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India and Middle Eastern Oil: 1900-1950 / *Kannan Srinivasan  
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## India and Middle Eastern Oil: 1900-1950

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The Indian subcontinent's contribution to the world economy's access to oil has not been sufficiently studied. In the first half of the last century the British Empire drew on India to provide the finance, the administration, the army, the police forces and the labour for extracting Middle Eastern petroleum. The oilfields of Iran<sup>1</sup> and Iraq<sup>2</sup>, and the great refinery of Abadan, which was to become the largest in the world, were developed and operated by Indian labour. Indians also operated many other facilities in the Middle East such as the Aden refinery. Given the central place of oil in twentieth century capitalism, the contribution of Indian labour and resources has been critical<sup>3</sup>.

The Indian Army was deployed frequently in this region, putting down revolts of Kurds and others who did not accept the English assumption of control after they had overthrown Ottoman rule. The army was also extensively used elsewhere, such as the Gulf, Persia (and of course Palestine, to put down frequent Arab revolts against Jewish immigration). In addition, the Indian Police deployed its officers and *havalendars* extensively in this region, protecting petroleum installations in Persia, and administering the Iraq police.

Once Britain discovered that the area around the Mosul Vilayet of the Ottoman Empire was rich in oil, she set out to control it. The Government therefore invested Sterling 2.2 million in the Anglo-Persian oil company to obtain a 51 per cent stake. Britain fought the First War in the Middle East with Indian troops and financial resources, with a clear focus on the oil in the Turkish territories. In violation of the armistice signed with the Turks a week earlier, British forces seized Mosul in November 1918. With the end of the war, promises of independence to the Arabs — who had risen in revolt against Turkey to support the British — were forgotten.

A widespread revolt — now against British rule — was met by the systematic bombing of civilian populations, and the use of poison gas. In 1920, the Secretary of State for Air and War, Winston Churchill, pointed out that the new state of Mesopotamia “could be cheaply policed by aircraft armed with gas bombs, supported by as few as 4,000 British and 10,000 Indian troops”.<sup>4</sup>

As in India, some form of local government would be more effective than direct British rule. As Britain’s Foreign Secretary, the former Viceroy Curzon described it, an “Arab façade ruled and administered under British guidance and controlled by a native Mohammedan and, as far as possible, by an Arab staff” would be most appropriate. He urged that “there should be no actual incorporation of the conquered territory in the dominions of the conqueror, but the absorption may be veiled by such constitutional fictions as a protectorate, a sphere of influence, a buffer state and so on”.

The Hashemite family was installed as rulers of Iraq; there were frequent revolts against these puppets, until they were finally overthrown in 1958. Estimates by Stork<sup>5</sup> and Tanzer<sup>6</sup> are that **annual** profits of the oil companies in Iraq at that time were in the order of seven hundred per cent of the **cumulative** investment that the oil companies had made by then. This should give one some idea of why they have so long wanted to return to Iraq.

Today, Iraq is once more under foreign occupation.

The close connection between seemingly independent multinationals and the State is evident today as it was in the period of British imperialism. Were it not for the British Government and its subordinate Government in India, Anglo-Persian, which ultimately became British Petroleum, would not have acquired a fraction of the resources it did.

Indian historians have not concerned themselves much with Middle Eastern petroleum; and western historians have treated the Indian involvement as a mere detail of British policy.<sup>7</sup> This paper seeks to indicate the nature of this involvement. It is an exploratory study: much more work needs to be done on the path we have indicated. We only provide glimpses of three aspects of the Indian role.

Section One looks at how Agents of the Foreign & Political Department of the Government of India organised the seizure of territories after the war, presiding over the formation of the new states of the Middle East, keeping Anglo-Persian in line and protecting its interests from other multinationals. Section Two, how they managed Indian labour in the oilfields; Section Three, how India subsidised the Empire and imperial control of oil.

## I

## Political Agents: Inventing Borders

The broad terms of petroleum policy were decided in London. But Indian political agents in the field developed the specifics, often with considerable autonomy.

A significant part of the development of petroleum was therefore conducted by officials of the Government of India, paid for out of Indian revenues.

Members of the Indian Political Service could be posted to the princely states, the tribal areas on the border, or to India’s neighbours, with whom the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India conducted its own foreign policy. It was natural for the British to deal with this region from India, because a large part of the Middle East came under the sphere of influence of the Government of India. Indian political agents, who looked after British interests in the region, assumed significant administrative powers; the promotion of Britain’s petroleum interests became their responsibility.

