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Imperial Labour History and the Global Turn

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[L'atelier 'Travail & Empire' est soutenu par le CREC / CREW.]

Labour historians have been particularly attuned to the global turn. Over the last decade labour historians have become not only more global in their outlook, but they have also begun to pay greater attention to subjects that speak to contemporary concerns associated with globalization. This has given rise to a number of studies considering a diverse array of subjects, including 'global' occupations, forms of free and unfree labour migration, and the global dimensions of working-class formation. The benefits of this global approach are immeasurable. Among other things it has highlighted the importance of studying labour in globalized sectors over the *longue durée*; it has brought into question the teleological assumption that labour movements inevitably develop a national character; and it has underscored the point that working-class formation was driven by processes that occurred across territorial borders. The danger with global approaches, however, is that they can flatten and homogenize the experience of labour, emphasizing connection over disconnection, and privileging subaltern agency, co-operation, and mobility over class-, gender-, and race-based hierarchies of power. These issues are particularly pertinent to colonial contexts. Racialised labour recruitment practices, punitive and draconian labour legislation, and the deployment of state violence in response to worker protest all served to accentuate differences and inhibit collective action. Put simply, the task for labour historians is to focus not only the 'free' movement of labour and the associated flow of ideas, discourses, and practices across territorial borders but to investigate the role of coercion and state regulation in facilitating and restricting such movements.

Session 1 : Jeudi 2 novembre, 14h-15h30

Convict Builders of British Imperial dockyards Katherine Roscoe, University of Leicester

The work of convicts has been remarkably absent from histories of maritime expansion. In recent years, labour historians have begun dismantling narratives that posit a shift from 'unfree to 'free' labour in the nineteenth century (Bosma, 2009; Lichtenstein & De Vito, 2013; Anderson & Maxwell-Stewart, 2014). The fields of Indian and Pacific Ocean studies have brought attention to the journeys of coerced labourers and 'unfree' peoples on board ships travelling across oceans – including slaves, lascars, coolies, and convicts (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000; Anderson, 2000; Foxhall, 2012; Jaffer, 2014). Yet coerced labourers who built the maritime infrastructures that enabled these journeys remains absent from the historiography. This paper examines the more than 15,000 British and Irish male convicts who laboured in, and were transported between, dockyards in Gibraltar (1823-63), Bermuda (1842-58) and Australia (1839-69). Using records from the National Maritime Museum's Caird Library and Colonial Office Files, it will explore dockyards as sites in which waged labourers worked alongside coerced and unfree workers, including European convicts, enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples. It will look particularly at the ways in which labour was managed and recognised differently depending on the relative freedom, social status and ethnicity of the workers. In sum it places convicts at the heart of the construction of maritime infrastructure which connected Britain to its empire.

'Gifted with Strength That Is Not Human': Using Indigenous Colonial Labour for Coaling Steven Gray, University of Portsmouth

The shift from sail to steam power for Royal Navy ships required them to be coaled at least every seven days. These processes were not autonomous, and, indeed, few were mechanised to any extent even by 1914. Thus, steam power required an enlarged labour force to unload colliers, ensure safe storage, and load the coal onto visiting warships. Importantly, then, coaling stations were not just strategic points, but also working environments requiring substantial human labour. This paper therefore looks at how the advent of coal powered warships thus had important effects on the populations of the settlements which surrounded these imperial stations. In some cases, labour could be attracted from the environs, but in others, where work was plentiful already or human labour was in short supply, workers had to be enticed or brought from further afield. In some cases, with some workers coming from hundreds of miles away, this created new racial dynamics to stations, with different ethnic groups making up the new labouring forces and the general population. Although offering gainful employment to these newcomers, an often-deliberate effort between employers to suppress wages in places with little other opportunities, meant that stations became sites of economic exploitation, where long and arduous work was combined with poor standards of living, and in the environs of some stations, at least, we see the emergence of slums.

