

Radhika Singha. pp.1-33. Please ignore endnotes

A 'proper passport' for the colony: border crossing in British India, 1882-1920'

Home is the place where
When you have to go there
They have to take you back

(Robert Frost, Death of the hired man)

(T)he final result would be a standardised Indian passport, differing only in minor detail from the standardised form of the whole Empire and valid all the world over. ¹

There has been a spate of historical work on the place of the passport in the emergence of an international order of states made up of mutually exclusive bodies of citizens.² Torpey locates the modern passport in the process by which nineteenth century nation-states took individual citizens into a closer documentary embrace, to enforce certain demands such as military service or taxes, but also to confer certain entitlements such as a vote or a pension. National space was demarcated in procedures and documents which codified and institutionalised the dividing line between the citizen and the foreigner. The crystallisation of an international system of passports during World War One was a landmark in the emergence of these more 'hard-edged' nation states. Torpey focuses on the U.S.A and West Europe and concludes that modern documentary controls over movement are an instance of powerful Western states imposing their ways on the rest of the world. ³ However empire as a political form, imperialist rivalry and the colonial periphery are not really the theme of this fine monograph.

Working in the colonial dimension Radhika Mongia assesses the passport as a document, which seemed to uphold a 'universal' principal of territorial sovereignty, but institutionalised a race-discriminatory immigration regime as an aspect of nation formation.⁴ Mongia's important insights derive from a close focus on the 'colour-bar' imposed by colonies of white settlement. However passport regimes had to work in a complex and shifting range of objectives. Keeping people moving in certain channels could be as important as keeping them back. India was crucial to the British empire as the hub of various circulations of population around the Indian Ocean,. A focus on these might diversify the points from which a global change such as 'passport-isation' can be evaluated and deepen the pre-national and trans-national perspectives being discovered anew in histories of empire.⁵

In January 1915 a new design of passport was introduced to war-time Britain and on 30 November

a passport was made compulsory for all British subjects leaving the U.K. On 17 July 1916 the Secretary of State for India suggested that the Government of India provide a passport for all European British subjects, Indian British subjects and subjects of native states setting out for British dominions and colonies.⁶ It took eight months to work out the Defence of India passport rules of 22 March 1917 which made a passport compulsory for all travelers entering and leaving India by sea.⁷ According to a Foreign Department note, India was the last of the territories of empire to introduce the system.⁸ Reporting back to the Secretary of State, Viceroy Chelmsford pointed out that they had had to make

a few special exemptions...naval and military forces, crews of overseas vessels, pilgrims and also cooly traffic with Ceylon and the Malay States.⁹

What kind of figures do we have here? By November 1918, 1.3 million combatants and non-combatants would be despatched from Indian ports to various theatres of war overseas.¹⁰ On the eve of world war one, some 52,000 sea-men, 17.5 per cent of those on British ships, were lascars from the sub-continent. About 200,000 people, mainly labourers, travelled annually from the Madras Presidency to Ceylon and the Federated Malay States.¹¹ And even at the height of the war some 1,300 pilgrims from India turned up at Medina in 1917 in the performance of the Hajj.¹²

Imperial imperatives, and international relations 'from below'

British officials in nineteenth-century India used the word 'passport' quite loosely to refer to a variety of travel documents. It was only in 1856 that the Foreign Department of the Government of India issued a circular order prohibiting district officers from issuing passports or *rahdari parwanas* for internal travel, a prohibition enforced with some consistency only from 1864.¹³ The word 'emigration' was used for various kinds of travel across India's borders, for instance when discussing the Hajj movement of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca.¹⁴ The official position, re-iterated by the Commerce and Industry Department in August 1916 when asked to consider a compulsory passport was that the Government of India allowed a freedom of emigration except in the case of indentured labour.¹⁵

Underlying this stance were imperial imperatives requiring a porosity of Indian borders for different orders of population mobility. These ranged from 'free' labour migration to harbours, dock-works, mines and plantations of Burma, Ceylon and Malaya dominated by British capital, geopolitical ambitions in Ottoman territory bound up with sea-bound pilgrim traffic towards the Hijaz, and the mobilization of lascars, soldiers and military labour for empire. Recent evaluations of

colonial mapping and surveying emphasize that they conceptualized a grid of harder, more lineal territorial boundaries over the landscape. The older geo-political accounts remind us that from 1878 the pink tide of empire was flowing outwards from the frontiers of India. The British empire claimed spheres of influence and extra-territorial jurisdiction around the Indian Ocean, not only in the superior person of the European British subject, but also in the humbler figure of the 'British subject, native of India'. In the 1870s and 1880s this generated a substantial discussion about regulating access to a British Indian passport. Merchants with Indian connections based in the Hijaz, Siam or Persia would sometimes register with the British consulate and ask for a passport, if they sought leverage against local officials, claimed trading privileges, or wanted to evade taxation, corvee or conscription.¹⁶ In 1912 trafficking in British Indian passports in Central Asia was significant enough to make the Government of India prescribe a more detailed descriptive roll.¹⁷

In the early twentieth century another trope of discussion opened up around the passport because of restrictions against the emigration of Indians to colonies and dominions of empire claimed for white settler nationhood. The Government of India took the position that it could inform Indians of immigration restrictions and the risk of being turned away, but would not prevent them from leaving. However, drawing upon a special passport worked out for Australia in 1904 the Government of India began to broker a kind of conditional mobility. The stance it took was that race discrimination was at root a 'mistaken' equation of all Indians with the figure of the illiterate, impoverished 'coolie-menial-migrant'. The British Indian passport began to be conceptualized as an official attestation of civic virtue, a document meant only for men of means or of 'education and respectability'. Such men could potentially be accepted as settlers anywhere in empire, but if not, the passport would at least confirm that the bearer had a properly documented identity and nationality to which he or she could be returned. By helping to prise apart 'travel' from 'settlement' the government hoped the British Indian passport could keep open a socially restricted but geographically empire-wide circuit of mobility. 'Free' labour migration had to be contained within geographically demarcated circuits where there was a great demand for it on plantations and mines, and official travel documentation was less necessary because settlement could be accommodated.

This effort to manage the 'color bar' was beleaguered by a certain aspiration to social mobility, linked to the increased density of passenger traffic, and circuits of information and credit around the Indian Ocean from the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ As British Indian subjects searched for opportunity along these routes they also began to press against restrictions on entry and settlement in prosperous parts of the empire, sometimes by evasions and illegalities, sometimes by

testing institutional barriers and forcing open debates about the norms of citizenship.

Official anxiety that circuits of 'free migration' were broadening out of control was intensified by the outbreak of war in 1914. However the value of passport controls for political surveillance had to be weighed against the need to keep India's borders porous for the movement of labour, something which became even more vital because of the man-power needs of the army and war-demand for the product of overseas mines and plantations. One response was to formulate a compulsory passport regime and work in substantial exemptions. However some of these exemptions also expose certain problem areas in colonial management of mobility. They reveal the effort of populations under formal or informal imperial rule in Africa, Arabia and Asia to retain some agency in the order of travel and migration being worked out by the Euro-American world and presented as the international norm. What we have here sometimes, in Selcuk Esenbel's felicitous formulation is the struggle to maintain 'an alternative, ambivalent arena of international relations between these so-called 'Non-Western regions ...parallel to the interstate relations forged by the formal treaties and diplomacy dominated by the Western powers.'¹⁹To illustrate this I take up the exemption of *pardah* and *gosha* Muslim and Hindu women, that is, those who observed certain norms of veiling, from passport photographs and the exemption of Muslim pilgrims travelling to Mecca and to Basra from the compulsory passport system.

In the turmoil of the years 1919-1922, the colonial executive realized the full potential of the passport as an instrument of political control and surveillance. A major concern was to keep track of Indians who had been out there somewhere during the war in all the upheavals of pan-Islamic anti-imperialism, Bolshevism, radical nationalism and even just in the milieu of 'advanced democracy'. The use of the passport to enforce 'loyalty' was the point of conflict with the Indian intelligentsia, amenable otherwise to a flattering distinction from the coolie to preserve their own mobility.

Indian representatives in the Imperial Legislative Council insisted that Indians could not be excluded from India whatever the length of their stay outside, but agreed that passport surveillance would be needed to maintain internal harmony in a territorially bounded national society. For the special investment of the Indian intelligentsia in territorial bordering we also have to move to the intense debates over the Indian emigration Act of 1922. Some historians have argued that for European states, and white-settler colonies the *sine qua non* of national sovereignty became the right to decide on immigration policy. For Indian political elites it was the theme of emigration, their determined bid to nationalize the unskilled labour market, which forged a connection between territory and

their claim to sovereignty.

The documentary pile

To understand why the Foreign Department passport began to acquire a certain uniqueness as a document of identity and nationality, one has to examine it within the spectrum of other colonial travel documents with which it co-existed upto the war. In 1847, the East India Company regularized its arrangements to provide British subjects, native or European, setting out from its Indian territories with a 'a document attesting their right to the protection of the British Crown'.²⁰ For a fee of Rs.1/ a passport could be acquired either directly from the Foreign Department at Calcutta, or through the local governments of Bombay and Madras.²¹

A.B a British subject, resident of _____, by profession _____ aged ____ being about to proceed to _____ for the purpose (whether trade or recreation or pilgrimage). This is to certify that he is entitled to British Consular protection. '

By order

Signed by the Secretary or his Deputy.

The context was one in which the Ottoman government had extended passport regulations to its Arabian provinces, but was persuaded to withdraw this demand for Muslim pilgrims from India. The Foreign Department maintained its arrangement but there was no law which compelled an Indian subject to take a passport for entering or leaving India, and in strictly legal terms this was the position upto March 1917.²²

The pilgrim passport:

In 1880, the Ottoman government, under international pressure to bring pilgrim traffic to the Hijaz under sanitary management, demanded a passport again. The Government of India too began to be called upon to ensure that Muslim pilgrims setting out for the Hajj were routed through selected ports, counted out and properly apportioned between steam-ships monitored for epidemic disease. In 1882 it formulated a special pilgrim passport and continued to issue it even though Ottoman interest in it waned again.²³ The Home Department issued the pilgrim passport, not the Foreign Department, an indication that when it came to the seasonal Hajj 'migration' the gaze of the Government of India ranged anxiously inwards before it moved outwards to the imperial frame. The pilgrim passport was cast as a facility freely given to British Muslim subjects so that they could call upon consular assistance should they need it, but there was no compulsion to take one. Pilgrim passports stamped with the seal of the Home Secretary were sent in bundles to local governments, for distribution under the signature of the district officer. They were issued without a fee, and without any effort to verify individual particulars.²⁴ These bundles lay largely unutilized, an indication that

pilgrims themselves had no great incentive to take one. The bulk of pilgrim passports were actually disbursed at Bombay, the major port of embarkation for Jidda, under the signature of the Bombay Commissioner of Police. It is at this location that one discovers the symbolic function of the pilgrim passport. It was part of a package of measures by which, with a minimum of expense, the Government of India wanted to demonstrate its medical and sanitary management of the sea-borne Hajj traffic from India.