Oil was first discovered in Persia, where seepages had been known long before its industrial use was discovered. A concession agreement was signed in May 1901 with William Knox D’Arcy, the financier who would be responsible for the eventual establishment of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Oil was struck in the Masjid-I-Suleiman in May 1908. The potential of the Baghdad province of the Turkish Empire was well enough known for concessions to be signed in 1914; but war intervened. In early 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement assigned spheres of influence to Britain and France in the Middle East; in 1917, British Indian armies captured Baghdad.

Under the San Remo Agreement of April 1920 it was agreed that Mesopotamia would be a British mandate under the League of Nations. Production had already begun; but at this early stage, it was primitive.<sup>8</sup>

The Secretary of State for India explained to the Viceroy the War Cabinet’s decisions for the future administration and political control of Mesopotamia and Arabia: “Baghdad (was) to be an Arab State with local ruler or government, under British protectorate in everything but name..”

The territory around Baghdad, once a state had been organised, was to be administered “behind Arab facades as far as possible”.<sup>9</sup>

The Indian Empire and its administrative resources were critical: “South Persia including Arabistan and Fars to be sphere of influence of Government of India...”

G.S. Barnes, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council anticipated that it would be important to seize the oil bearing territories of Mesopotamia from Turkey and retain them after the Allied victory:<sup>10</sup>

"I hope that the administered territory will include the Mesopotamia oil-field. Oil is almost the only important commodity in respect of which the British Empire is not self contained... our needs are likely to grow immensely in the immediate future."

Iraq was important quite simply because: "The Mesopotamian field is believed to be one of the largest in the world".

So by the end of the First War, Indian Political Agents were busy developing the options of an Armenian State and a Kurdish State to act as local enforcers of imperial interests — before it had been decided to create a Kingdom of Iraq and of Kuwait in those territories for the very purpose.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1918, the Political Resident, Persian Gulf wrote to the Secretary in the F&P Dept. of the Government of India, "It is, I understand, the intention of His Majesty's Government and the Allies to create and foster an independent Armenian State and a Kurdish confederation free from Turkish influence.. If the former is to have a fair chance, the creation of the latter is essential..."

This basic principle was adopted in the drawing of borders in the Middle East; fragment it into as many identities as possible, the easier to govern. Sometimes a single identity was fragmented and joined to others forcibly, as was the Kurdish nation. A telegram from the officiating Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, of the same date proposed: "the location of an independent Armenian State".<sup>11</sup>

And on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1918, he proposed "the immediate formation of a central Council of Chiefs for Southern Kurdistan under British auspices".<sup>12</sup> He requested that "Sheriff Pasha should come out to get in touch with his compatriots."

On the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1918, Major Noel said that Sheriff Pasha was "very well spoken of in Southern Kurdistan and that his arrival should be expedited".<sup>13</sup> On the 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1918, the Baghdad Commissioner urged that "Sulaimaniyah should be occupied by a small force to save the country from anarchy....Kurdistan be declared under British Protection".<sup>14</sup>

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1918, the Political Resident of the Persian Gulf urged the Kurdistan option — later discarded because it would have put too

much oil under that ethnic nationality — further:

"(Kurdistan) is so (well-disposed) that, provided we take prompt and vigorous action now difficulty need not be anticipated in creating Kurdish State under our protection and with control by Political Officers over general policy. ... I strongly advice (sic) immediate despatch of qualified officers to assume direct charge of principal administrative service".<sup>15</sup>

So Political Agents juggled with a variety of options. The states they finally set up were not those which had any basis in national identity or popular feeling; but those that suited the extraction of oil.

#### *Political Agents safeguard imperial interests*

In this section, we look at the role of the political agents in promoting Anglo-Persian insofar as it served imperial interests. This was done by regulating the company so that it would not loot Iraq for the short term gains of private investors. (The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was owned 49% by private investors and 51% by the British Government.) Such considerations of immediate profit were subordinated to the long-term strategic interests of the Empire.

Anglo-Persian used certain associate companies wholly owned by the promoters to transact much of its business, transferring assets from the public limited Anglo-Persian to the D'Arcy Petroleum Company and other firms. The India Office suspected that this siphoned off profits to private investors.