The regular arrival of white Britons at these foreign places, in the form of sailors aboard warships seeking coal, also makes these stations interesting points of cultural, imperial, and encounter and racial interaction. Indeed, the plethora of accounts of coaling at overseas stations, recorded by the sailors themselves, reveals both an interest in the different labour forces found at these places, and the ingrained racial and imperial mindsets held at this

time. These recollections also show how sailors made comparisons between themselves and indigenous heavers, which allow us a glimpse as to how naval men viewed themselves, as imperialists, white men, Britons, and men serving in the Royal Navy.

The Men of the Victoria Bridge in British Canada, 1854-1859

Anh-Dao Bui Tran, Sorbonne University (Paris IV)

In August 1860, Canada was celebrating. The Prince of Wales was visiting Canada for the first time and was to inaugurate the Victoria Bridge in Montreal. The press abundantly described the festivities in the city and the crowd anxious to see the prince, and reaffirmed the loyalty of the Canadian subjects to the Crown. The Victoria Bridge was the first bridge to cross the St Lawrence and was ordered by the Grand Trunk Railway Company. It was designed by Robert Stephenson and built by a firm of famous British contractors. The completion of the bridge was a celebration of British skill, know-how, and endurance, as was also claimed by British engineers. And indeed, the bridge was a technical achievement. It was nearly three kilometres long and the river was one of the biggest known at the time. Winter was another difficulty: extreme cold made work difficult and even prevented it, thus shortening the construction period.

About 3,000 workers were employed each year in a country where there was a serious lack of labour. The contractors brought British workers from Lancashire and Cheshire at great cost. It appears that the other workers were mainly Irish, and probably French Canadians. I would like to investigate the consequences of the shortage of workers: clearly, there are at least two different sorts of migration here, since the British workers were recruited directly in Britain, while the Irish – or at least a number of them, emigrated to Canada on their own. It also implies that races were associated to different skills – the British being skilled workers and the Irish, for instance, considered unskilled, and this race-based hierarchy also has to be studied in this paper. At the same time, the employers' efforts to preserve their workers are interesting and have to be compared with labour policy in Britain. While this group sounds heterogeneous, it appears that workers strove regularly to demand better wages, and these movements were important enough to preoccupy employers. I will thus have to analyse the organisation of this group of workers of various nationalities and skills, and how they worked together. This also implies to examine the techniques, both British and alien, used by or imposed to the workers.

This communication will therefore try to answer two main questions. The first is about workers' migrations: what types of migrations occurred? What was the role of the contractors? Can we venture that different sorts of migrations corresponded to different levels of skilled workers? The second question is about the organisation of the workers: how they worked, ie what techniques they used, their demands, and what labour policies were adopted in Canada in comparison with Britain.

Race And Slavery As Determinants Of Female Labor Force Participation Rates, Cuba 1860-1907

Pilar Pérez-Fuentes, University of the Basque Country, Spain

Les études historiques sur les déterminants de l'activité féminine ont porté principalement sur les aspects économiques et démographiques qui affectent l'offre et la demande. Dans le cas des sociétés ethniquement complexes avec un héritage de l'esclavage, comme dans le cas de Cuba, cette approche ne suffit pas à expliquer les différences significatives dans les taux d'activité des femmes «blanches» et «colorés», tant dans l'étape de l'esclavage comme après son abolition en 1886. En 1861, 1899 et 1907 recensements différence persistante

et visible est dans les niveaux d'activité des femmes par l'appartenance à un groupe racial. Les résultats indiquent que l'expérience de l'esclavage et de la différence raciale agissent comme des variables importantes, bien que difficile à quantifier, dans les différentes expériences de travail des femmes comme Goldin (1977) a soulignée pour les EEUU.

L'étude commence avec des données agrégées du recensement de 1861 et fait également un micro-analysis des taux d'activité des femmes et de ses déterminants. Les listes nominatives de personnes dans les quartiers densément peuplés de la banlieue de La Havane, élaborées à partir du recensement, m'ont permis raconter l'occupation par groupe racial, par condition, par l'âge, par l'état matrimonial, par le cycle de la famille et par la composition des ménages où elles habitent. La importante différence dans les niveaux d'activité entre les femmes «blancs» et «de couleur» libres est relationnée avec l'existence de différentes expériences vis à vis la formation et la durabilité des ménages, le mariage et la maternité. Un ensemble de pratiques sociales liées à l'héritage de l'esclavage et de la différence raciale et qui sont étroitement liés à l'activité des femmes.