As Britain expanded her influence along the Red Sea, the figure of 'the Hindi' in the Hijaz, the pilgrim, sojourner or settler from the Indian sub-continent began to transmute into the figure of the 'Mohammedan British Indian subject.' The pilgrim passport specifically stated that the British government did not undertake to bring back pauper pilgrims. But if the poor pilgrim was going to be cast as a British subject, then Ottoman authorities had both a ground on which to ask for their speedier repatriation after the Hajj and a political reason to do so. From Hajj season to Hajj season the discussion of the pilgrim traffic came repetitively back to the problem of arranging passage home for the 'pauper pilgrim'. In the reluctant engagement of the Government of India with this issue one can see a connection emerging between the idea of sheltering 'national' borders and a state obligation to bring the subject back.

In this context the many potential uses of a compulsory pilgrim passport were repeatedly brought to the attention of the Government of India by hints from the Sublime Porte, international sanitary conferences, and the British consular establishment. It could be deployed to filter out the destitute, to grasp the pilgrim traffic statistically, and to extend political surveillance over 'bigots and malcontents.' It was pointed out that other imperial powers, the French, the Dutch and the Russian, used a deposit or compulsory passport system to prevent the most indigent from setting out for the Hijaz.

Why did the Government of India consistently back away from the many 'governmental' capacities of a compulsory pilgrim passport? A part of the answer is that the poor pilgrim's trek was not merely a problem for British empire but a political resource, strengthening its claims over access routes into Ottoman domains and extending its sphere of influence. The contention that the British empire gave Muslim subjects full 'freedom to travel to fulfill a religious obligation' also allowed it to claim a legitimacy of rule over Muslim populations and to resist crippling quarantine regimes in the Red Sea.

Alien passes: the frontier Hajji

In 1882 the Government also authorised the Commissioner of Police, Bombay to issue informal passes, to pilgrims from Chinese and Russian Turkestan, and Afghanistan, stating that they were 'quiet and orderly', so they could be helped to embark.²⁵ This was an interesting description. In other contexts, even as empire pressed outwards along the north western frontier of India in the 1870s, images of the aggressive Kabuli, the *badmaash* Pathan, and the fanatic frontier maulvi, populated the imagination of colonial officers.²⁶ Peripatetic bands from territories along and across the north west frontier were cast as unruly elements who had to be prevented from setting up migrant clusters in the interior, and intimidating the non-martial populations of India.²⁷ In the large metropolis the colonial police began to treat trans-frontier sojourners as an aggressive component of the urban lower classes.²⁸ In this instance however the Foreign Department weighed the advantages of 'interchange of information and intercourse' against the danger of admitting 'fanatics, spies and sedition mongers...' and decided it would be 'more in accordance with English habits and principles' to give foreign pilgrims facilities.²⁹

The Government of India may have wanted to impress trans-frontier Hajjis with the contrast between their 'backward' polities and a government capable of providing the documentation, inspection and licenced pilgrim ships which Muslims now needed to fulfill their religious obligations. When a fee of Rs 2/- seemed to discourage applications it was withdrawn.³⁰ Rivalry with Russia over Central Asian trade routes and the motto of 'free trade' in its dealings with China certainly shaped the decision to allow Muslim pilgrims to cross over from Chinese and Russian Turkestan into Ladakh and Yarkhand on their way down to Bombay. The Government of India hoped that the freedom with which it gave Hajjis access to its routes would redound to its credit in comparison with Tsarist passport restrictions on pilgrims.

Foreign pilgrims were to be given a 'pass' not a passport, on the grounds that Britain could not assume responsibility for them outside India. In addition, the alien pass was to be issued only in Bombay, so they did not loiter about elsewhere.. The police strategy was to use some rough surveillance over the railways to get trans-frontier Hajjis down to Bombay by the most direct route, so that they did not veer off en-route, setting up supposedly turbulent 'colonies' in the interior, particularly in Muslim princely states like Hyderabad.³¹

'Assisted' labour migration, and coolie agreements

In the 1840s the East India Company's major pre-occupation with travel documents focussed on the registration documents which channelised coolies from India to the expanding sugar sector of British empire.³² These 'coolie agreements' served a vital ideological function.. They were

supposed to establish that indenture was not a re-introduction of slavery but a state-regulated form of 'assisted migration' based on a 'voluntary contract' recorded before the district magistrate.³³ What the contract didn't record was that it would be enforced by penal provisions often buttressed by local vagrancy laws. At the other end of the journey the documentation served the disciplinary purposes of binding the coolie to a five- year engagement with a particular plantation owner, and to remarkably stagnant wages.³⁴ The 'protection' which the Government of India offered here was merely of a last resort kind. After ten years the employer was bound to give a paid passage home if the coolie wanted it, what some officials described ironically as the 'sucked orange' principle. But the return passage also buttressed the contention that such a long period of indenture, reinforced by penal law, was required because the importing colony and the employer had paid for passage there and back.

In 1848, one suggestion was that emigration agents at ports, those appointed by the governments of Mauritius, British Guiana and the West Indies to organise documentation and departure for indentured labourers could issue passports to other travellers as well.³⁵ The objection was that they were not officers of the Government of India. They were nominated and paid for by the colonies which had been permitted to import labour on certain terms from India and they dealt with 'natives of a different class'.³⁶ The symbolic difference therefore between the passport which invoked 'the protection of the British crown' and 'coolie agreements' structuring a class-defined migration, mostly within empire, was established quite early.

'Assisted' migration, where the person left under an agreement or contract to labour for hire overseas, was supposed to take place only within a state-documented stream.³⁷ There was no such restriction on labour mobility between India, Burma, Ceylon and the Federated Malay States, organized through debt bonds, but characterized as 'free labour migration'. The argument was that these places were close enough for emigrants to know about conditions of work, in theory employers required only a month's notice, and they could return on their own.

It was when 'free labour migration' was attempted beyond these circuits, across the Pacific to Canada and Australia, or when ex-indentured labourers attempted to set up as settlers in Natal on the expiry of their contracts, that the Government's stance of non-intervention ran into difficulty. Adding to the problem were 'passenger Indians' that is, merchants, professionals, shop-assistants and other men of the middling sort from India, distinguished from 'steerage' that is from the mass of labourers, by the fact that they could pay for first or second class passage and support themselves, but also facing the colour-bar.

The Australian passport

A special passport for Australia designed and issued by the Department of Revenue and Agriculture in India provided a framework for seeking a solution.³⁸ The Australian Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 kept out 'Asiatics' by a dictation test in a European language. The Governor-General of Australia, Lord Northcote, offered to permit 'bona fide' Indian merchants, students and tourists to enter Australia and stay for upto a year without the dictation test 'provided they were in possession of passports from the Indian Government *sufficiently* identifying them and *specifying* the purpose and probable duration of their visit.' These passports were not meant for petty traders, artisans or labourers or 'those whose object was to settle in Australia'.³⁹

The Australian passport was designed as one which gave a very complete return address indeed.⁴⁰ District officers in India were instructed not to hand out a passport application for Australia if the person did not fit the desired social profile.⁴¹ However the government refused to commit itself to preventing or punishing those who left for Australia without passports. It said it had no authorisation under Indian Emigration Law to prevent Indians from leaving without passports for a country where passports had been made a condition of entry.⁴²

Interestingly the very narrowness of the social categories to whom an Australian passport could be issued produced a collective travel document. In the Foreign Department passport the applicant could enter the names only of his wife and children. In the 'Australian passport' the holder could also enter the names of servants, dependants and relatives other than his wife and children. These companions and attendants could not have their individual passport because they did not qualify as 'bonafide tourists, merchants and students'.⁴³ In general the Government of India displayed a readiness to permit the eminent personage, whether a British officer taking a shooting party into Central Asia, or an Indian notable making the journey to Mecca to travel literally as an estate, taking on the single travel document all the resources needed to reproduce status abroad.

A passport is not a right

In the following years the Government of India seemed to guide the Foreign Department passport towards the kind of understanding reached over the Australian passport. It was becoming clear that in a context where fresh immigration restrictions were piling up, any free issue of passports would also expose their limited viability. The operative phrase was that the applicant had to be a 'fit and proper person to hold a passport.' In 1911, government spelt out the new position:

the mere fact of being a British subject or a subject of a protected Native State

does not imply any vested right to claim a passport....passports should not ordinarily be granted to persons of doubtful character or respectability.⁴⁴

To discourage the labourer, small peasant or petty retailer from setting out for British Columbia, California, Australia, or Argentina District Magistrates began to be instructed not to give them certificates of identity, and local governments to refuse a passport.⁴⁵ The Protector of Emigrants at Bombay began to withhold embarkation tickets which made ship-owners wary of taking them as passengers.⁴⁶ The official position was still one of non-intervention in 'free migration', so the argument used here was that such endeavours were actually a surreptitious form of 'assisted' labour migration, resembling indenture, which was prohibited except under state sanction and supervision.⁴⁷ This was the contention even if the would-be emigrant was a reasonably solvent traveller, for instance a substantial peasant, or an ex-soldier with a pension, men who could mobilise money for passage from kinship networks or get credit from a travel broker. In their rousing account of Sikh settlers in Canada, Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh find it necessary to re-assure their readers that this was a stream of sturdy peasant entrepreneurs, not of destitute submissive coolies: These people, unlike the Tamils and Telegus, came from the well- to do class of peasant proprietors. They were strong of body and extremely touchy on questions of personal honour.⁴⁸

On a paternalist note, officials contended that these men had been duped into leaving by 'labour recruiters in disguise' who painted a rosy prospect for them. The problem was that the nature of this offence was not clear.⁴⁹ Just before the war the Government began to explore the legal forms in which it could prosecute for an offence it termed 'inducing to emigrate by false representation'⁵⁰ Would-be emigrants setting off in the wrong direction were not punished, or held back forcibly, but the lack of state verified 'bonafides' became a problem. When some aspirants of the 'agricultural and labouring classes' complained to the Collector of Surat that Government dissuaded them from going to the USA 'because they might get too rich', they had not got it entirely wrong.⁵¹ Men of the humbler sort began to find it so difficult to get official documentation if they sought social mobility in the wrong direction that certificates of identity became 'a saleable commodity' transferred from one person to another by so-called touts or 'disguised labour recruiters'.⁵²

Certificates of identity

The needs of political surveillance may explain why another document of identity was issued so much more frequently than the passport and often used in lieu of it, without official objections. In 1899, the Home Department, wanting to keep track of travelling Indian literati, instructed officials to encourage students and others going to England, Japan and America to take a certificate of identity.⁵³

The certificate of identity set out name, address and nationality, and could be attested by the district magistrate, the Commissioner of Police, or the British Political Agent of a princely state. It did not have to be processed through any higher official level.⁵⁴ It could be issued much more freely than the passport because the Government of India did not feel burdened with responsibility for securing entry at the other end.⁵⁵ Surveillance was the primary concern, not holding the traveller back.⁵⁶ The certificate helped to trace relatives if the student ran out of funds, but it too began to commit a reluctant government to organize repatriation.⁵⁷

Well into war-time, we find the Secretary of State complaining that persons 'of seditious tendencies' had entered Allied and Neutral countries, using certificates of identity.⁵⁸ It was only on 8 March 1916 that the Government of India instructed local governments not to issue the certificate of identity to persons of 'doubtful loyalty'. It now had to carry an endorsement in red ink 'This certificate is not a passport and does not of itself entitle the holder to a passport.'⁵⁹ With the introduction of a compulsory passport in March 1917, certificates of identity were terminated.⁶⁰

War measures :foreigners, political undesirables (and unwanted emigrants?)