Consequently, at a meeting at the India Office on the 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1919, Lt.Col. A.T. Wilson, the assertive Civil Commissioner of Mesopotamia insisted that fields owned by Anglo-Persian

"should be worked, not by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company direct, but by a separate company — an offshoot of the parent company — formed for the purpose, with its head office at Baghdad". He offered to "arrange to furnish the company with land for a refinery and pipeline".

Wilson pointed out that it was important that benefits from the ownership of new discoveries should explicitly serve Government strategic interests.

It was important not “to hand over to a comparatively small number of shareholders the whole interests of the Iraq State and of the British Treasury in what might well prove to be the richest oil fields in the world”.

Such a policy “would be opposed to the present trend of opinion in favour of nationalising certain essential industries such as Electric, Power, Transportation services and coal... Colonel Wilson estimated the capitalised value of the Mesopotamian oilfields at about £50,000,000 (Pounds Sterling)”.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike Anglo-Persian, Royal Dutch Shell was out of the control of the British and their Government in India. So when Shell tried to butt in to the petroleum business in Iraq, the Government of India dealt very firmly with it. That firm employed a senior British General to acquire petroleum territory in Mesopotamia on behalf of its subsidiary Anglo-Saxon Petroleum. Even as today in Iraq, we see that some imperial servants were eminently corruptible; but officers of the Political Service maintained the interests of the Empire above the private.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> 1919, General Sir John Cowans stationed in Baghdad wrote to the Civil Commissioner: “I beg, on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company of London to make application for the Petroleum Rights of Mesopotamia, or at any rate the area lying north of Baghdad”. The Civil Commissioner, E.B. Howell conducted an elaborate delaying operation, obstructing Cowans at every point, making sure that Mesopotamia and Persia were kept the preserve of the Anglo-Persian. He wrote back two days later, on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1919, demanding:

“further information regarding the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company of London. The name is not familiar to me. I should be grateful if you can tell me: When the company was formed with what objects, on what capital and under whose direction. If possible I should be glad to see a copy of the Articles of Association and of the Company’s prospectus, if, as I believe, it is a new venture”.

Cowans replied indignantly: “there is no question of its being any ‘new venture’ and the Home authorities to whom you wired are fully conversant with the Shell Group and its operations”. Howell disposed of Shell-Anglo Saxon’s request for petroleum rights

“the temporary Military Administration existing in the occupied territories has no locus standi at all... to sell or negotiate with a

view to sale... Your application will therefore, remain upon record here, but in the circumstances above explained it would be premature for me to entertain proposals for the acquisition of any opinion on petroleum rights”.

Even requests for maps by Cowans –

“I shall be much obliged if you can tell me whether Captains Noble and Evans, the geological experts remaining here, can have access to any maps and reports made by Dr. Pascoe or others as it would appear to be a waste of time for them to go over the same ground again” — were disposed of peremptorily by Howell: “I regret that my instructions are that access to confidential documents cannot be given by me to you or to the members of your party”.<sup>17</sup>

So Anglo-Persian was the nominated English company for all British controlled territories in the Middle East. Shell, a more dynamic, innovative company in those years, was successfully excluded. The consequences were long-term. Shell even recently has had poor access to oil and gas in the Middle East. Anglo Persian used this Government backing to great advantage.

In 1919, Anglo-Persian tried to get an exclusive deal from the Ruler of Kuwait. But this was opposed by the representative of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India at Baghdad.

This was because he was aware that the US government would object on behalf of US companies to any British attempt to secure a monopoly for English companies in the post-war division of the territories of the defeated powers.

“Strick, Scott and Co. on behalf of Anglo Persian Oil Company have endeavoured to induce Sheikh of Koweit to come to an agreement with them whereby they should have monopoly... I have informed Political Agent that this Agreement which the Sheikh has not yet signed though he was apparently about to do so, is inadmissible... So had Sheikh signed agreement, which is financially very profitable to him personally, his action would certainly have been challenged by US Consul at Basrah ...”<sup>18</sup>

He argued that it was important both to control Anglo Persian tightly and to maintain its monopoly status in representing British imperial interests:

‘I venture to express the opinion however, that there would be much to be said for committing to the Company, both at home and in Mesopotamia, under Govt. control, the Imperial task of the development of the oil resources of South Persia, the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia, provided it was possible to make the company independent of secondary commercial concerns...’<sup>19</sup>

### *Political Agents & Anglo American rivalry*

In a situation when they no longer had monopoly of force but had to share power with the Americans, Political Agents of the Government of India stationed in the Middle East had to improvise continuously and resourcefully to protect British interests. They could not simply lay down the law to local chieftains – who might then call in the Americans.

