/confine in this way is continually under pressure, and the stress reproduces itself in the interior of the empire. In this condition, sovereignty is present, but not in one source or organ, but in the half juridical, half economic-political space of the empire, where several actors are at work, and whose main feature is, namely, that more than the empire depending for its viability on the presence of sovereignty, it is sovereignty, which now depends on the imperial form for its relevance and legitimacy.

Thus imperial confines are being reproduced by nations everywhere to locate and keep the migrants at bay. Yet, we have to remember that in this age of empire and globalisation, governing strategies must ensure that labour flows must not be directionless; they must conform to the rules the regime of division of labour

lays down. This is the governmental rationality under imperial conditions I am referring to. The reserve army or the army of surplus labour must conform to the institutional rules of the global labour market. The logic of these institutional rules was formed in the period I have referred to in this article. It is important to take the genealogical route, for only then we shall have a sense of how the empire labels the barbarians today – a process which is reflected in the Hollywood movies of Mel Gibson (we have our Bollywood counterparts) or the writings of Niall Ferguson, whose evidences lie behind the locked doors in the Pentagon and the California prison system (or in many sub-jails of India and Pakistan); or in the actions of the vigilantes on the us-Mexico border, or borders elsewhere; horrendous episodes of ethnic cleansing by avengers in many parts of the world, and the bankruptcy of liberals who professed till the other-day ideals of universal citizenship and global civil community, or if you like global civil society. These dreams, their emptiness, their violations, and the rude reality of the encounter between the empire and the barbarians – all these were enacted in the second half of the 19th century, and all these are being re-enacted one century later.

Back to the Future

In short, the late 19th and early 20th centuries was another period of globalisation when the migration controls were put in place. As now, then too, control of migrant labour was not the concern of governments only. Employers, recruitment agents, labour brokers in sending and receiving countries, lawyers, courts, training institutes, moneylenders and other credit agencies, bureaucrats, municipal authorities, smugglers, and a wide variety of intermediaries sought to gain from the transnational flow of workers. Networks grew, some of them in Charles Tilly's language, "transplanted networks". Tilly pointed out that by the early 19th century, evolving capitalist economic and property relations marked by the spread of wage labour, separation of households from the means of production, and the rising productivity of commercial agriculture had combined with diminishing land resources and an expanding demand for labour in urban areas to make long-distance migration a rational choice for many Europeans. Local conditions, including land-tenure patterns, agricultural requirements, and resource management, profoundly influenced rates of migration and return. They also determined the kinds of people who emigrated, such as from certain parts of southern Italy, where land ownership was still possible and therefore the migrants hoped to use their American wages to purchase land upon their return. The sons of Norwegian cattle farmers shut out from ownership also left Europe.

In all these acts of emigration, awareness of networks became a critical factor. On the other hand workers developed, even then, different means to cope with these control mechanisms, even if partially most of the time, and if possible to evade them. But vulnerability remained overwhelming. Possibly today's situation is better with labour rights in place in many cases. But the fact remains that globalisation means globalisation of recruitment of migrant labour, even though the situation is not what it was 150 years ago, particularly with regard to

migration of skilled labour, and what may be called "immaterial labour", plus the new constitutive factors behind today's globalisation. In many cases however, the situation obtaining today reminds us of the time I am speaking of here, for instance the exploitation inherent in global supply chains (we can today think of the Burmese migrant workers in Thailand), creation of new economic space virtually out of nothing (for instance Macao), Filipino nightclub hostesses and girls in Hong Kong or the Nepali labour there, women migrant workers in Taiwan, and the massive cities marked by migrant workers and trafficked labour (including sex workers) for instance of Georgian or Armenian care giving women in Athens. Even though studies such as the one done collectively on migrant labour in Asia (*Transnational Migration and Work in Asia*, eds Kevin Hewinson and Ken Young, 2006) concentrate justifiably on our time, it will be good to have a sense of history of empires, particularly colonial empires, their boundary making exercises, and the bodies that repeatedly hurled themselves on these borders and boundaries, and made migration one of the most bio-political aspects of our age. Conversely we can say that it was in that age that control of mobile bodies began constituting one of the most critical aspects of bio-power. The emergence of some of the different forms of labour subjectivities marking our world today can be traced back to that time.

In many senses today's care and construction industries represent what the plantation and railway construction industries signified in the period referred to in this article. Thousands upon thousands of migrant workers serving worldwide from the US to west Asia to south-east Asia to the far east as masons, plumbers, coolies, nurses, ayahs, sex workers, workers in entertainment and construction industry, remind us of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Nursing schools are booming in the developing countries to produce the necessary labour. Bangladesh has 130 such nursing-midwifery schools, Indonesia about 1,400 schools, Myanmar 48 schools, Nepal 124, Thailand 80, Sri Lanka 26, and India over 4,000 schools. Midwives and ayahs constitute the bulk of the trained personnel sent abroad. All this while the weekly earnings of registered nurses in the US, for instance, remained relatively stagnant from 2005 to 2011, in fact suffering 5% decline in actual purchasing power. The number of guest nurses in the same country increased noticeably in this period. In 1994 about 9% of the total registered nurse force consisted of guest nurses; by 2008 the share had gone up to 16.3%. And mark it, at the same time in one year – 2010 alone – the incidence of injury and illness due to occupational hazards increased by 6%. We have similar figures of immigrant labour in sex and other entertainment industries (for details of the US figures, see, DPE Factsheet, April 2012 – http://dpeaflcio.org/wp-content/uploads/Nursing-A-Profile-of-the-Profession-2012.pdf; and on Asian figures, compilation by Prakin Suchaxaya, South East Asian Nursing Union and World Midwifery Report, 2011 – http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/main_report/en_SOWMR_Full.pdf).

Yet what we forget is that these new areas of labour power production had to be secured in the first phase of this round of globalisation with coercive means exactly as in the 19th century colonial population had to be sent as part of the armed forces in sea voyages to the areas where plantation industry was to come up not much later. The coincidence of securing areas for occupation and production is not and was not god ordained. Premansu Kumar Bandopadhyay's account of military expeditions to south-east Asia from India, *Sepoys in the British Overseas Expeditions* (2011) throws light on an early phase of this process. The echoes of such expeditions in the hinterlands of India or the Amazons or the forests of Indonesia or the deserts of west Asia can be heard today.

While we need not overstretch the similarities of the two ages they should not astonish us. If the earlier period of globalisation marked by industrial capitalism called for massive supply of labour forming its underbelly, this period of globalisation marked by unprecedented financialisation of capital and other resources (including land) calls for a similar supply of labour (for opening up forests, construction of new towns, entertainment and care industries, etc), forming the underbelly of the beast today. Then too, as now, it was preceded by depeasantisation on a wide scale. Then too as now the process was preceded by massive application of force.

In any case, we must now collectively start working on a genealogical account of migration, labour, and the burden of identity in modern capitalism. This will not be a straightforward history, as national, gender-related, race, and several other factors contributed to the making of a hugely heterogeneous labour market. The subjectivities produced in that process have contributed to the contentious history of our time.

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