With the declaration of war the colonial executive began to appropriate new powers over entry and exit across India's borders, and residence and travel within, at first targeting only foreigners, and 'political undesirables.' A Foreigner's Ordinance of 20 August 1914 gave the Governor General in Council powers to prohibit and regulate the entry, departure and residence of foreigners in India and intervene in their trade, business and property.⁶¹ The British business community in India found a very conducive atmosphere in which to wreck competitors on suspicion of German links or 'Hunnish' sympathies.⁶²

One kind of 'political undesirable' was located in the sea-lanes from India touching upon Siam, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai. Among the deck-passengers leaving from Calcutta for ports of the Far East, wrote a Bengal official, were Punjabis 'peasant proprietors of fairly good standing, more or less literate in their own language', who took service as 'watchmen, constables, overseers on estates and petty contractors.'⁶³ This was the route along which they gathered resources to set out further for Australia, British Columbia and California, but were often kept in circulation because of immigration restrictions.⁶⁴ During the war, police officers began to meet returning steamers from Canada and the Far East and to keep passenger lists.⁶⁵ The departure of men from Punjab and the United Provinces as watchmen and guards in Singapore and Malaya was categorized as 'assisted'

migration and prohibited.⁶⁶

The declaration of war with Turkey in November 1914 and pan-Islamic dissidence also focussed official suspicion on merchants and maulvis in the routes of pilgrimage and trade between Arabia, India and South-East Asia.⁶⁷ The other anxiety was about 'political criminals', that is militant nationalists among India literati and students, who had evaded arrest by slipping out to neutral countries like Japan or the U.S.A. or by tarrying in France.⁶⁸ A defence of India rule of 22 June 1916 gave local Governments a blanket authority to stop 'undesirables' from leaving India by land or sea.⁶⁹

Yet it is the figure of the returning colonial subject, contaminated by 'disaffection' which evoked particular anxiety. On 5 September 1914 an Ingress into India ordinance extended the provisions of the Foreigner's Ordinance to any other person entering British India who might endanger the 'safety, interests or tranquillity' of the State.⁷⁰ He would be registered on entry, and his descriptive particulars recorded. He could be required to proceed to a particular place, and restricted to residence and movement in that area. There was one significant difference from the Foreigner's Ordinance: 'The power to prohibit entry...shall not be exercised.'⁷¹

The first time the ordinance was used was on 29 September 1914, by the Bengal government, against Punjabi émigrés on the Komagata Maru, a ship chartered by Gurdit Singh to take 376 men, some of them war veterans from Hong Kong to Vancouver. Gurdit Singh epitomises the narrative of entrepreneurial migration made possible by the framework of empire. His family owned a few acres in Amritsar, Punjab, and he had taken up contract work in Singapore and Malaya, before shifting to Hong Kong.⁷² Turned away from Victoria harbour, the passengers were not allowed to disembark at Hong Kong or Singapore but brought to Calcutta where they discovered that they were to be interned in villages in the Punjab.⁷³

Between 1915-16, using the Ingress into India ordinance, some 3000 individuals would be put under area restrictions in Punjab. The dangerous migrant was to be contained perhaps even cleansed by re-planting him within some idealized rural hierarchy. Some redeemed their mobility by joining the army. By invoking the success of this experiment, the Punjab Government was allowed the unusual privilege of putting through a local criminal enactment the Punjab Habitual Offenders Act (Act V of 1918). Area restrictions and pre-emptive surveillance, which had hitherto been applied only to the so-called 'criminal tribes' of India could now be used against a new criminal figure, the 'habitual offender'.⁷⁴

On 29 August 1916 as the Government of India grappled to formulate a compulsory passport, local governments were instructed to advise all travellers to take out a passport, but this instruction did not apply to the steerage passenger, that is to the labourer.⁷⁵ The Bombay Government went ahead and began to prevent travellers leaving for East Africa and South Africa without taking a passport⁷⁶ The Foreign Department was not particularly perturbed :

We have thus come to the position of allowing the forcible detention of passengers without passports sailing to countries where passports are required. For this no legal sanction exists, but it is obviously the 'commonsense thing to do, in everybody's interests; and no one is in the least likely to dispute the exercise of this power. ⁷⁷

A traveller could be prevented now from leaving without a passport. But on what grounds could a passport be refused? Should the decision simply rest on the respectability of the applicant, as outlined in the 1911 rules. Or were the immigration restrictions of the receiving territory to be taken into account as well. During the war, such restrictions could be termed a 'war measure' in which the Government of India was bound to co-operate.⁷⁸ A shift in position was taking place but it was acknowledged fully only in 1921. ⁷⁹

The standardized empire –wide passport: a civilised travel regime for the colony

The Government of India had been much quicker to follow the lead given by Britain in introducing a new passport design than in making it compulsory for all travellers. In place of a single sheet of white paper the new passport introduced to Britain on 19 January 1915 was a single sheet of pink paper folded between board covers bound in blue with a gold crest. There was a designated space now for a photograph of the bearer, and a more detailed column for individual description.⁸⁰ The British Foreign Office suggested that India too adopt this form since it was desirable to have a uniform passport system throughout empire.⁸¹

The correspondence on standardization suggests that the project of sending Indian subjects out with passports which looked like the passport of the U.K, or any other 'civilised' polity had a certain appeal for Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. The rapid raising of passport and visa barriers during the war and the expectation of fresh immigration restrictions, particularly from South Africa convinced the Government of India that it had to anticipate future demands by being ready with 'complete passports' that is with those which were intelligible anywhere. ⁸² To use a contemporary phrase, the Government of India was feeling the pressures of having to 'go global' in border management. If

one steps back further in time one can distinguish another drive as well. From Viceroy Curzon onwards the Government of India had begun to complain that the importance of India to empire and the increased political complexity of ruling it was not sufficiently appreciated in London. Unlike white settler colonies and dominions it could not claim autonomy on the platform of self-government, but sought to do so on the strength of its capacities as a modern executive. A 'proper' passport modeled on the British passport would demonstrate this ability and complement the agenda of generating 'empire-mindedness' in a dependent colony.

At this point there were eight Foreign Department passports, four printed in black ink for various categories of 'British subject', and the same printed in red ink for cases in which wife and children family members were entered on the same passport.⁸³

The forms distinguished the following legal frames for the status of British subject:

Form A. British subject by birth

Form B. British subject by naturalisation in the U.K.

Form B1. British Indian or British Colonial subjects by naturalisation (within the limits of His Majesty's Indian Empire, or British Colony or Possession)

Form C. Natural born subject of a native state in India in subordinate alliance with His Majesty.⁸⁴

This multiplicity of forms began to be regarded as something less than a 'proper' passport., and their specificities as local quirks which might compromise, the international legibility of the Indian passport. H.V.Biscoe summed up the views of the Foreign and Political Department:

(I)n these times when passports are closely scrutinised, it is most desirable that they should be in a standard and easily recognisable form. At present we have eight forms, of which the opinion was expressed, by the Hon'ble Member for the Legislative Department in 1883 that they were not passports at all, with which I venture to express my humble concurrence.⁸⁵

The decision in India was to use, with some modifications, the British Foreign Office form, but the simpler wording of the British consular passport. The Foreign Office agreed provided the bearer's photograph was always attached.⁸⁶ The wording of the new British Indian passport was as follows:

These are to request and require in the name of the Governonr General of India, all those who it may by concern to allow ----- to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford -----every assistance of which ----may stand in need.⁸⁷

A comparison between the old and new form allows us to understand what was meant by a 'proper' passport. Instead of the eight possible forms there was one form now issued under the

authority of the Viceroy and Governor General of India, with the signature of the Secretary of the Foreign Department.⁸⁸ Biscoe had objected to the seal of local governments 'as the titles of provinces such as "Bihar and Orissa" etc are unfamiliar to foreigners and might lead to questions'.⁸⁹

However under the heading 'nationality status', the entry would still record whether the passport holder was a natural born British subject, a naturalised subject, or subject of a native state. The different legal frames had to be retained and probably princely India had to be reassured of its continued salience in the scheme of empire.⁹⁰

Another new feature was that the applicant and the person attesting his application had to make a formal declaration as to the truth of the applicant's statement. However penalties were introduced only with the compulsory passport rules of 22 March 1917.⁹¹

There was one telling difference between the British and Indian application form. In Britain a wide range of people in civic life could be called upon to verify the declaration.⁹² The Foreign Department insisted on 'greater care in India, so the declaration could be verified only through bureaucratic agency: 'a Political Officer, magistrate, Justice of the Peace, Police Officer not below the rank of superintendent or Notary Public.'⁹³ The irony was that these functionaries had to declare that to the best of their *personal* knowledge and belief the declaration was true and that from their *personal* knowledge they could vouch that the applicant was a fit person to receive a passport.

In 1919 A.T. Maricair, a member of the Madras Legislative Assembly gave an eloquent account of the 'hardships and inconvenience' of this arrangement especially when passports were made compulsory. The seemingly simple task of paying one rupee into the local Sub-treasury and getting an application form, inaugurated the ordeal of wandering about between tiers of officialdom. The insistence on making the recommending officers personally responsible for the verification of particulars made them reluctant to do so.⁹⁴ A marked feature of the march of documentary government in the colony was that 'red tape' strengthened both the institutional reach of the bureaucracy and its social grip. In every way possible it was crucial for Indians of 'means and respectability' to stay on the right side of the district administration and to strive for social connections with the machinery of the Raj.

The contest over descriptive particulars:

i) language, script, signature, and thumb-print

Both the British and Indian form asked for a specimen signature, and the applicant had to fill up the declaration and give descriptive particulars in his own handwriting. However Indian passport

regulations added a special item:

In the case of an applicant for a passport being unable to write English, a transcription in English should be placed below the applicant's vernacular signature in the form of application. In the case of an illiterate person a thumb impression should be *substituted* for a signature on the form of application, which should be certified by the person verifying the declaration.⁹⁵

The clear instruction that the thumb print was to be taken only from an illiterate person registered a kind of political victory, at least on Indian soil, of a battle which had been fought out elsewhere.