The Americans had compelled the English to undertake that much of the Middle East which would only be developed with equal access to US companies (the Red Line Agreement).

As Ibn Saud (of Nejd and Hejaz which later became Saudi Arabia) grew closer to the Americans, it became important to woo him more actively so that Britain would not lose out to the Americans in Kuwait.

“... Petroleum Concessions Ltd are aware of the position of deadlock resulting from Ibn Saud’s commitment to the Standard Oil of California, but they think that by the offer of an arrangement to facilitate the marketing of the Bahrain Petroleum Company’s production they may obtain the necessary leverage to induce the California Company to relinquish their stranglehold on Ibn Saud’s part-interest in the Kuwait neutral zone”.

Agents in the field kept a close watch on the Americans and tried actively to keep them out. The Political Agent in Kuwait noted that:

“On 6<sup>th</sup> January the Shaikh reported that Standard Oil geologists in the employ of Bin-Saud had reached Agrab al Khalija. .... I moved into the Neutral Zone for 4 days, to ensure that none of the geologists through mistaken zeal started operations there....”

He maintained that the legal position was that “examination of the Neutral Zone area must have the previous approval of His Majesty’s Government, the protecting power as far as Kuwait was concerned.”

By the mid Thirties, when the British had negotiated a Federal Government with the Congress in India, their Government in India had worked out a smooth operation ensuring that Anglo-Persian effectively served British strategic interests.

Political officers took the initiative even in discovering prospective areas where Anglo-Persian might work. Having been checkmated by Standard Oil of California and other US companies in Saudi Arabia — assisted by two renegade officers of the Crown, Major Frank Holmes and H.St. John Philby, already mentioned above, ex-ICS, father of the spy — the Anglo-Persian was determined to take pre-emptive steps to secure petroleum rights.

A letter from another Anglo-Persian joint venture — to the Under Secretary of State for India, asked that: “subject to the approval of His Majesty’s Government, my company, Petroleum Concessions Ltd, proposes to seek for oil concessions ...”

As officers of the Government of India and servants of the King Emperor, Political Agents took the initiative in communicating to the India Office the areas where Anglo-Persian should work. Walton of the India Office tipped off L.Lefroy of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (as it was now known):

“The Sultan of Muscat had recently informed the Political Agent that he is anxious to have a thorough oil survey carried out in his state... This information may perhaps be of interest to you and Mr. Skliros.”

The India Office did more: it urged the multinational to develop fresh prospects when it seemed entrepreneurial spirit was lacking.

“Do you know whether the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and Petroleum Concessions Ltd are intending to open negotiations in the near future with the Sultan (for example by applying for an option on the lines of those already obtained on the Trucial Coast)?”

This made sense: after all, this was capitalist development under Government tutelage, to serve the strategic interests of the Empire. The terms and conditions of entry by this subsidiary of a quasi-PSU were laid down clearly to ensure Government of India control when awarding petroleum rights:

“that any geologist or employee who visits any of Trucial Sheikhdoms for the purpose of exploring or surveying the area of the option should be of British nationality; that the exploring party in their travels would be definitely guided by the views of the Resident as to where they should go...if it is

desired during the currency of an option to enter into negotiations with the Sheikh concerned for a concession the prior approval of His Majesty's Government will be required before such negotiations are opened".

Similar conditions for the prior approval of the details of contracts by the Government of India/Great Britain were made obligatory as a prerequisite to entering into negotiations throughout British-controlled West Asia.

We have seen similar agreements for Bahrein, Muscat, Kuwait, Ras-al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Dubai. Clearly the Mandate had nothing to do with the interests of the peoples under tutelage, but solely of the occupying Power.

In January 1936 Skliros of Anglo-Persian discussed in confidence with the India Office the activities of its subsidiaries in Qatar, Abu Dhabi and other Trucial Sheikhdoms.

"Their policy was to secure a series of 5-year options.... But" noted the India Office bureaucrat, "I gathered that the company was in no particular hurry to develop oil in any of these areas and merely wished to prevent other concerns coming in and developing a nuisance value".

