

fuller story as we learn about the activities of the criminals William Murray and Patrick Madan, the opportunist Kenneth Mackenzie, the Reverend Philip Quaque of Cape Coast Castle, Richard Miles, the governor of Cape Coast Castle, and the inhumane Joseph Wall of Gorée. This focus on characters, and the work that Christopher has done in finding everything possible about these individuals, expands the story while illustrating the intersection between the micro and the macro.

The work is more informative than it is interpretative, so while the reader learns facts about crime in Britain during this period, especially crimes against property, there is little explanation of why there was so much crime and why transportation became a form of punishment. This is not a major issue, but there are places where aspects of the story could be clarified, especially in relation to West Africa. An example involves the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa. Christopher calls their trade castles “quintessentially British” because they promoted British trade, but ignores the fact that the company’s funding came entirely from an annual parliamentary grant, ensuring that the government had a say in what the company did or did not do. Thus, while the company resisted the attempt to send convicts to the Gold Coast, its bargaining position was weak. Beyond this, as the fighting occurred both sides utilized African allies – but they were not incorporated into the coastal European or company forces, as the work implies. Finally, a better understanding of the coastal situation would show why West Africa was a poor choice for a penal colony.

As convicts were incorporated into the company system they were being brought into a system that more often than not ensured death rather than survival. This occurred not only because of the diseases endemic in West Africa, but also as a result of the company wage system in which company servants received their pay in over-valued goods that they were expected to barter for food and for other necessities they required. The problem here was those lowest in the company hierarchy received the fewest and least desirable goods. Most soldiers, which is what the convicts became within the company structure, received the majority of their pay in alcohol, either brandy or rum, and tobacco. This they could either barter or consume – with most doing the latter.

However, these are minor quibbles within a story that needed to be told as it provides us with important insights into late eighteenth-century British crime and punishment. What is most shocking involves the nature of a system that was designed to move criminals somewhere else, but once there, abandon them and, as Christopher shows, most quickly succumbed. Thus, while they were spared the noose in Britain, they suffered and died from yellow fever or other painful causes, such as when Kenneth Mackenzie placed William Murray in front of a cannon and executed him. This was a system designed to export a problem and which provided considerable profit for some, such as the captains of the various vessels which carried transported criminals around the North Atlantic. An inhumane system was being transported to a new place where another inhumane system was starting to come under a concerted challenge.

*Ty M. Reese*

BALACHANDRAN, G. *Globalizing Labour? Indian Seafarers and World Shipping, c.1870–1945*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi [etc.] 2012. xii, 318 pp. Rs 1,240.00; £30.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859012000661

Maritime workers from India made inter-oceanic commerce possible within the British Empire but their identities and roles were highly contested and fluid. G. Balachandran’s

sophisticated book makes a major contribution to their labour history during the period of high imperialism. He demonstrates these seafarers' diverse origins, working conditions aboard, and lives ashore, mainly in Britain and India but also in Australia, North America, and the European continent. He is both highly knowledgeable about the lived experience of these Indian seafarers and also acutely sensitive to the cultural implications of British discourses about them.

Illustrating the complexity of these workers' lives, Balachandran begins his book with the brief biography of one of them: Jan Mohamed, born in 1897. During his many crossings of the Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans, and his sequential roles ashore, he changed his legal identity and name multiple times. Despite his rural peasant origin in landlocked Punjab, he migrated to Bombay where he signed on to a British merchant ship as a coal trimmer at age seventeen. Torpedoed during World War I, he survived, receiving medals and commendations for bravery from the British crown. Later in his seafaring career, he deserted his ship in New York. Moving to Detroit, he worked in a car factory. There, he was naturalized as an US citizen, only to have his citizenship later revoked on racial grounds. Taking to the sea again, he eventually returned to Bombay. There he stowed away on a Finnish ship; later joining its crew, he obtained his discharge papers in Belgium. Returning to Britain, he was illegally deported. He protested and smuggled himself back in. Shifting British legal definitions and also jurisdictional disputes among government departments about the rights and legal status of colonial subjects kept Jan Mohamed in legal limbo, but he continued to challenge official efforts to dismiss and deport him. To bolster his case, he joined the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union (NSFU, formerly the National Union of Seamen). Finally, in 1930, he negotiated with the British Government for a certificate of nationality as an Indian subject of the British crown and steamed out of the official records. His life is unusual, not so much for the multiple changes in his identities as for the extent of the documentation of his "identity trail" (p. 202) in official archives.