The criteria of literacy, the techniques used to attest and verify an identity document, were issues integral to the civic rights for Asiatics in colonies and dominions staked out for white settlers.⁹⁶ In 1907 the Transvaal government had passed an Asiatic Registration Act requiring every Indian male over sixteen, who claimed domiciliary rights, to register himself, his wife and all his children, giving ten fingerprints even if he was literate. Identity documentation, once associated with the indentured coolie had been spreading to all Indian residents. Now fingerprint identification further equated literate with illiterate and tarred all with the brush of criminal suspicion. The demand was that educated men be allowed to use signatures and those who could not write give only a thumb-print. '(T)humb-impressions', wrote Gandhi in protest, 'are taken because they make it easy to identify a person Digit impressions are taken from criminals because the person ...wants to evade being identified.'⁹⁷

The struggle in South Africa created a special sensitivity in India about identity techniques for travel documents. In 1912 when the Government of India introduced a more elaborate descriptive roll for passports it initially demanded both thumbprint and signature. Sensing trouble it rapidly retreated and claimed it had never intended to compel those who could sign to give their thumbprint as well.⁹⁸

ii)Passports and pardah : the 'unveiled' photograph of the veiled woman

The passport rules in India made a specific reference to a new requirement.

Small duplicate unmounted photographs of the applicant (and wife, if to be included) must be forwarded with the application for a Passport, one of which must be certified on the back by the person verifying the declaration made in the application form.⁹⁹

There was a vague anticipation that some Indians might object to entering detailed descriptive particulars of their wives and submitting their photographs.¹⁰⁰ However the general trend of official

opinion was against any exemption for parda or gosha women, those who observed certain norms of veiling. There was no point in 'vitiating the Imperial passport system for the sake of the very small effect on native opinion'.¹⁰¹

'People who travel abroad ... do not, expect their native prejudices to receive full scope in foreign surroundings, and ...we should respond to this tendency and not check it by reactionary regulations which ...would...not greatly avail the anxious lord of the seraglio shepharding his flock through the embarassments of a foreign port. '¹⁰²

This tough position invites some reflection. It was the fingerprint rather than the photograph which had once been hailed as a mighty weapon on the side of the 'colour bar'. In the 1890s, having established the life-time persistence of finger-ridge patterns, and the statistical probability against mistaken identity, Galton's immediate idea for application was that fingerprint identification would

supply an invaluable adjunct to a severe passport system. It would be of continual good service in our tropical settlement, where the individual members of the swarms of dark and yellow-skinned races are mostly unable to sign their names and are otherwise hardly distinguishable by Europeans, and, whether they can write or not, are grossly addicted to personation and other varieties of fraudulent practice.¹⁰³

Yet it was the 'rough and ready' photograph, rather than the more 'forensic' technology, which was treated as the key element in the creation of an empire-wide passport. With the Defence of India rules of 22 March 1917 the photograph entered into the very definition of this document:¹⁰⁴

Ironically it is the colonial subject now, who occasionally invokes the 'scientific' superiority of the thumbprint. Stating that Muslims had religious objections to photographs, one M.A. Sheikh asked why the more accurate system of thumb impressions had been put aside.¹⁰⁵ Denis Bray, the Foreign Department Secretary also felt the attitude did not have to be so uncompromising.¹⁰⁶ The thumbprint, he pointed out, had the advantage over the photograph of being a 'sure proof of identity'. By making details of other descriptive features less necessary it was also a better way, he implied, of coping with female vanity:

Passport descriptions are usually vague...and nearly every woman insists... that she has no 'peculiarities'. The photograph is supposed to supply an ever-ready, if rough and ready, means of identification. Unfortunately the passport photograph is as a rule not a speaking likeness.¹⁰⁷

Another factor, merely mentioned in passing, was the expense of a photograph for travellers of humble means.¹⁰⁸ The Deputy Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bushire referred to the difficulty of getting a passport in some parts of the world:

Photographs of a sort can be obtained here but no facilities exist at any other port in the Gulf except Muscat.¹⁰⁹

The thumbprint might have a more 'penetrating certainty', and could be recorded more cheaply and easily, but it was a procedure associated with regimes of identification for criminals, colonised races and unwanted immigrants.¹¹⁰ The portrait photograph on the other hand had circulated in a wide range of contexts. The demand for a photograph on the passport was a new one for Britain too. It was supplemented by a column demanding a remarkable amount of additional detail – height, forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, colour of hair, complexion, face and 'any special peculiarities'.¹¹¹ As Martin Lloyd puts it, despite the inclusion of a photograph, the authorities seemed loath to trust it fully.¹¹² A similar column was also introduced to the Indian passport and Punjab officers complained they found it difficult to fill up the entries.¹¹³ The Foreign Department in India forwarded a specimen form sent by the London Foreign Office but added

These descriptions however must necessarily be somewhat vague, unless the holder of the passport possesses special peculiarities... and the real clue to the holder's identity is the photograph attached to the passport....¹¹⁴

Why did the Punjab officers feel at a loss? Descriptive rolls were filled out in India in a variety of institutional contexts - for military recruits, convicts and 'criminal tribes'.¹¹⁵ Perhaps the point of perplexity was these officers were searching for phrases which could be used as much for themselves as for colonial 'others.'

War, it has been said, 'is the great handmaiden of all forms of legibility'.¹¹⁶ It had suddenly and dramatically broadened the demands which nation states could make on individual citizens. A related development was the need for uniform and standardized documents of identity and nationality by which states could co-operate with each other in monitoring the movement of their citizens. An unease about the greater reach of the state and the potentially leveling implications of standardized documentation registered along the axis of race, and along the axis of gender. The idea of women coming into focus as individual citizens, vested with an individual mobility, was dealt with by humorous stories about the encounter between female vanity and the construction of an institutional identity. A.C Wratislaw, British consul in Salonica describes the issue of passports to British nurses and V.A.Ds in 1917-18. He would enjoy, he recalled, listening to a conversation such as the

following:

(Mills speaking) Please give me the umpteenth Stationary Hospital....under the heading of 'Special Peculiarities' you have written 'Attractive features and an engaging expression'. This is useless for purposes of identification and besides, the description does not tally with the photograph attached....'Special Peculiarities' is meant to cover such distinctive marks as a squint, or a hare-lip, or a red nose, or....Pray be calm....I will leave the space for 'Special Peculiarities' blank. Thank you. Good-bye.¹¹⁷

Clearly, when words failed to grapple with difference, then the photograph would have to speak. The photograph also seemed to offer the convenience of a certain compression of time. This was an image which had been attested by official scrutiny, pasted into a document, stamped with an official seal, bordered by all the marks of the bureaucratic process ascribing and verifying identity and nationality. The official inspecting passports would need just enough resemblance to connect the bearer with the passport. This was the 'ever ready if rough and ready quality' of the passport photograph, the potential it seemed to have to keep travellers of different races and nationalities moving through ports and border posts. The thumbprint by blocking this look, by requiring closer scrutiny, could seem to interrupt this flow.¹¹⁸

Anglo-Indian bureaucracy had a more tangible reason for using the opportunity afforded by war to put 'pardah norms' in their place as a purely local issue which had no place in the new international order of travel.¹¹⁹ Its long held conviction was that special legal procedures formulated to accommodate pardah women, were exploited by them and their male relatives to evade legal responsibility and to conceal assets from government.¹²⁰ To exempt pardah women from passport photographs was to leave the door open to 'fraudulent misuse'.¹²¹ Another objection thrown in was that seditionists might enter or flee the country disguised as pardah women.¹²²

Looking around for precedents J.L.Maffey, Secretary, Legislative Department recalled that he had seen a photograph of the Begum of Bhopal 'in the Delhi Durbar volume'.¹²³ In fact Begum Sultan Jehan, had left a special visual impact on the 1911 Imperial Assembly because she had presented herself before King George V and Queen Mary, covered from head to toe in a truly splendid veil. Descriptions of the event revealed in the exotic spectacle of the only woman ruler in India enveloped in

a pale blue silk veil which completely concealed her head and figure, and a jewelled circlet and aigrette, and also the ribbon of the Star of India. Her Highness... made a single profound bow. ¹²⁴

However, the same official volume, **The Historical Record**, also has an 'unveiled' portrait photograph of 'Her Highness the Nawab Begam of Bhopal, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., C.I.' Positioned in a pillared hall, the Begum is a dumpy yet composed figure, garbed in a dress bordered with crepe embroidery, a distinct look of Queen Victoria about her.¹²⁵

Did Government actually refer to this photograph in countering petitions protesting against passport photographs? Evidently not. It would have seriously embarrassed the Begum of Bhopal. An 'unveiled' photograph could be inserted in lavish commemorative volumes meant for very restricted circuits of viewership. A photograph, verified first by a public official, then stuck on a travel document which would circulate through many hands and be scrutinised at borders was a different matter.

The Commerce and Industry Department, in touch with indentured migrants could have supplied a more prolific example. In Mauritius, an 1867 ordinance made it compulsory for ex-indentured labourers from India, male and female, to attach a photograph to a 'portrait ticket'. They had to produce this ticket for police inspection to prove they were not absconding from their contract.¹²⁶ Public opinion in India was ambivalent about the coolie woman. She was regarded as a victim of sexual exploitation but also as an embarrassment because of the supposed looseness of her morality and marriage ties.

In a sense the thumbprint unlike the photograph allowed pardah norms to be carried into travel and identity documents and marked a status difference.. The respectable woman's thumbprint on her husband's passport or domicilliary certificate affirmed that she was vouched for by a male relative.¹²⁷ She had not left the moral anchor of family when she changed one space for another. The thumbprint also secured the man's credentials as a patriarch. Officials could not stare between the face of the woman and its indexical reproduction to verify identity.