En deuxième lieu, les données obtenues à partir des recensements de 1899 et 1907 pour l'ensemble de l'île, et aussi pour La Havane et Santiago de Cuba, montrent la différence persistante dans les niveaux d'activité des femmes "blanches" et de "couleur". Les taux d'activité par âge et l'état matrimonial (concubinage y inclue) nous ramènent à établir un lien entre l'expérience de travail des femmes noires et mulâtres avec les pratiques familiales dérivées des conditions de vie et le mariage de l'esclavage -déjà aboli- par rapport à la cohabitation, l'illégitimité des enfants et des femmes chefs de ménages, conditions qui se traduit en désavantage économique de ces ménages et ces femmes.

La double stigmatisation du travail des femmes et la segmentation raciale des professions féminines montrées par les enquêtes révèlent comment l'empreinte de l'esclavage et les différences raciales persistent en tant que déterminants de l'activité des femmes pendant décennies.

Session 2 : Jeudi 2 novembre, 16h – 17h30

Imperial Labour and Social Mobility: How India Unmakes a British Working-Class Alexandra Lindgren-Gibson, University of Mississippi, USA

This paper asks how working in India changed the way members of the British working class conceived of their relationship to labour before and after imperial service. In the second half of the nineteenth century, British men and women of working-class origin made up half the British population of the Raj, but their stories have largely been elided from the historical record. In doing so, historians have failed to understand the interaction between the experience of imperial labour and class formation in imperial space. Members of the British working class in India experienced better material conditions, had access to servants, and played managerial roles while in the empire, but returned to their working-class communities of origin once their terms of service were up. Focusing on the histories of three families of working-class origin, I examine these families' self-conceptions as workers (soldiers, servants, railway workers) in an imperial environment where racial hierarchies fundamentally altered the way in class hierarchies functioned. Once these families left India—either to return to Britain or move on to other parts of the empire—they were forced to negotiate the aftereffects of having been temporarily outside the class structure of metropolitan Britain. I conclude that “working class” is a far more fluid category than historians have previously thought, rendered permeable by, among other phenomena, geography, race, marital status, and life stage.

Henry Winship's Scrapbook: Race and the Making of Railway Labour in Colonial India, 1853-1874

Amanda Armstrong, University of Michigan, USA

My presentation will consider the making of racially hierarchizing labour regimes along early colonial Indian railways. Drawing on sources from the Public Works Department, labour periodicals, and rail company employment records, the paper will approach the making of railway labour regimes by considering the codification of career tracks between Britain and India, the management of railway colonies, and the organization of volunteering units. With respect to the former – that is, career tracks – I will discuss how the East Indian Railway Company reserved the roles of driver and guard for European and Anglo-Indian employees, formalizing a ceiling on the promotion of so-called Native employees. This bifurcated career system made for an accelerated path of promotion for British labour migrants, while also giving a colonial cast to supervisory relationships on the rails. The association of higher grade railway workers with colonial authority was reinforced insofar as drivers and guards were deputized, invited to join volunteering units, and housed along with managers in railway colonies. To give a picture of the cultural life of railway colonies in the 1860s, I will devote the final third of my presentation to a discourse analysis of the Scrapbook of Henry Winship, a resident of the Howrah railway colony. In its 200 oversized pages, the Scrapbook contains clippings from rail labour periodicals, original portraits of drivers and volunteers, orientalist prints, theater programs, domestic images, landscape photographs, and other ephemera. I will find in the Scrapbook evidence for the cultural life of a colonial labour aristocracy in the making. My presentation will contextualize this remarkable source in relation to the labor processes, patterns of migration, institutions of social reproduction, and sanctioned violences that together gave shape to, and fractured along lines of race, early colonial Indian railway labour.