Anglo-Persian did not intend to produce from these regions: but simply prevent others from producing, since it would depress their profits. This was consistent with the policies of all the oil companies. In 1958, when Abdel Karim Qasim came to power in a popular uprising, the Iraq Petroleum Company, which was jointly owned by all the major oil multinationals, was only producing from 0.5 per cent of its actual concession area, so that it would not disturb the profits earned by the multinational cartel elsewhere in the world.

## II

### Indian Labour

In one important respect the interests of the Empire and of the company were identical. This was in the question of denying the rights of Indian labour. As far as the political agents were concerned, their attitude was one of 'hands off' — which had the effect of serving precisely the interests of the various subsidiaries of Anglo-Persian.

Decisions on petroleum were dictated by strategic considerations. So labour was dealt with under special laws. A comparison of the conditions of oilfield workers with those of, say Assam plantation labour would be useful.

The Political Advisor, Bahrain, continued to deny requests for redress and improvement even as late as the late 1940s.<sup>20</sup> Given this dispensation, we shall look at how Anglo-Persian's subsidiaries dealt with the labour under their control.

The conditions of Indian labour in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company were poor throughout the period of our study. Indian labour was used from the very outset of exploration for petroleum in the Middle East, in Persia, since 1902. Indian workmen from Burmah Oil's Rangoon refinery built the Abadan refinery, which was commissioned in 1912. Indian workmen were involved in all stages of the process: in drilling and exploration, in production, in building the refinery at Abadan and in operating it.

Shaw Wallace and Company did much of the recruitment, from a range of communities. These included Pathans from the North West Frontier Province, Tamils from the Madras Presidency, Telicar Jews from Bombay often as skilled labour, Goan and Mangalorean Catholics as clerical staff. Much of the labour was from rural areas, perhaps because such workmen might not have the contacts and background that would encourage them to organise. Records show no indication of unionisation. As we shall see in this section where we look at Indian labour in Persia, Mesopotamia and Bahrain, there was some improvement over 30 years. Labour became more assertive. However, even by the late 1940s, the situation at the workplace was far from ideal; and there was only limited recognition of labour rights.

This is an early demonstration of the fact that the nature of the industrial process does not result automatically in greater development of the working class and the resources it can command. A sophisticated industrial process co-existed with relatively un-free labour, even by the standards of that time. Those very years saw militant labour struggles in the textile mills of Bombay.

In the petroleum labour we have looked at, there are at least some differences with other indentured labour. Apart from the fact that the right to settlement was absent, oilfield workers in the Middle East were seen as producing a raw material critical to British global power; therefore any agitation for labour rights was treated as a security threat. During the Great War, war power laws governed their lives, not Indian labour laws. They could be detained indefinitely after the expiry of their contracts, as this law was applied well beyond the end of the War. Curiously, nationalist politicians do not seem to have taken much note of or protested against these conditions, though they agitated frequently on behalf of other indentured labour.

In this early case of 'outsourcing', imperialism enforced this lack of freedom, since it forced a foreign oil industry on states that it had created, denied workers from those states an opportunity to work in this industry,

and recruited instead expatriate labour on contract, that would never have the resources to organise. As in the case of the mill strike of the 1980s in Bombay, the overall political economy determined the options available to workers.

When we look at the labour being recruited to serve the American oil-driven occupation of Iraq today, its condition is no more free than it was a century ago.

### *Unique Indenture*

Around 1000 to 3000 workmen were required every year from India in the Abadan refinery alone. Records show that during the Great War and for some time after Anglo-Persian's Indian labour had no right to even a day's leave in the week. Their accommodation was frequently uninhabitable. Families and dependents were compelled to travel to Persia at their own cost. Employment could be terminated by the company at any time by giving one month's notice. But the worker could not leave before serving a minimum period of two years. Should an employee attempt to leave before that, he was imprisoned. When he came out of jail, he had to pay his own passage back. Employees could be detained indefinitely even beyond their term of contract, under military law. Anglo-Persian persuaded the local authorities to treat this as a war necessity: workers were told they would be shot if they attempted to escape.