Petitions of protest came from Bombay, a port with considerable passenger traffic to South Africa, East Africa and Zanzibar and from Madras presidency where Hindu and Muslim merchants with substantial interests in Singapore and Malaya would find that they were obliged to take a passport whereas the 'coolie' was exempted.¹²⁸ They contended that their reputation and social status would be compromised by having to expose their female relatives to a male photographer, and then to the scrutiny of the attesting official.¹²⁹ Muslim merchants of the heterodox sects may have felt particularly vulnerable.¹³⁰ Indian merchant communities were probably also worried that closer documentation of women and children would provide a future handle for tightening immigration restrictions, not only in East Africa, but perhaps also in Zanzibar.¹³¹ One aspect of these restrictions

was a narrower definition of family relationship and more stringent demands for proof of it.¹³²

The next year, to the discomfiture of the Government of India, both Zanzibar and East Africa would agree to issue passports to pardah women without photographs.¹³³ In March 1918 the Madras Government, noting the strength of feeling recommended a relaxation of the photograph rule for women.¹³⁴ Clearly, pardah norms in travel were anything but a local issue. By the end of 1918 the pan-Islamic protest was welling against the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire and Britain's control over the holy places of Islam in Arabia and Iraq. The Government of India thought it wiser to retreat and on 10 October 1918 issued an order dispensing with passport photographs for pardah and gosha women travelling to India from the Straits, Malaya, Mauritius, Nyasaland, the East African Protectorate, Uganda and Zanzibar.¹³⁵ In April 1919 the concession was extended to Persian Gulf ports and Iraq.¹³⁶

The Defence of India passport rules : and exceptions

In July 1916 when the Government of India in July 1916 was called upon to make this standardized passport compulsory for all travellers leaving India, the idea was initially quite overwhelming.¹³⁷ The main dilemma for the Department of Commerce and Industry was the dense flow of 'coolie-menial' labour moving between India, Ceylon, and the Federated Malay States.¹³⁸ C.R. Cleveland the Director of Criminal Intelligence was also dubious about the surveillance value of the measure:

I do not think political-criminal considerations require a compulsory passport system for Indians leaving India. We are safeguarded to a reasonable extent by the power to prohibit egress under the Defence Act rules and by the suspicion and trouble incurred by travelling Indians of the better class who have no passports.

¹³⁹

A key consideration in the decision to introduce a compulsory passport was to ensure that European British subjects in India observed their new obligations as citizens.¹⁴⁰ The case of military manpower provides an example of the way in which compulsory passport rules and an exemptions could work in complementary ways.

The Registration ordinance and military 'movement orders'

In January 1916 Britain had passed a general order obliging all male citizens of the U.K. between the ages of 18-41 to register for general military service. In 1917 the order was extended to men

between 41-50 , and enforced in India by a Registration Ordinance of 2 February 1917.¹⁴¹ . The Army Department in India wanted a compulsory passport to ensure that non-official Europeans did not evade service in the local Indian Defence force, by slipping away to some other colony or a neutral country..¹⁴²Compulsory passports also provided a way of conserving steamship passage for military use .Women had to have war work certificates to get a passport.¹⁴³ The order affected the families of British officials in India, for we find the Viceroy Chelmsford mournfully reporting that `your very stringent rules' about not granting passports to women and children were being strictly administered. ¹⁴⁴

Lowering its sights from European British citizens to the humblest of Indian subjects the Army Department's concern was to organise a continuous outward flow of followers, servants, labourers and artisans to various theatres of war. This overseas movement was most marked towards Mesopotamia, where the number of non-combatants from India, 293,152, was roughly equivalent to the number of combatants, 295,565 .¹⁴⁵ For political reasons, namely an ongoing campaign in India against indentured migration in India, the Government had decided to keep this labour flow out of the scope of the Indian emigration act of 1908. A martial cloak was cast over it and it was represented as `military service overseas.' ¹⁴⁶ Colonel Black of the General Staff, conveying the army point of view on compulsory passport rules , suggested that since labourers, servants, mechanics, followers etc were `not easy to define in a statutory role' the military `movement orders' they received could be the basis of an exemption.¹⁴⁷ . Under section 4 of the passport rules the Governor General in Council therefore exempted

all individuals proceeding on duty to or returning on duty from any theatre of operations who are singly or collectively entered upon or in possession of movement order, passes or rolls signed and issued by a responsible civil or military authority.¹⁴⁸ .

'Free' labour migration

The Commerce and Industry Department insisted on an exemption for `bonafide labourers' travelling to Ceylon and Malaya referring to the practical difficulty of issuing them all with a passport.¹⁴⁹ In fact a much more active concern to keep labour flowing to docks, mines and plantations around the Indian Ocean informed this decision. Oil and rubber were crucial to military needs ..¹⁵⁰ The Commerce and Industry Department also insisted on retaining the special Australian passport, fearing that the quest for standardization might compromise a definite concession: These `special' forms are more than mere passports: they represent our attempt to comply with special stipulations by the Australian government. ¹⁵¹

The pilgrim trek

Section 9(c) of the March 1917 passport rules also exempted. 'any bona fide Mahomedan pilgrim proceeding to, or returning from Jeddah or Basra.'

From 1911-12 as the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph lost fresh territories, the trek of poor pilgrim from India took on a special significance for sections of the Muslim intelligentsia. It seemed to maintain a line of defence against the interventions of the European powers in the Hijaz.¹⁵² This intelligentsia also resisted official attempts to impose a compulsory return ticket to end the problem of repatriating destitute pilgrims. This measure they alleged, would give a British managing agency monopoly control over the Hajj passenger traffic to the disadvantage of Muslim shipowners, and put the journey completely beyond the reach of the poor pilgrim.

With Britain's declaration of war with Turkey, the Government of India had to balance its own ambitions in Turkish Arabia with anger and anxiety in India about the advance of European forces on the holy places of Islam. In June 1916, the Sharif of Mecca, with British backing, declared his independence from the Ottoman empire. It became crucially important for the Government of India to demonstrate that change of regime would not mean denial of access to the holy places. The Bombay Government worked out a revised pilgrim passport form, of a remarkable simplicity now because all text related to Turkish regulations and Turkish officers was deleted.¹⁵³ The standardisation of the pilgrim passport was postponed and pilgrims too were excluded from the compulsory passport system, on the grounds that the political future of Arabia was still not clear.¹⁵⁴

The Indian Passport Act XXXIV of 1920: excluding 'mischievous persons'

'An Act to take powers to require passports of persons entering British India'
(8 September 1920)

If in 1916 the Government of India had exhibited some perplexity about the need for a compulsory passport, from 1918 it began pressing the home authorities to consolidate the system for peace-time.¹⁵⁵ The Defence of India passport rules of March 1917 had applied to entry and exit by sea. The passport Bill introduced in February 1920 vested the executive powers with substantial discretionary powers to formulate rules for entry into India but did not refer to exit.¹⁵⁶

3 (1) The Governor General in Council may make rules requiring that persons entering British India should be in possession of a passport.

3(2c) (...such rules may) provide for the exemption, either absolutely or on any

condition, or any person or class of persons from any provisions of such rules. ¹⁵⁷

H.C. Dobbs the official member steering it, admitted it was an 'enabling Bill' the force of which would reside in the rules. His justification was that conditions of travel were changing so rapidly that every change could not be brought back to the legislature for confirmation.¹⁵⁸ Dobbs made out his case with a ferocious concentration on the theme of internal security. In a statement both somewhat inaccurate and anachronistic, he declared that the Defence of India passport rules, had been formulated to put a check on 'actual or potential spies and Bolshevik propagandists.'¹⁵⁹ However the end of the war had not freed the world, and particularly India of dangers to internal harmony. The Bolshevik government, had proclaimed its intention of flooding the East with revolutionary propaganda. He called upon members of the Legislative Council to prevent this

pernicious propaganda, the object of which is to create hatred and strife not so much between the Government and governed as between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.¹⁶⁰

There was some anxiety about Bolshevik agents filtering into India through Persia. Yet scrolling back over the 70 printed pages of strictly official discussion preceding this public speech, I could not find one mention of the word 'Bolshevik'.¹⁶¹ In this confidential forum the Home Department, making no mention of Bolsheviks at all, had stated quite flatly that its concerns related to 'undesirable emigrants who return to India to promote sedition after taking part in revolutionary conspiracies outside India.'¹⁶² The key issue was this: did a person hailing from India have an absolute right to return. An issue of domiciliary right was being raised for Indians as well. The Home Member set out the approach:

Our view hitherto has been that we cannot refuse to allow British subjects domiciled in India the right to enter the country for evil purposes and to excite sedition, but I do not see why we cannot make them get passports or why we should allow persons not domiciled in India the right to enter the country for evil purposes and to excite sedition. Their entry could only be regulated in a passport system.¹⁶³

By using the term 'Bolshevism' repetitively Dobbs sought to condense a variety of different fears about the political movements swelling in India, and the implications of democratisation. The ethno-nationalism of the Punjabi peasant and soldier had been fostered by the resources found in networks of empire.¹⁶⁴ However as the Ghadr troubles during the war indicated, agrarian discontent and race bars to social opportunity could range the same connections in dangerous opposition to empire. The Khilafat movement in India, which had brought sections of the urban poor into mass politics, could potentially tap the wider geographies of pan-Islamic anti-imperialism..Another

worry after the war was that the international forums and connections of labour, including the communist international might become available to Indian labour as well. Indian students and literati abroad, 'corrupted' by exposure to a freer political life, might find patronage from states hostile to or competitive with British imperium¹⁶⁵. 'Renegade' Englishmen, like C.F. Andrews, or the journalist B.G.Horniman, ready to question the moral credentials of empire in international forums were another embarrassment.¹⁶⁶ Missionary societies too had international connections and they too had to be warned that their clergy were given entry on certain conditions. They could not be allowed to criticise local authorities or engage in 'politics' in the course of their stay.

H.R.C.Dobbs used a rather hazy phrase to imply that there was a consensus on people who could be denied entry. '(T)he main principle that Government should have power to exclude mischievous persons from India is generally accepted...' ¹⁶⁷. The immediate suspicion of Indian members of the Legislative Council was that executive discretion might be used to prevent or obstruct the return of those deemed 'seditious Indians'. The government denied this, but as I pointed out, the possibility had been discussed. There was another interesting suspicion. G.S.Kharpade said that it was not clear if the Act could prevent British Indians going to Native States and vice versa. ¹⁶⁸ William Vincent, the Home member declared that the Government had never excluded a subject of any Indian state from British India.¹⁶⁹ Yet during the war, orders of internment and externment had been applied to prevent prominent nationalists, activists of the Khilafat movement and suspected Ghadr sympathisers from moving about within India.¹⁷⁰ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad editor of the *Al-Hilal* was ordered to leave Bengal and prohibited from entering Bombay Presidency.¹⁷¹ Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali, strong critics of the British empire's ambitions in Ottoman Arabia, were regarded as martyrs of the internment policy. ¹⁷² In the past troublesome subjects of princely states had been deported from British India by invoking the Foreigners Act. In the post-war era 'internal' borders would acquire fresh salience as a barrier against political infection. In 1924 during a protest termed the Nagpur Flag satyagraha Congress activists would be barred from entry into the princely states.¹⁷³ Indians suspected of nationalist activity began to be deported from Burma, still part of the empire of India, as seditionists.. So Kharpade's anxiety that controls might shift from external to internal boundaries was not entirely naïve.

Despite these misgivings, the Select Committee introduced only one significant change to the passport bill. In the definition of a 'passport' the words 'and having attached to it a photograph of the person to whom it was issued' were omitted. By doing so particular categories of travellers could be exempted from a passport photograph whenever necessary.¹⁷⁴ Those other geographies with their own ways of travelling which had pressed itself to the attention of the British empire during the war

left their permanent mark on the Indian passport Act.