The Threat of the 'Thin-Lipped Negro Hybrids' to Agriculture: Puerto Rico's Farm Labor Migration in the Context of Global Capitalism

Ismael Garcia Colon, College of Staten Island, USA

As part of twentieth century's global capitalism, colonial labor migration and attempts at its management emerged from the intersection of citizenship practices, racial ideologies, and immigration policies. Using the case of Puerto Rican workers, this paper traces the specific ways power shaped their formation as particular colonial subjects within U.S. agriculture. I also explore their migration in relation to the policies of guesswork that allowed the hiring of Mexican and West Indian braceros. Puerto Rican migrant farmworkers share similar experiences with Algerians and French Caribbeans in France, South Koreans in Japan, British West Indians in the United Kingdom, and Dutch Caribbeans in the Netherlands. In 1948, Puerto Rican workers began to migrate to the U.S. Northeast through contracts sponsored by the government of Puerto Rico's Farm Labor Program. By promoting migration and assisting workers, the colonial government sought to eliminate unemployment on the islands while feeding the postwar labor demands of U.S. employers. Puerto Rican workers encountered a labor market in which employers praised the deportability of farmworkers and rendered domestic workers, like them, as undesirable for agriculture. The lobby efforts of colonial officials forced federal agencies and elected officials to pay attention to Puerto Rican workers. Moreover, the dominant definitions of citizenship based on cultural and racial homogeneity led many employers and officials to treat Puerto Ricans as deportable immigrants. Clarification of Puerto Ricans' legal status prompted the government of Puerto Rico to intervene on behalf of workers. Puerto Rican

farm labor migration mirrors the possible effects of open border policies for immigrant farmworkers throughout the world, and demonstrate the important role of colonial migrants in the history of global capitalism.

The Ministry of Labour and the North-African workers in the metropole from 1939 to the 1950's : managing recruitment, flows, job-placement and repatriation of colonial workers from French empire

Hugo Mulonnière, Université de Rouen

During economic interventionism periods of the 20th century and especially during World Wars, the French authorities and the Ministry of Labour organized recruitment of workers inside its colonial empire and abroad. This policy consists in recruiting workers on site, managing the workers flows, placing them in firms, and eventually repatriating them at the end of their contract of employment.

At that time, North-Africa appeared as a reservoir of cheap and unskilled workers and the state took specific measures toward them. In this presentation, I will study the policy driven by the Ministry of Labour toward workers from the North-African territories under French rule (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) in metropole, from the beginning of the Second World War to the 1950s. The case of North-African workers in France is remarkable because of their increasing number and their specific legal status (between strangers and nationals). This immigration is also atypical because the French authorities decided to create specific administrative services to monitor and control the workers.

In this presentation, I would like to analyse the way the Ministry of Labour manages the flows of North-African workers, from the massive recruitments during the war period, to its unsuccessful attempts to regulate the migrants flows after the re-establishing of freedom of movement between Algeria and metropole in 1946. This approach will lead us to study the professional and medical selection of the North-African workers implemented by the state.

After the war, the number of unemployed North-African workers on the metropole soil is dramatically increasing. The Ministry of Labour takes measures to fight against this phenomenon by promoting job-placement of North-Africans, which leads to apply the National preference principle to protect Algerians against the competition with foreign workers. This policy is surprising as, in 1940, it was used on the contrary to expel North-African workers.

Managing North-African workers flows also implies to organise their repatriation in North-Africa in case of long-term unemployment, employment injury or illness. In laws or circulars, the repatriation is described as a right for the migrants, whereas the reading of the archives show that it has been used by the Ministry of Labour as a tool to adjust the labour market.