One of the central issues throughout this period, brought out especially effectively in Balachandran's book, were the disputed definitions of these Indian seafarers, often collectively called *lascars*. They came together for a voyage from various social origins and regions. Some were born into traditional fishing or sailing communities, but many were from peasant villages, often far inland, like Jan Mohamed. Although classed as Indians, many were not actually born in India but rather elsewhere in the Indian Ocean region like the Maldives or Aden. Many were not professional seamen in that they undertook many different jobs in their lifetimes.

Balachandran shows how many of these men chose to work only occasionally at sea and only when it was the best available option, taking up other jobs as opportunities offered. Thus, when the British Indian Army recruited heavily for soldiers during World War I, the supply of Indian workers available for shipping declined significantly. Conversely, when British immigration restrictions tightened, the supply of Indian seafarers rose, since many regarded this as a means of reaching Britain to work as peddlers, restaurant cooks, or other land-based workers – what some Britons disparaged as "one voyage men" (p. 182). Some seafarers used their allotted berths to store goods that they traded from port to port, while they slept on deck. Others signed on mainly to gain passage to Mecca for the Haj. Nevertheless, many of the jobs aboard required great skill and stamina in the face of many dangers and hardships, offering only low pay, with various legal and illegal deductions, fees, and penalties taken by their employers, white officers, and Indian petty officers and recruiters.

Recruitment of maritime workers remained highly competitive since shipping companies, ship captains, employment brokers, *ghat serangs* ("dock headmen"), and British officials in India and Britain all sought to control this maritime labour supply. The British Parliament passed various regulations specifying wages and working conditions, although

many of these remained unenforced. White-dominated British unions (like the International Labour Organization and the NSFU that Jan Mohamed briefly joined) occasionally demanded higher wages and better working conditions for Indian seafarers, but usually so that white British seamen would not be undercut by cheap Indian labour. Communist-led unions were usually far more racially inclusive than other European labour unions. To support British policies and interests, government reports and newspapers often made accusations of corruption, usually against Indian seamen and intermediaries. One theme throughout Balachandran's book remains his insightful analysis of how Britons often tried discursively to conflate Indian seafarers with coolies – a racially pejorative for all unskilled Indian manual labourers.

By concentrating on the period of European steamship ascendancy, Balachandran looks at a time when Indian seamen were increasingly deskilled, at least in the eyes of Britons. Many ship owners hired Indians to save on labour costs. Unlike white seamen, who enlisted under the terms of European Articles, most Indian seamen served under racially defined official Asiatic Articles – with lower wages, worse food and housing, more restrictions on where they could sail, and limits on where they could be discharged. British ship owners often regarded British sailors, especially those in militant labour unions, as expensive, dangerous, and disruptive, while these owners tended to discount the courage and manliness of Indian seamen. This stereotype made Indian seafarers appear both more docile and less reliable in shipboard emergencies. Indeed, Indian seamen tended to desert in port rather than mutiny aboard. Despite the many powerful forces working against them collectively, these seafarers remained diverse in their identities and interests.

Owing to their different origins, social identities, religions, and roles aboard, these seamen had limits on their solidarity. Men from specific regions of India tended to specialize in the different departments of these steamships. In some departments of the ship, including the cabin and dining service staff, there was little that was maritime about them other than the locale. Goans and other Indian Catholics (by religion or culture) tended to predominate in this department. In other departments, like the firemen who stoked and tended the massive steamship boilers, their specialized skills involved sorting, hauling, and shoveling coal, and they did not see the sea while on duty. The various parts of the deck crews also had particular skills and tended to originate in specific regions.