### *Protest*

Efforts by labour to protest were dealt with summarily. Saleh Khan, Juma Khan and seven other 'riveters and holder men', Pathans from the North West Frontier Province, who had been hired in November 1915 by Shaw Wallace and Company on behalf of Anglo-Persian were judged by Col. R.L. Kennion, Consul and Magistrate at Mohammerah on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1916. Commenting on their living conditions, he noted that, widthwise, each man had a foot of sleeping space:

Under Clause 4, they were entitled to 'accommodation'. It appears that along with 51 others, they were accommodated in a shed 60" x 12". This is manifestly insufficient and seems to have been a matter of complaint from the start. In fact it is not improbable that the whole dispute arose from the grievance the men had in this respect.<sup>21</sup>

These men thereafter absented themselves from work twice, first when one of their tribesmen was killed; and thereafter when they were sent home because of heavy rain and did not return when the day cleared up. They appealed to the Magistrate at Mohammerah about their accommodation and their pay being cut; as a result of which they were given other accommodation. But when they returned to work

Mr. Grant sent them away, saying that as they had absented themselves for so many days for their pleasure, so now they could be absent so many more for his, or words to that effect...

When they were next summoned to work, they refused. Kennion acknowledged that

It is still more questionable whether on the men's return to work, (Mr Grant)...should have refused to allow them to work in order to punish them further for their absence for *which they had already had their pay docked. Such action seems to be unconciliatory and likely to cause trouble.*

Nevertheless, he said the Company had an absolute right to stop pay for any absences, and "the stoppage of pay...cannot be regarded as reasonable cause for refusal to work".

More significantly he held that an agreement to work was a contract, under which the failure to perform an obligation should attract a criminal penalty. Accordingly, he sentenced them to a brief term of imprisonment. They were dismissed from work and, like many of the Indians who work in Iraq today, had to pay their own passage home.

From this it is evident that their pay could be cut for any reason, even an absence from work to appeal for justice; while any protest by them could attract dismissal and imprisonment.

Anglo-Persian and its agents, Shaw Wallace, reserved the right to summon men from India to Persia or Mesopotamia; and then refuse to hire them or to dismiss them peremptorily without reason; save its own subjective satisfaction as to their fitness or competence. This appeal of 20<sup>th</sup> August 1919 from "Santa Sing, Mistry", to the Protector of Emigrants, Karachi, illustrates the plight of such workers.

I, on behalf of the undernamed fitters beg most respectfully to bring to your honour's kind notice that in accordance with the orders



given by Messrs Shaw Wallace and Company, Karachi to get fitters for Abadan, I with great difficulty obtained services of about 87 men some of whom were certified for their work by Messrs T Cosser and Compay (sic) and physically by doctor Nazaret. An agreement for two years was drawn up with these men by the company and thus they were sent to Abadan by SS "Chakla" which sailed on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1919. Afterwards I also was sent making a similar agreement and reached there on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1919. The Superintendent Engineer, Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Abadan, then sent for me and demanded my certificates which I submitted to him. He returned me all other certificates except one which was granted to me by the same company on my previous service for two years. He dismissed me and my men (except some who agreed to remain on low pay) under Clause II of our agreement for incompetency (sic) which is quite illegal agreement as I have every confidence for my men's competency....<sup>22</sup>

It was the Protector of Emigrants in Bombay or Karachi who acted to some extent to secure the interests of workers.<sup>23</sup>

By virtue of his statutory responsibilities under the Indian Emigration Act, this official was compelled to take exit interviews of these workers, record their complaints, and represent these grievances to the Government of India and the Political Officers in Persia. But even this minimum recourse to law alarmed Anglo-Persian and its agents.

Shaw Wallace & Co. wrote to the Collector at Karachi on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1919:

We should at the same time be sorry to think that the petitions accompanying the letter in question were considered sufficient evidence to deprive us of the privilege which we have hitherto enjoyed.

This is because

our friends (Anglo-Persian) are still experiencing great difficulty in securing a sufficient supply of efficient labour and consequently we should deplore the adoption of any additional formality tending to retard the speedy despatch of such labour from here.<sup>24</sup>

Many of the measures taken to control labour were under the guise of 'war-time' measures that continued well beyond the end of the War because they so suited the Company.

### *War time measures continued*

Anglo-Persian managed to get the Emigration Act suspended in the case of Persia under the claim of "war measures", even as the war was ending.

The Government of Bombay's appeal of September 1918, renewed in November 1919, had brought to light

the fact that certain employees of the company had been ill-treated and asked for an enquiry to be made. The Army was asked but did nothing. The General Officer Commanding, Baghdad, was accordingly asked by the Army Department to conduct this enquiry and report the result to the Government. But no communication from this Officer seems to have been received so far.