Session 3 : Vendredi 3 novembre, 9h - 10h30

The Knights of Labor and an International Fraternal Tradition

Steven Parfitt, University of Nottingham

The Knights of Labor was the first great national movement created by American workers. It was also one of the largest global labour movements in the nineteenth century, with branches throughout the settler-states of the British Empire as well as in Belgium, France and Italy. I have elsewhere described the Knights as the “First-and-a-half International,” a movement midway in time between the First and Second Internationals and, in some

respects, combining features of both those two famous bodies. But what differentiated the Knights from them? Or to put the question another way: did the Knights of Labor represent a longer and wider working-class tradition, not socialist or anarchist but something else? In this paper I argue that the Knights were the largest, and one of the last, representatives of a working-class tradition that is often submerged in the writing of labour history: fraternalism. The fraternal tradition was a powerful one throughout the nineteenth century, but eventually came under attack from Marxists and others who wrote it off as mystical humbug and more or less disappeared by the early twentieth century. Before it died off, however, it helped to speed forward the development of the trade union movement and a distinctive working-class culture. The Knights, I argue, followed in the train of movements from the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union to the Brotherhood of the Union and many others besides. By exploring the global history of the Knights of Labor we can better explore this submerged tradition and show how all these various movements had reverberations and echoes across the British imperial world – and, as the Knights did, sometimes beyond it as well.

The 1919 mutinies in the French Armed Forces: Colonialism, Ethnicity and the Remaking of the French left

Matt Perry, University of Newcastle

1919 was a global moment of both the remaking of empire, not least the French empire, and a powerful contentious surge from below in metropolitan as well as colonial settings. During the Great War, the French Empire drew on what General Mangin called the 'la force noire' of colonial labour and troops to fill the factories and the trenches. As the war continued in the East after Armistice with Allied intervention against the fledgling Soviet Republic, a wave of army and naval mutinies undermined French efforts to topple the new regime. Using mutineer testimony, this paper considers their attitudes to class, military authority and ethnicity. This neglected imperial and colonial dimension of the revolt complicates our understanding of events that became the foundation myth of the French Communist Party, 'glorious hours' in which French military service personnel apparently fraternised with Russian workers in the spirit of internationalism. Not only was there a mutiny of colonial troops themselves in Siberia but also the French military authorities instrumentalised ethnic divisions to suppress the mutinies. Viewed more broadly, this French connection with the Russian Revolution was crucial to the remaking of the French left, feeding into the Congress of Tours the following year, and setting terms of debate for the left's relationship with the colonial question.

Comradeship Over Britannia's Borders. The Colonial Networks of the Labour Party in the Interwar Period

Quentin Gasteuil, Sorbonne University / ENS Paris-Saclay

Between the two World Wars, the way the Labour Party (LP) dealt with colonial issues resulted from a number of factors. Among them, the colonial networks in which it was involved played a crucial part. The aim of this communication is to focus on the relationships that some LP leaders and members had with people who were in or from the colonial territories of the British Empire. These links are decisive to understand why and how some colonial topics were or were not taken into considerations, or dealt with through political decisions and actions by the Party. In order to plunge into the making of the Labour Party's interwar colonial policy, I will suggest a deconstructive approach, stage by stage.

I will first characterise the individuals the Party was in contact with. I will examine the territories they belonged to, their political and social features, the nature of their relationships with the Party. I will then shed light on the members within the LP who were the interlocutors of these colonial activists, focusing especially on their individual profiles and their functions within the Party. As a second step, I will detail the way the results of these interactions circulated within the different levels of the Party, and will underline the means, the channels and the limits of this circulation. I intend to show how the information spread from individuals to the various sub-structures and members of the Party. Finally, I will study the influence of these networks on the wider policies and political actions of the Labour Party vis-à-vis colonial issues, both when it was in the opposition and when it was in office. On the other side, I will try to assess the influence of these connections on the activism of the LP's colonial contacts.

I will adopt a transnational approach – particularly relevant when colonial questions are at stake – of the Labour Party's activities, as opposed to the idea of a political structure withdrawn and marked out by national borders. On the whole, this presentation's purpose will be to demonstrate the complexity and the interdependence of the various factors involved in the elaboration and in the application of the Labour Party's political orientations.