These disparate workers formed a variety of small, fragmented, and transient unions, including the Indian Quarter Masters' Union, the Asiatic Seamen's Union, the Indian Seamen's Anjuman, and the separate Indian Seamen's Unions in Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Bombay (now Mumbai). Further, the activist seafarers who organized and led many of these unions often themselves went to sea, thus weakening the continuity of leadership. Yet, rival Indian unions, including those led by shore-based labour brokers or politicians in the Indian National Congress, lacked credibility among seafarers. Nonetheless, these maritime workers identified with each other sufficiently that, in 1939, many of them simultaneously went on strike in ports throughout the British Empire. Overall, however, Balachandran concludes that “[t]heir life strategies were driven by a wish to avoid proletarianization, not embrace it” (p. 264).

Balachandran necessarily relies heavily on British records and accounts of these Indian maritime labourers, but he thoughtfully reads these sources against the grain to recover both the actual lives of these men as well as how they were culturally constructed by Britons. Balachandran's intentional use of the question mark in his title indicates his heuristic use of “globalizing”, highlighting the term's ambiguity. Employers mobilized and deployed these Indian workers across the earth's oceans. But also these workers lived in “fluid, yet discontinuous, spaces of labour mobility where boundaries, far from becoming extinct, are unstable and as liable to contraction and realignment as to conditional expansion, and where boundary crossings are contested, negotiated, thwarted, and

continually executed” (pp. 20–21). Balachandran concentrates on these maritime workers, thus complementing academic studies on the rest of the British and Indian shipping industries and on British imperial maritime commerce generally.

This impressive volume greatly expands and deepens our understanding of the complex worlds of Indian seafarers. Balachandran bases his impressive analysis on extensive and thorough research in archives in Britain, India, Australia, and the European continent. Scholars will find rich material and much insight that will enable them to include these workers within social and labour history globally.

*Michael H. Fisher*

*The World in World Wars. Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia.* Ed. by Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, Katharina Lange, Dyala Hamzah and Ravi Ahuja. [Studies in Global Social History, Vol. 5.] Brill, Leiden [etc.] 2010. vii, 613 pp. € 129.00; \$183.00 doi:10.1017/S0020859012000673

In recent years the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin has been at the centre of a series of initiatives aimed at studying non-European experiences of both world wars. This interest has taken the form of promoting research projects, publishing books, and organizing workshops. The present volume brings together the papers presented on two such occasions: a workshop on the social, cultural, and intellectual effects of the world wars on the Middle East, held in 2006, and a subsequent workshop on the “World in World Wars” (2007), the title of which is also the title of the volume under review. The promise of a history of the world wars devoted to their social effects and cultural legacies, and stressing their multi-racial and international nature, is religiously respected, and the present volume clearly manages to go beyond the type of historiography that, even when it attempts to analyse non-Western campaigns, ultimately falls into the trap of becoming caught up in the adventures and deeds of some commander trapped on a far-off, less important front. This is why the book deliberately leaves out the deeds of General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck during the 1914–1918 East African campaign, and similarly ignores the adventures of T.E. Lawrence and the vicissitudes of the Arab Bureau.

The aim of providing a narrative of the two world wars that can overcome the eurocentric angle which has dominated Western historiography so far is definitely commendable, but it cannot claim to be a particularly innovative approach. In fact, this theme started to attract attention among Africanists as far back as the late 1970s, and writing a global history of the world wars is a challenge that has begun to be addressed even by academics with no particular experience in Afro-Asian studies – with, of course, mixed results. For example, in 2010–2011 alone, no fewer than four volumes appeared dedicated to investigating the social and cultural effects of the world wars in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia; other publications have since followed. The volume’s bibliography lists 624 titles, and while this is, in itself, a very persuasive figure, there have been some oversights, and the bibliography could have been even better. Not only is the historiography of the two world wars extremely rich, in qualitative terms it is very interesting, and, frankly, some of the ideas posited in this volume have been acknowledged for some time already.

The nineteen papers included in this volume are organized into three distinct sections. The first deals with the wartime experiences of combatant and non-combatant individuals. Preference is accorded to soldiers and follower-rank groups. The passage from a