The Government of Bombay made it clear that "complaints against the company are becoming frequent," it held that "as the necessity of the Company's exemption is over with the termination of war, they (Anglo-Persian) may again be brought within the scope of the Emigration Act."<sup>25</sup>

The Civil Commissioner at Baghdad thereupon pleaded the Company's case (15<sup>th</sup> December, 1919):

Strongly deprecate reintroduction of Indian Emigration Act... very extensive works... increase capacity of existing refinery... for 20,000,000 gallons to 45,000,000 or possibly 51,000 gallons per mensem to meet GoI, Railways, admiralty and trade route requirements... simultaneously constructing extension which will produce 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 gallons of lubricating oil... company would gladly employ another 2,000 or 3,000 men if they could... labourers employed here during the past 10 years...<sup>26</sup>

Control over different sectors of the labour force was justified as a requirement of the War. Even after they were no longer hired by the War Office directly, but by the India Office instead, when the postal workers went on strike they were dealt with under military law. As in the case of

other employees, there was great discontent at the fact that they were compulsorily retained in service even after their contracts were over.

About 40 employees of Mesopotamia Postal Dept essayed lightning strike 1<sup>st</sup> October and are being dealt with under military law in consequence... They are the same men who struck at Basrah 6 months ago, and real reason probably is discontent at compulsory retention.<sup>27</sup>

Recruitment had been carried on by the War Office in some departments, such as the Post and Telegraphs. By the end of the War, there was a switchover to recruitment by the Government of India for civil personnel in Mesopotamia in services such as the Post and Telegraphs, Railways and Surveys.<sup>28</sup> The political agents saw their role as the protection of the interests of the Company. They exercised their judicial and police functions frequently to jail or threaten workmen. They were immune to even the nominal procedure of justice that the Indian customs officials who functioned as "protectors of emigrants" went through.

Several political agents found employment with the Anglo Persian immediately after retiring from the Indian Political Service. They also kept up a McCarthyite hunt for "Bolshevik influence" among the employees of Anglo-Persian, relying on dubious tales from informers and pursuing a Tamil clerk who was dubbed the mastermind of the conspiracy.<sup>29</sup>

In December 1919, the Government of India's Department of Commerce & Emigration reviewed the suspension of the Act. G.L. Corbett agreed that "There appears to me to be no justification for continuing the suspension of the Emigration Act in favour of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which was only agreed to experimentally as a war measure."<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, they were unwilling — in the Company's interest — to stop its recruitment peremptorily.

Unskilled labour was used by the Company as late as 1920, even though it was illegal.

The extraction of petroleum was treated as a military necessity. The rights of Indian labour were done away with.

All Indian manual labour in Mesopotamia is employed by the Military except for 15000 unskilled and 4300 skilled employed by the railways which however are more truly a military than a civil department. It is not therefore possible to dispense with this labour as long as

military needs remain what they are... If they (Council of State) are averse to Indian emigration and G of I force the issue, there may result a complete breakdown of the Army and Railway administration.<sup>31</sup>

In 1920, the Government of India was worried about comment in the Indian press on the use of wartime legislation to recruit Indian labour when the war was long over.

G of I are anxious that present measures for recruitment of labour for Mesopotamia should be terminated at the earliest possible date. These measures were only sanctioned as purely temporarily (vide condition No. 1) and have now been in operation for 8 months... If labourers are willing to go under this agreement without the right to settlement, well I don't think we could object, but as soon as there is the slightest pressure, I am convinced that recruitment under these conditions must cease... December 24, 1920.<sup>32</sup>

But no real fuss was made by the National Movement about these people's rights. This made their situation even more difficult.

Almost all labour employed in Mesopotamia is enrolled (for the duration of war and therefore can claim discharge after the conclusion of peace.

It was only in 1922 that the Government of India finally objected to the Iraq administration (under mandate from the League of Nations) continuing to use obsolete legislation employing military regulation to deal with labour even though the War was long over.

...the present provisional arrangements as to the recruitment of military Labour Corps in India and their employment by the Civil Administration in Mesopotamia cannot be continued much longer and is opposed by the growing mass of Indian opinion.<sup>33</sup>

Such wartime laws would contain, of course, fewer rights for such workmen. Though the Government refers to "Indian opinion" this does not seem to have been an issue widely discussed in the Press or the Provincial

Assemblies; though the Madras Assembly did discuss the issue, as did *The Hindu*.