Session 4 : vendredi 3 novembre, 11h – 12h30

Moored Mobilities of Coal and Labor: Natural Resources, Employment, and International Politics in Fushun Coalmine, 1905-1955 Limin Teh, Leiden University, Germany

Coal from Fushun (in present-day Liaoning province) fueled the movement of objects, capital, knowledge, and people throughout north and northeast China during the first half of the twentieth century. In turn, the extraction and transportation of Fushun coal rested on mooring previously mobile Chinese labor to the coalmine. Economic and labor histories often naturalize the rise of a stable labor force as an inevitable stage of industrial development when workers acclimated to the discipline of industrial work, severed ties with the countryside, settled permanently in urban centers, and identified with their occupation. However, an examination of workplace institutions and labor management discourses in Fushun coalmine through three regimes in the period 1905-1955 reveals how transnational processes of empire and nation-state formation and industrial development depended on the mobility of coal and coalmining knowledge, and how this dependency paradoxically contributed to the immobilizing or mooring of the Chinese labor force.

Negotiating Empires: British Imperial Subjects and the New American Empire in Panama, 1904-1920 Julie Greene, University of Maryland, USA

British Antillean migrants migrated by the tens of thousands from their home islands to the Panama Canal Zone during the early twentieth century for jobs as dynamiters, diggers, blacksmith helpers, laundresses, railroad workers, and similar occupations. In making that move they migrated also from the world of sugar plantations within the British Empire to a highly regimented and industrialized territory controlled by the United States at its moment of aggressive global expansionism. Thousands of them remained in Panama or the Canal Zone after the construction project ended, thousands others migrated back to their home

islands or onward to plantations across Central America, Cuba, or to the United States. Although historians have examined these laborers and the migratory routes they traveled from different perspectives, there remain many questions. They tend to be presented as an undifferentiated group—West Indians—even though in fact the many different islands from which they came provided them with widely different backgrounds, cultures, and circumstances. There has also been relatively little exploration of what it meant for these workers to be traveling amidst and between two different empires. Yet these workers were engaged in a multidirectional and complex migratory pattern that kept their lives intertwined with both the British colonialism of Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua, etc., as well as the younger empire of the United States that was busily creating a new and highly regimented and industrialized world in the Panama Canal Zone. The essay will focus on three major themes: the difference between conditions on their home islands and those in the new world of the Panama Canal Zone, and the impact of the migrations on both spheres; lessons learned by these men and women as they traveled across empires which made it possible, at times, for them to develop effective strategies for negotiating with the authorities; thirdly, the ways that their allegiances and imperial, racial, and gender identities shifted as they moved across the Americas.

This presentation will be based upon research at the United States Library of Congress, which holds testimonies written by canal workers; at the National Personnel Records Center (a branch of the U.S. National Archives) in St. Louis; at the University of the West Indies and the National Archives in Kingston, Jamaica; and at the National Archives of Great Britain.

Analogous conditions, contentious definitions: The internationalization of the colonial 'native' labour in the interwar period

Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra, Brazil

This paper analyses the internationalization (and transnationalization) of colonial 'forced labour' in the interwar period. It explores the workings of the ILO's Committee of Experts on Native Labour that between 1927 and 1930 assessed the variegated modalities of labour compulsion, frequently connected to 'conditions analogous to slavery'. The debates and disputes about the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 will be addressed. These were partially fostered by the representatives of European colonial empires, some of who were distinguished experts in colonial affairs. European colonial empires were mainly suspicious of the potential consequences of the internationalization of oversight over imperial and colonial *modi operandi*, namely about the exaction and organization of colonial manpower and its close articulation with the dual citizenship models (e.g. the *Indigénat* regimes). In order to provide a modicum of local dynamics, a brief assessment of some colonial case-studies will be offered. The gradual involvement of 'peripheral' actors in this debate, namely representatives from Asia and Africa, and the intervention of transnational and interimperial bodies, such as the Anti-Slavery Society or the International Colonial Institute, will also be addressed. The widening of international (and transnational) contributions to the emergence of colonial labour standards – the native labour code –, more or less driven by the goal to mitigate the widespread use of forced labour, was an important process, and will deserve a special place in the paper.