In other respects the Indian Passport Act went through with very little modification. By raising the spectre of Bolshevism official members managed to mine 'respectable fears' about the burgeoning assertiveness of the urban poor. In an age shaping up as one of mass politics, the middle class intelligentsia had to tap sources of political leadership emerging from the urban poor.. But they tended to keep it unstable by retracting recognition of its legitimacy, sometimes condemning it as *goonda-badmaash* activity, that is, relegating it to the realm of criminal entrepreneurship rather than political activity. On the other hand organised labour politics could also sometimes be characterised as the work of 'outside agitators'.¹⁷⁵ There was a certain readiness therefore, in legislative councils with expanded Indian representation, to allow the executive to consolidate powers over the regulation of movement, both at the border and internally. The latter would crystallise in certain provincial acts to restrict 'habitual offenders' to their villages and to extern 'goondas' from cities.¹⁷⁶ The point of tension and contest was whether these executive powers would also be used to restrict 'legitimate' political activity and to repress militant strands of the national movement.

Sovereignty and control over exit: nationalising the labour market

The passport Act of 1920 did not make it compulsory to produce a passport for exit. What Government could count on now were the harder state boundaries of the post-war world. As an Inter-Departmental Conference on Indian passports noted: 'Persons leaving India for countries where a compulsory passport system was in force would require passports, and, if they neglected to take them out, it would be at their own risk.'¹⁷⁷ However during the war the Government had exercised its powers over exit from India not only to hold back seditionists but in one respect for political conciliation as well.. On 12 March 1917 almost along with passport rules it issued a press communiqué about another Defence of India notification:

in order to conserve the man-power of India for the purposes of labour in connection with the war the Government of India have decided to prohibit all labour emigration except to the extent necessary to supply the minimum requirements of Ceylon and the Federated Malay states.¹⁷⁸

In effect the measure suspended indentured migration, now a very narrow stream from India, but one which had been the subject of a wide-spread movement in India demanding its abolition.¹⁷⁹ In 1922, in the aftermath of the stormy Non-Co-operation movement, government decided that it would be a popular move to amend the Indian Emigration act

to bring a formal end to the indentured labour system .¹⁸⁰ The debates over the Indian Emigration Bill would reveal the determination of Indian elites to put unskilled labour migration under stringent restrictions. The contention was that this would stimulate national industrial development and protect national prestige by dissociating the figure of the Indian abroad from the subjugated figure of the coolie. N.M. Joshi, a labour sympathiser expressed a fear that the labourer's own agency in the matter might be taken away permanently.¹⁸¹ B.N.Sarma, one of the official members charting the Bill intervened in the debates to declare that `

it is perfectly competent for any State to fix for itself the conditions under which emigrants may proceed to other countries; it might prohibit emigration altogether; *there is no such thing as a right of emigration to every individual or a natural right to emigrate from his own State...*

Clearly startled, N.M.Joshi asked : `You are referring to immigration'
Mr.B.N.Sarma: `I am talking of emigration, not immigration.'¹⁸²

Conclusion

The passport regime in India crystallised as one which vested great discretionary powers in the executive, both to control movement across India's borders, and to work in broad exemptions. The Indian emigration Act of 1922, following after the Indian Passport act of 1920 curtailed some of that discretion by imposing strict legislative control over the emigration of unskilled labour from India. In this `nationalisation' of the labour market some citizens claimed a paternalistic right to regulate the mobility of other politically less qualified citizens. Within the borders of India another distinction emerged in laws which distinguished between law-abiding citizens and those categorised as criminal tribes, goonda-badmaashes and habitual offenders, whose movements could legitimately be restricted and placed under police surveillance.

FORM OF CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY.

3
221

1. Name of applicant
2. Father's name and caste ..
3. Residence
4. Age of applicant
5. Nationality of applicant* ..
6. Social and pecuniary status of father
(or guardian)
7. Date of probable departure of
applicant from India
8. Object of applicant's visit to
England (Europe)
9. Height of the applicant ..
10. Colour of the applicant's { (1) eyes
 (2) hair
11. Any real distinctive marks ...
12. Signature of applicant (with tran-
scription in English if signature is
in vernacular)
13. Thumb impression of the applicant.

Signature of District Officer (in a Presidency
Town, the Commissioner of Police), or
Political Officer or head of school or college. †

Date

* *i.e.*, whether a British subject by birth or by naturalization (or a subject of a Native State).

† Countersignature of the District or Political Officer should be obtained on certificates signed by heads of schools or colleges.

(3)

No. 71.

A

This is to certify that _____, who is
proceeding to _____, and whose
for the purpose of _____, and whose
description is entered below, is a British subject by birth.

Given at the Foreign Office, Fort William, the _____ day of
188 .

By order of the Governor-General of India in Council.

*Secretary to the Government of India,
in the Foreign Department.*

Signature of the Bearer

Residence of do.

Profession of do.

Age of do.

No. 72.

B

This is to certify that _____, who is
proceeding to _____, and whose
for the purpose of _____, and whose
description is entered below, is a British subject by naturalization.

Given at the Foreign Office, Fort William, the _____ day of
188 .

By order of the Governor-General of India in Council.

*Secretary to the Government of India,
in the Foreign Department.*

Signature of the Bearer

Residence of do.

Profession of do.

Age of do.

Form A.]

Copy of the passport from the passport office in the
L. H. S. Consul at Jeddah for Turkey at the
Registered No.



153 BRITISH CONSULATE,
JEDDAH.

PILGRIM'S PASSPORT. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

Name and Father's Name (in English and Urdu).	Name of nearest relation Father's name and address of pilgrim	RESIDENCE.			Occupation.	Age.	*Distinctive marks.	Names and places of nearest relations in India.
		Town or village.	Pargana or taluka.	District and pro- vince.				

*To be filled up for male pilgrims only.

This passport, issued by the authority of the Viceroy and Governor General of India in Council, requests and requires all those whom it concerns to afford the person above named going on pilgrimage to the Hedjaz all needed assistance and protection.

By Order of the Governor General of India in Council

Investigates at Bombay this _____
190_____
Edwards
Commissioner of Police.

Edwards

Secretary to the Government of India
in the Department of Education



NOTICE TO PILGRIMS.

Authorities in the Hedjaz will allow pilgrims from British India to land without a passport, this passport is issued to enable pilgrims to obtain the advice and assistance of the British Consul at Jeddah, and every pilgrim is recommended to provide himself with one.

Passport is supplied on request made by or on behalf of the intending pilgrim, but no fee is charged for issuing the same. It is intended only for the Hedjaz and, if a pilgrim desires to travel beyond Medina, he should procure a regular passport, which is granted on the production of a certificate of identity and which should be visé by the Turkish Consul at the port of embarkation.

The British Government does not undertake to bring back pauper pilgrims from the Hedjaz.

The British Government has no desire to interfere with the liberty of the pilgrims, but warns them that they should not undertake the journey if they have not sufficient pecuniary means for the expenses of the journey to the Hedjaz and back to India.

At Jeddah the holder of this passport should deliver the duplicate copy to the Agent of the British Consulate before leaving the ship.

Passport is granted solely for the convenience of the pilgrim. The holder thereof should apply to the British Consul at Jeddah for assistance in case of difficulty.

Pilgrims are warned not to risk their money by depositing it with untrustworthy persons in Jeddah or Mecca and are recommended to deposit it in the British Consulate in Jeddah, where they can obtain facilities for the purchase of cheques from respectable banks for any amounts which they may require in Mecca or Medina.

For the convenience of pilgrims not knowing English, this passport is accompanied with a full translation of this notice in Urdu, Arabic and Bengali.

Form A.]



Registered No.

BRITISH CONSULATE

JEDDAH.

PILGRIM'S PASSPORT.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

THESE COLUMNS TO BE FILLED IN FOR THE PERSON MENTIONED IN COLUMN 1 ONLY.

1 Name and Father's name (in English and Urdu).	2 Names of nearest relatives and servants accompanying pilgrim.	3 Residence.			4 Occupation.	5 Age.	* Distinctive marks.	7 Name and place of residence of nearest relations in India.
		6 Town or village.	8 Pargana or Taluka.	District and Province.				

Handwritten marks: 1, 2, 3

* To be filled up for Male Pilgrims only.

This passport, issued by the authority of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, requests and requires all those whom it may concern to afford the person above named going on pilgrimage to the Holya all needed assistance and protection.

By Order of the Governor-General of India in Council.

Counter signed at Bombay this _____
 day of _____
 (Sd.) _____
 Commissioner of Police.

(Sd.) E. D. MACLAGAN,
 Secretary to the Government of India,
 in the Department of Education.

MSA

Judl Dept 1917 No 689
P+VI Convict

G.C.P.—H 23—1,100-11-16—K2

In exercise of the power conferred by Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the Governor of Bombay in Council hereby remits, with effect from the date of embarkation for Mesopotamia, subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth, the remainder of the punishment awarded to *Kaloo Lala Jail R. No. 3510*, a convict at present undergoing sentence of imprisonment in the **DECCAN EXTRA-MURAL** Prison.

The conditions are these:—

- (1) That he will be enrolled and attested as a follower under the Indian Army Act on arrival in Mesopotamia.
- (2) That he will, for the period of two years or the duration of the war, whichever is less, be employed there under the Military works service on embankment work, on loading and unloading stores from and into steamers and river craft, or on such other work as the Military authorities may direct.
- (3) That he will behave well and perform satisfactory service during the period of his employment.
- (4) That he will not commit any offence punishable by any law in force in British India.
- (5) That he will not associate with notoriously bad characters, or lead a dissolute life.

By order of the Governor of Bombay in Council,

Dated the 1st Dec 1916.

Acting Secretary to Government.

I hereby accept and agree to abide by the above conditions; and I acknowledge that, should I fail to fulfil those conditions, or any portion of them, the Governor of Bombay in Council may cancel the remission of my punishment, whereupon I may be arrested by any Police officer without warrant and remanded to undergo the unexpired portion of my original sentence.

Left hand thumb impression of Kaloo Lala no. 3510.

Dated the 8 December 1916.

CERTIFIED that the foregoing conditions were read over to the Prisoner *Kaloo Lala no. 3510* and accepted by him under Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in my presence.

Witness.

[Signature]

Superintendent.

DECCAN Extra-mural Prison

Dated the 1st Dec 1916.