Local Struggles, Global Impacts: The Emergence and Diffusion of Industrial Dispute Tribunals across British Colonies

Zophia Edwards, Providence College, USA

Prior to 1938, workers in the British colonies had little to no institutions for collective bargaining or to deal with work-related grievances. However, in 1938, a Trades Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance – a legal template governing the establishment of tribunals to arbitrate and settle labor disputes – emerged and was rapidly adopted by British colonies across the globe; by 1941, twenty-three colonies had passed this legislation. This paper investigates what accounts for the emergence and subsequent promulgation of this tribunal throughout British colonies. Some scholarship describes the origin and subsequent global diffusion of similar institutional forms as a top-down process where institutions originating in the Western metropolitan core spreads to the rest of the world either by willful imitation or by forces of coercion. Others espouse a bottom-up account where institutions emerge and diffuse through the work of powerful social actors at the local/regional level. This historical analysis shows that the Trade Disputes Ordinance was neither the sole product of the British colonizers nor the work of particular strategic actors within the colonies. Rather, it emerged in response to labor uprisings in the colony of Trinidad and Tobago and through a dense set of interactions between local trade unions, British colonial administrators, and British private capital, with deep reference to political upheavals across the empire. These findings correct dominant metropole-to-colony understandings of the emergence and global diffusion of institutions and demonstrate the importance of attending to the interactions between the colonized and the colonizers and global impacts of local labor mobilization.

Session 5 : 14h – 15h30

British Imperialism and Anti-colonial Activism in India: Tales from across the Borders Ravi Kant Tripathi, Université Paris 13

As one of the first anti-colonial movements of the twentieth century, the Indian struggle for independence has attracted a vast and rich historiography. Much of this has been focused within the boundaries of India. Before the Indian nationalist intelligentsia began to associate itself with working class agitations towards the end of the 19th century, there were several agitations, including strikes by workers in the textile mills of Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Surat, Madras, Coimbatore, Wardha, and so on, in the railways and in the plantations. This study adds a transnational dimension by examining Indian anti-colonial activism in exile. The experience of political exile, both voluntary and involuntary, provides insight into the international dimensions of radical politics. This article tells the story of some of these exiled revolutionaries, looking at radical Indian nationalists in London (1905–10); the emergence of the Gadar movement in the United States (from 1914); and the early career of anti-colonial revolutionaries like M. N. Roy (1917–19) and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. It gauges the impact of global events including the First World War and the Bolshevik revolution on the thoughts, ideas, movements, collaborations and confrontations of these actors. While focusing on the articulations of anti-colonial consciousness among the Indian working class, the study interrogates the aspect of the role of the transnational labour activism in the ongoing struggle for India's freedom.

Labour and imperial security networks during the Meerut trial, 1919-33 Nick Owen, University of Oxford

This paper examines the interaction of two transnational networks under colonialism: (1) the labour network that linked British and Indian trade unions and their federations; national labour parties and their related international bodies; and national Communist

Parties and the Comintern; and (2) the imperial security network that connected the British, Indian and colonial intelligence services. Its focus is the Meerut Trial 1929-33, in which around thirty British and Indian trade unionists were put on trial for conspiracy, using evidence obtained by the intelligence services. Based on original research in archives in the CPGB and Labour History archives in Manchester, the archives of Indian Political Intelligence and the British security services, and the records of the Government of India, the paper examines the relative strengths and weakness of the two networks, using its empirical findings and network theory to criticise current conceptualisations of imperial networks.

Session 6 : vendredi 3 novembre, 16h – 17h30

Toiling decolonization: the international and transnational dynamics of social and labour debates in late colonialism (1945-1962)

José Pedro Monteiro, Centre de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra, Brazil

After 1945, as racialized discriminatory juridical and political imperial frameworks became increasingly challenged, debates on social policies and practices in the colonial territories became an intensely disputed terrain. Variegated political and societal imaginations coalesced around the topic: as means to strengthen imperial legitimacy and existence, as devices to foster greater equality within imperial formations, or as a privileged topic to contest colonialism and advance self-determination claims. This was not, to be sure, a colonial or imperial bounded process. International actors and transnational networks played a crucial role in it.