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- ¹ Deputy Secretary, Foreign and Political Dept (F&P), Government of India (GOI, 7 April 1915, F&P, . All manuscript references are from the National Archives of India, Delhi unless otherwise stated.
- ² J.C.Torpey, **The invention of the passport: surveillance, citizenship and the state**, Cambridge, New York, 2000. Andreas Fahrmeier, J. Caplan and J.Torpey ed. Documenting individual identity, G.Noiriel, The French melting pot Salter,
- ³ **The invention of the passport.**
- ⁴ Radhika Mongia, 'Race, nationality, mobility: a history of the passport', **Public Culture**, 11, 3, Fall, 1999, 527-556.
- ⁵ A.G.Hopkins, 'Back to the future: from national to imperial history', **Past and Present**, 164, August 1999, 198-243. I have benefited substantially from insights provided by the following work which has focussed on networks across the Indian Ocean framework to broaden the geographical lens used to study the history of the sub-continent. L. Fawaz and C.A.Bayly (ed.) **Modernity and culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, 1890-1920**, Columbia University Press, 2001; Jan-Georg Deutsch and B. Reinwald, **Space on the Move. Transformations of the Indian Ocean Seascape in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century**, Berlin, 2002; Thomas Metcalf, **Forging the Raj: essays on British India in the heyday of empire**, New Delhi, 2005; C.Markovitz et al ed . **Society and circulation.**
- ⁶ F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.
- ⁷ The notification was issued on 5 March 1917, then re-issued with slight corrections on 22 March 1917.
- ⁸ Note , 6 Dec 1919, Home, War A, June 1920, No.55-5
- ⁹ Viceroy to Secretary of State for India (henceforth SOS), 3 March 1917, F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, No.10-99. Ibid.
- ¹⁰ **India's contribution to the Great War**, Calcutta, Government of India, 1923.
- ¹¹ F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, No.10-99
- ¹² F&P, Secret - War, May 1918, No.159-160. Rule 4 empowered both the Governor General in Council and local governments to exempt persons from the operation of the passport rules and Rule 9 listed the specific exemptions which the Viceroy was referring to.
- ¹³ C.O. 24 Nov 1856; Foreigner's Act (Act III of 1864).
- ¹⁴ See R.F.Burton, Personal narrative of a pilgrimage to al-Medina and Meccah, 1855, Vol.II, reprint, London, 1913, pp.184-185.
- ¹⁵ 9 Aug 1916 , F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.
- ¹⁶
- ¹⁷
- ¹⁸ T.Metcalf, **Forging the Raj**
- ¹⁹ Selcuk Esenbel, describing the Asian face which Japan's nationalists showed to the world's Muslims. 'Japan's global claim to Asia and the world of Islam: transnational nationalism and world power, 1900-1945', **The American Historical Review**, 109,4., October 2004, pp.1140-1170. .
- ²⁰ Foreign Political, 3 July 1847, No.46-49; Foreign, Political, 31 Dec 1847, 1220-33; F&P, General, A, July 1916, No.1-65.
- ²¹ Foreign , General, A, Aug 1908, No.3-4.
- ²² There were practices of seeking permission in particular cases, as for instance, when Indian princes wanted to travel abroad.
- ²³ Foreign, A, Political, E, March 1884.
- ²⁴ Foreign Dept, General, Aug 1908, No.3-24.
- ²⁵ At first a fee of Rs two was charged for this, but later dropped.Home, sanitary, A, July 1882, 84-200.
- ²⁶ Bombay Judl Dept, 1879, Vol.83, MSA. Also 'Vagrant bands of foreigners' Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home, No.CLVII, Calcutta, 1879.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸

²⁹ Note, C.G., Foreign Dept, 25 Sept 1881 , Home Sanitary, A July 1882, 84-220 check.

³⁰ Foreign, Political, E, march 1884.

³¹ Bombay, Judl Dept, 1879, Vo.83, MSA; also Bombay, Judl Dept, 1882, No.80, MSA.

³² Act XV, 1842, and subsequently Act XXV, 1845. .

³³ For excellent discussions, I.M.Cumpston, **Indians overseas in British territories 1834-1854**, London, 1969, H.Tinker, **A new system of slavery: the export of Indian labour overseas, 1830-1920**, New York, 1974; 'Race, mobility and the passport'..

³⁴

³⁵ Marina Carter, **Servants, Sirdars and Settlers**. Prabhu Mahapatra explained the various dimensions of the indentured contract. .

³⁶

³⁷

Indian Emigration Act (Act XXVI of 1883), Indian Emigration Act 1908. .

³⁸ The Department of Revenue and Agriculture handled the issue because it dealt with emigration, a subject later taken over by the Department of Commerce and Industry.

³⁹ GG Australia to GG of India , 18 Aug 1904, Foreign, Genl, B, Feb 1905, 23-25. Emphasis added. To extend his stay beyond a year the passport holder had to apply for a certificate of exemption..F&P, General , A, Aug 1908, No.3-24.

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⁴⁰ The name of the bearer had to be written both in English and the vernacular. Descriptive particulars and residence were recorded in greater detail than in the Foreign Department passport. The Australian passport noted the caste and clan of the holder, the specific town and village of residence, not just the district and state. It also recorded the 'purpose of visit' , the 'probable duration of visit' , and the port of embarkation. F&P, General, July 1916, No.1-65, pp.32-33.

⁴¹

Orders, 18 Oct 1904, Rev and Agric Dept., in Foreign Dept, General, B, Feb 1905, No.23-25.

⁴²

GOI, Dept of C&I, Emig, to John Morley, SOS, April 1906, L/PJ/6/758 File 1227, 1906, India Office Library and Records, London (henceforth IOL)

⁴³

F&P, General, July 1916, 1-65, pp.32-33.

⁴⁴ Rule VII, 1911.

⁴⁵ Memorandum, C&I, Emig, 15 Aug 1912, in Bombay, General, 1912, Vol.56.

Check out F&P, A March 1907, 6-9, and A, Feb 1907, 10-12.

⁴⁶ The practice had no legal basis but re-assured shipowners that the passenger was not an 'assisted emigrant.' F&P, A, March 1907, 6-9; F&P, A, Feb 1907, 10-12. check.

⁴⁷ Indian emigration act, 1908.

⁴⁸ . Khushwant Singh and Satindar Singh, **Ghadar** 1915, Delhi, 1966, p.ii.

⁴⁹ Ibid.Also Memo, C&I, 10 July 1914, in Bombay, General Dept, 1914, No.1263, MSA. Section 415 of the Indian Penal Code was being discussed as a possible weapon. Ibid..

⁵⁰ Ibid; also Bombay, General, 1912, Vol.56.

⁵¹ Collector Surat , 13 Jan 1913, in Bombay, General, 1913, No.51, MSA

⁵² Protector of Emigrants , Bombay, 11 Nov 1912, ibid.

⁵³

Home, Public, A, July 1899, No.418-439; Home, Public A. July 1902, 34-38; Home Educn, A, June 1910, No.133-135.CHECK all.

⁵⁴

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⁵⁵

. A certificate of identity, was 'an assistance to a stranded immigrant in a foreign country not a means of enabling him to enter it.' Note,Legal remembrancer,1912, Bombay, Genl Dept, 1913, No.51, MSA.

'Report of the Committee on Distressed colonial and Indian subjects', Parliamentary Papers, Cd.5133, April 1910 check

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸

Telegram, SOS, 27 Dec 1915, F&P, General, A, Feb 1918, No.1-16.

⁵⁹

9 March 1916, F&P, General, B, April 1916, No.163-164.

⁶⁰

Foreign, General, A Feb 1918, No.1-6.

⁶¹ Ordinance III of 1914. The term of an ordinance was for the duration of the war and six months after. **Legislation and orders relating to the War**, fifth edition, Delhi, 1917.

⁶² Bombay, Judl Dept 1916, No.426, MSA. Ibid.

⁶³ 10 May 1916, F&P, General, A, Feb 1918, No.1-6.

⁶⁴ Home Political, Nov 1914, No.97-177..

⁶⁵ Home, Political, A, Sept 1918, No.55-77.

⁶⁶

⁶⁷ F&P, General, B, Dec 1918, No.139-142.

⁶⁸ F&P, General, B, Dec 1918, No.139-142. F&P, General A, July 1916, No.1-65.

⁶⁹ F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99

⁷⁰ Ordinance V, 1914, 5 Sept 1914, the Ingress into India ordinance.

⁷¹ Section 2 (1), *ibid.*.

⁷² **Report of the Komagata Maru Committee**, Vol.1, Calcutta, 1914.

⁷³ Home Pol, A, March 1915, No.1-13.

⁷⁴ Home, Police, Aug 1917, No.75-76.

⁷⁵ F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.

⁷⁶ Bombay General Dept., 1916, No.477, MSA.

⁷⁷ Note, H.D.G. Law 5 July 1916, F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.

⁷⁸ Explaining the decision to make passports compulsory, the Commerce and Industry Department said it was to prevent the exit of undesirables and 'because of restrictions on immigration imposed by certain colonies as a war measure.' To Colonial Secretaries, Straits Settlement and Ceylon, 8 March 1917, *ibid.*

⁷⁹ In November 1920 the Home Department still held that 'the policy of the Government in the issue of passports is not to be guided by the immigration policy of a country to which an applicant intends going...'

On 28 November 1921a Government of India resolution stated that 'passports should not ordinarily be issued to Indian who would evidently be excluded' that is under immigration laws.

⁸⁰ Martin Lloyd, **The Passport, the history of man's most traveled document**, Sutton publishing, 2003, p.104

⁸¹ Foreign Office to SOS, 10 Feb 1915, F&P, General - A, July 1916, 1-65.

⁸² F&P Note, 5 Sept 1916, F&P, General, B, Oct 1916, No.30.

⁸³ 'Description of passport forms', Foreign Dept, General, A, Aug 1908, No.3-24.

⁸⁴ In matters relating to foreign countries, subjects of native states were treated as British subjects

⁸⁵

Note, 6 April 1915. F&P, General, A, July 1916, No.1-65.

⁸⁶

S of S, 11 May 1915, in F&P, General, July 1916, No.1-65. Emphasis added. .

⁸⁷

F&P, July 1916, No.1-65.

⁸⁸ However the local governments were still the certifying authority. Secy, Foreign Department to Viceroy Hardinge, F&P, Genl-A, July 1916, 1-65.

Biscoe, Note, 6 April 1915. F&P, General, A, July 1916, No.1-65.

⁹⁰ Subsequently an order was passed substituting the word 'Indian state' for 'native state', because of the demeaning connotations of 'native'.

⁹¹

These were for false statement or representations, obstruction to authority, and for abetting these offences F&P, General, B, July 1917, No.146.

⁹² A Mayor, Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, Minister of Religion, Barrister - at -Law, Physician, Surgeon, Solicitor, Notary Public, member or official of a Banking firm.

⁹³ A.H.Grant to GG Hardinge, 9 April 1915, *ibid*.

⁹⁴ F&P, General, B, January 1920.

⁹⁵ Rule 9. F&P, Genl A, July 1916, No.1-65.

⁹⁶ Radhika Singha, 'Settle, mobilize, verify: identification practices in colonial India', **Studies in History**, 16, 2, 2000, pp.151-198.

⁹⁷ 'Settle, mobilize, verify'.

⁹⁸

Foreign, General ,B, May 1913, 177-183. Yet, some ambivalence persisted. A General Order of 11 Dec 1912 from the Government of India said that it had left the taking of a thumb impression in the case of an educated British Indian subject to the *discretion* of the authority granting the passport. This probably was a concession to the Bombay Government which wanted to take a thumb impression from those who could sign in the vernacular language but not in English. F&P, General, A, July 1916, 76-101.

⁹⁹ Note H.B.St John, 26 March 1915, in F&P, General, A, July 1916, No.1-65.

¹⁰⁰

F&P, General, A July 1916, 1-65.

¹⁰¹

J.L.Maffey, 12 July 1915, F&P, General, A July 1916, 1-65.

¹⁰²

Ibid.

¹⁰³ .F.Galton, 'Identification by finger-tips', **The Nineteenth Century**, 1891, p.303.

¹⁰⁴ "'Passport" means a passport for the time being in force, issued or renewed not more than two years previously, by or on behalf of the Government of the country of which the person to whom it relates is a subject and, in the case of a person coming to India from any country other than the United Kingdom or a British possession, issued or vised by the British Ambassador or British Consul in that country, *to which passport there is attached a photograph of the person to whom it relates.*'Australia too incorporated the photograph into its definition of a passport.

¹⁰⁵

He pointed out that the Transvaal government had shifted from the photograph to the thumb print for domicilliary certificates. The wife and children of Indian settlers gave their thumbprint on the certificate of relationship required for their admission to the Transvaal. 29 May 1916 in F&P, General B, July 1916, 96-97. in.

¹⁰⁶

Secy, F&P, 4 November 1916, F&P, Secret , General, April 1917. The 1912

¹⁰⁷

Ibid. The descriptive roll prescribed for Indian passports in 1912 had a more tactful formulation. Instead of 'any special peculiarities' it used the term, 'any distinctive marks'.Foreign General, B, May 1913, No.177-183.

¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁹ F&P, 30 March 1917, F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, No.10-99.

¹¹⁰ 'Settle, mobilise verify '; Simon Cole, **Suspect identities: a history of finger-printing and criminal identification**, Harvard University press, 2001.

¹¹¹ F&P, general, A, July 1916, No.1-65. The earlier British Foreign Office passport merely gave the name, the country to which the bearer was travelling and the person's signature. In India the Foreign Department passport had accumulated

more descriptive details but the bearer's signature began to be taken only in 1883. Foreign, B, General, G Nov 1883, 66-67. The descriptive roll prescribed for Indian passports in 1912 asked for height, colour of eyes, colour of hair and, in a more tactful formulation, 'any distinctive marks'. Foreign General, B, May 1913, No.177-183.

¹¹² **The passport**, p.104.

¹¹³ F&P, General, A, July 1916, No.1-65.

¹¹⁴ 29 Oct 1915, F&P, General A, July 1916, 1-65.

¹¹⁵ 'Settle, mobilise, verify'; Clare Anderson, **Legible Bodies**.

¹¹⁶ J.C.Scott, J. Tehranian and J. Mathias, 'The production of legal identities proper to states: the case of the permanent family surname.' **Comparative Studies in Society and History**, 44, 1, 2002, 1-44.

¹¹⁷ A.C.Wratislaw, **A consul in the East**, Edinburgh and London, 1924, p.352.

¹¹⁸ In 1921 an official responding to a request in the Imperial Legislative Council that all Muslim travellers be exempted from a passport photograph on account of religious objections, said fingerprints were 'clumsy and slow' and would require a staff of experts. Foreign, General, B, Feb 1922, No.202.

¹¹⁹ The present state of the war, wrote J.L.Maffey, Secretary, Legislative Department 'affords good reason for insisting on this very necessary formality' 12 July 1915, F&P, General, A, July 1916, 1-65. The Home Secretary said that objections should be countered with the statement that the passport system was necessitated by the war and Government had to prevent the exit and entry of undesirables. There was no interference with the 'local custom' of veiling, so if pardah ladies objected they could give up their travels 'as long as present conditions continue.' 4 Dec 1916, in F&P, Secret, General, April, 1917, No.35-42. The Director of Criminal Intelligence supported a 'strong line'. Ibid.

¹²⁰ See Radhika Singha, 'Colonial law and infrastructural power: reconstructing community, locating the female subject', **Studies in History**, January - June 2003, Vol.xix, No.1, pp.87-126

¹²¹ J.L.Maffey, 12 July 1915, F&P, General, A, 1916, 1-65.

¹²² A.H Grant, Home Dept, 4 Dec 1916, F&P, Secret, General, April 1917, No.35-42.

The very reasonable response was that female ticket inspectors would prevent male impersonation. F&P, General, A Nov 1918, 2-18.

¹²³

12 July 1915, in . F&P, Genl, A July 1916, 1-65.

¹²⁴ **The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India 1911**, John Murray, London, 1914, p.163

¹²⁵ Ibid. facing p.136.

¹²⁶

Marina Carter, **Servants, Sirdars and Settlers**, Indians in Mauritius, 1834-1870, OUP, 1995. pp. 200, 206

¹²⁷

Two Muslim members of the Madras Legislative Council said there was no danger of men impersonating pardah women because they would be accompanied by their husband or male relatives. F&P, General, Nov 1918, 2-8.

¹²⁸

F&P, General B, July 1916, 96-97.; F&P, General B Oct 1916; F&P, General A, October 1917, No.18-24. No.30. On 22 Nov 1917, there were protests from three Indian members of the Madras Legislative Council. F&P, General, A, Nov 1918, No.2-18.; F&P, General, B, Jan 1920.

¹²⁹

¹³⁰

See F&P, General, A Nov 1918, No.2-18.

¹³¹

On 21 October 1915 British East Africa informed the Government of India that passengers would not be allowed to land without a passport. From April 1917 travellers from India to Zanzibar, were required to come with a passport. F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, No.10-99.

¹³² R.G. Gregory, **India and East Africa: a history of race relations within the British Empire, 1890-1939**, Oxford, 1971.

¹³³

F&P, General, A, October 1917, No.18-24.

134

It also recommended that women accompanying their husband or other male relative should not have to appear before the officer to verify their passport application. 1 March 1918, F&P, General, A Nov 1918, No.2-18. The Bombay Government had asked for a relaxation much earlier, in December 1916.

135

F&P, General, A, Nov 1918, 2-18. Reciprocal arrangements were worked out with these governments.

136

F&P, General B April 1919, No.270-271; F&P, General, B Feb 1920, No.77-94.

¹³⁷ Telegram from SoS, 17 July 1916, F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, No.10-99.

138

¹³⁹ 14 Oct 1916, F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.

¹⁴⁰ Listing the reasons why the Government decided to introduce a compulsory passport, A.H.Grant referred to orders of the Secretary of State restricting passage for women and children and the Registration Ordinance. Memorandum, A.H.Grant, Secy F&P, 9 Feb 1917, in F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.

141

Ordinance No. 1 of 1917, 2 Feb 1917. All male European British citizens between the ages of 18-41 were liable to general service and those between 41-50 to local service in the Indian Defence Force. F&P, General, A, July 1917, No.1-21.

142

Ibid.

¹⁴³ Viceroy to SOS, letters no 17 and 442, 30 Aug 1918, Chelmsford papers, Mss Eur/E264/9, IOLR

144

Letter no.442, Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ **India's contribution to the Great War**, 1923, pp.78, 96..

¹⁴⁶ See Radhika Singha 'Convicts and 'aborigines': finding labour from India for the war in Iraq, 1916-1920' forthcoming

¹⁴⁷ W.C.Black, M.O. 3, 25 Feb 1917, in F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, 10-99.

148

6 March 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ 8 March 1917, in F&P, Secret, General, Aug 1917, No.10-99.

¹⁵⁰ 6 Feb 1917, in C&I, E, Jan 1918, No.1-34.

151

Note 17 Jan 1916, in F&P, General, July 1916, 1-65.

¹⁵² See Mohamed Ali, My life, a fragment, 1942, Lahore, 1966.

153

This began to be issued from January 1917.

154

F&P, War, B, secret, Feb 1917, No.66-67; and F&P, General, B, March, 1917, No.18.

¹⁵⁵ In May 1918, the Home Secretary, sent a memorandum to the India Office stating that the passport system should continue after the war. Leg Dept Sept 1920, No.138-150.

¹⁵⁶ One reason, perhaps, why controversies about the colour-bar did not enter the debate

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Kamini Kumar Chandra, G.S.Khaparde and Rao Bahadur B.N.Sarma expressed their unease about the extensive power vested in the executive.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.72. The Foreigners Ordinance, Ordinance No.III of 20 August 1914, was supposed to have taken care of 'actual or potential spies.' And on 22 March 1917 when the passport rules were introduced the 'Bolshevik' revolution had not as yet taken place.

¹⁶⁰ H.R.C.Dobbs, Progs of Indian Leg Council, 25 Feb 1920, Home, Political, Deposit, March 1921, No.13.

¹⁶¹ Leg Dept Sept 1920, 138-150, pp.1-70.

¹⁶² W.H.C. Vincent, Home Member, 20 January 1919, *ibid.* p.7.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*.

¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁶ In 1918 C.F. Andrews was refused a passport to accompany the poet Rabindranath Tagore to the United States on the grounds that he was a 'notorious anti-war and anti-British agitator and intriguer'. F&P, General, B, Sept 1919, 17-22.

¹⁶⁷ Progs of Indian Legislative Council, 20 Aug 1920, Home, Political, Deposit, March 1921, No.13

¹⁶⁸

Progs of Indian Legislative Council, 20 Aug 1920, Home, Political, Deposit, March 1921, No.13.

¹⁶⁹

He also said that Government had never excluded Indians 'domiciled in India'. *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰

Writing to the Secretary of State on 6 Aug 1919 the Viceroy gave the following figures for the number of persons interned or otherwise placed under restrictions since August 1914

Under Bengal Regulation III 149

Madras Regulation II, 1819 12

Bombay Regulation XXV, 1827 6

Defence of India Act 1470

Ingress into India Ordinance 2145

Chelmsford Mss Eur 264/11, No.183, p.137. IOR

¹⁷¹ Bombay, Judl Dept, 1916, No.426, MSA..

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Check.

¹⁷⁴ Home, Police, Deposit, March 1921, No.13.

¹⁷⁵ *Goonda*: bully, bad character of a more fearsome variety. **Badmaash**: bad character

¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁷ 8 Oct 1919, Leg Dept, Sept 1920, No.138-150, p.33.

¹⁷⁸ H.C.Dobbs the official member presenting the Bill did so with a ferocious concentration on the theme of internal security. The Bill sought to put the vast powers which the executive had acquired over movement across India's borders on a permanent statutory footing::

. F&P, April 1917, No.29-30. Rule 16- B under the Defence of India Act (1915). The invocation of the military need for labour allowed the Government of India the political clout it needed to suspend indenture in the face of possible objections from the Colonial Office. See 'Convicts and "aborigines".'

¹⁷⁹ For an invaluable account, Hugh Tinker, **A new form of slavery**

¹⁸⁰ Leg Dept, A July 1922, No.1-19.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* p.70

¹⁸² *Ibid.*