In this presentation we will focus on the international and transnational reverberations of these debates. First, by illuminating how international institutions and heterogeneous transnational coalitions shaped colonial social policies and politics. Second, how the associated colonial and imperial events and initiatives impacted upon the global order, marked by decolonization and cold war.

In order to do so, this presentation will focus on different formations, processes and events. It will explore diverse imperial formations, that is, all formal European colonial empires but also South Africa. Different institutional actors that played a decisive role like the UN and ILO but also inter-imperial ones such as the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA) will be addressed as well. In order to limit the scope of the presentation and to provide insightful historical observatories, specific contentious topics such as forced labour, migrations, or “native” trade unions will be duly scrutinized. By focusing on processes such as the formation of loose networks or particular initiatives against colonial powers in international institutions, this presentation will illuminate the complex, nuanced ways international and transnational debates on colonial social policy interacted with, and shaped the variegated and protracted trajectories of imperial disengagement. Therefore, actors such as colonial and regional trade union federations or institutions such as the International League for Human Rights or the American Committee on Africa will be given due attention.

Upsurge in the Kericho Valley: Plantation Strikes in Kenya’s Tea Sector 1959-60

David Hyde, University of East London

The plantation strikes which erupted during 1960, involved more strikes and strikers than the previous twenty years taken together. They took place as part of distinct strike waves which touched almost all sectors of the Kenya’s economy and its public services which

plagued the decolonisation process during 1960-63 and beyond. The aim here is to examine the initial strike waves which triggered this short but pivotal era of struggle which has been overlooked. Throughout this period Kericho district in Western Kenya, in conjunction with Central Province, was the location for successive waves of plantation strikes. Here, during 1960 alone, there were 17 recorded disputes, including two general strikes. In contrast to their counterparts on the coffee plantations in Central Province, tea labourers confronted more centralised adversaries in the form of a handful of plantation companies which more or less monopolised the entire industry. The paper discerns a pattern of struggle between the shifting epicentres of Limuru's tea plantations, alongside the coffee producing districts of Thika and Kiambu in Central province, and the Kericho Valley's tea plantations. In all cases these strike waves drew in processing factories, pockets of industry and local townships. The tea strikes collided with preparations for African majority government and were an essential component of the strike waves which challenged the nature of the nationalist transition to independence in which the African bourgeoisie stood to become the principal beneficiaries. The work draws upon a wide range of plantation case studies throughout the Kericho Valley and attempts to bring out the organic interconnectedness of the strike movement which veered between unity and fragmentation. This examination of the tea strikes attempts to reopen unresolved issues about the role and influence of organised labour within Kenya's independence struggle.

The Role of Labour in Anti-colonial Struggles in Nigeria **Lucky Igohosa Ugbudian, FUNAI, Nigeria**

The paper focuses on the role of labour in anti-colonial struggles in Nigeria. The formal colonisation of Nigeria led to the introduction of wage labour in the country which was hitherto unknown. The untold hardship suffered by the new wage labour as a result of exploitative taxation, poor wages and frequent retrenchment culminated in the formation and radicalisation of the unions. Some of the major labour unions formed included Civil Service Union (CEU) in 1912, National Union of Teachers (NUT) in 1931 and National Union of railwaymen (NUR) in 1932. Reflecting on archival and documents analysed interpretively and qualitatively revealed that the Labour played key role in anti-colonial struggles in the country through its organisational and mobilisational as well as strategic position in the colonial economy thus used strikes, sit-outs amongst others to complement the efforts of the political nationalists. The finding also showed that labour became more active in the anti-colonial struggles following the economic challenges that heralded the conclusion of the Second World War. The collaboration and understanding between the nationalists and the labour put more pressures on the British. The consequence of the labour role in the anti-colonial struggles was low production and capacity utilisation which affected the exploitative objective of the colonial objective. The paper concludes by submitting that the role of labour in the anti-colonial struggles cannot be overemphasized because it was part and occupied central and strategic position in the nationalist struggles that culminated in Nigerian independence in 1960.