### *Illegal Emigration Continued as Well*

On the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1920, C.A. Innes noted that Anglo-Persian used unskilled labour from India.

Company requires now not only skilled labour from India, but also unskilled labour. At any rate, it is already utilising the services of the Military Labour Corps Department which, I presume, are composed mainly of unskilled labourers.

Yet such workers could only be sent abroad were Mesopotamia notified under law as a country to which labour could be sent; but that had not been done: "...the matter becomes more complicated, for I am informed by Office that they can trace no Notification formally including Mesopotamia under section 4 of the Act in schedule I as a country to which emigration is lawful."

To do so now would excite general public interest. Amazingly, nationalist politicians had not taken note of this extraordinary exploitation that produced one of the most valuable resources of the Empire.

If the office is correct, therefore, strictly, if we are prepared to allow the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to continue recruiting unskilled labour from India, we ought to regularise the position in the first instance by notifying Mesopotamia u/s 4. It would be a mistake to do this, for it would at once bring the whole question into public notice...

In fact the position was completely unlawful. It was simply that because control of oil was central to the War, the Government of India ignored its own law.

In view of the great importance of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's operations for the successful prosecution of the war, we agreed in 1918 to suspend the provisions of the Emigration Act in so far as recruitment by the company in India was concerned... We simply ignored the Act.

A strict application of law would not merely prevent Anglo-Persian recruiting from India under the Emigration Act: it would also prevent this public limited company using the labour resources of the Indian Army under the pretext of 'war effort'.

It is a more difficult question whether we should allow the company to continue recruiting in India, whether under the Emigration Act or not, pending the settlement of the general question of policy in regard to immigration into Mesopotamia. The question is, of course, of peculiar importance to the company since, if interpreted strictly, the order passed in Council on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1920 will preclude the Military authorities in Mesopotamia from continuing to lend the services of the Military Labour Corps Department to the company.

Since Anglo-Persian was so important for the U.K. Government, the Government of India would not actually stop this completely illegal emigration.

It is no doubt true that the company is an important one, that the British Government is a large shareholder in it and that the Admiralty is much interested in obtaining supplies of oil from it. I do not think, therefore, that we should be justified in closing down suddenly recruitment from India for the company. In my view, we must give the company time to make other arrangements.

Innes therefore proposed that the GoI should regularise this emigration post facto, but only temporarily.

I consider that the principle of the Order in Council... should be applied also to the company, that is, I would allow them to continue to recruit in India both labourers and skilled artisans provided of course that that recruitment is conducted under the provisions of the Emigration Act. It should be made clear, however, that this concession is a purely temporary one...<sup>34</sup>

To which A.P. Muddiman agreed on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, pointing out that this entire suspension had been grossly illegal.

Apparently in 1918, it was decided to "suspend" the provisions of the Emigration Act to enable the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to

recruit in India. The grounds for the action taken were the needs of the military situation, but it does not seem to be suggested that there was the slightest colour of law for what was done and is, I presume, still being done.<sup>35</sup>

He maintained that the illegality could no longer continue:

I certainly think that this position must be abandoned at once. Paragraph 3 of the summary speaks of the Act being reintroduced, but the facts are apparently that the existing law is being disregarded. It ought either to be given effect or in the alternative amended. The executive Government cannot exercise a dispensing power.

A large contingent of unskilled labour – over 20,000 according to the Directorate of Labour — continued to come into Persia and Mesopotamia. It was deemed ‘impossible’ to cease such illegal recruitment and comply with the Act.<sup>36</sup>

It seems likely that the administration was not eager to use Iraqi labour: close to local connections, it would have been much more difficult to exploit.

But Indian labour, far from home, and any semblance of a fair legal system, could not stand up for its rights.

Considerable reduction is contemplated in next financial year but release of all Indians in the near future quite impossible. It is understood here that service is unpopular.<sup>37</sup>

### *Violations of Rights Continued*

And even after the reintroduction of the Act, such practices by Anglo-Persian continued.

Amazingly as late as the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1924 we still find even Government officials noting that the Anglo-Persian continued to ignore even the (amended) Indian Emigration Act of 1922:

The present position is illegal and highly irregular, as the new Act does not appear to provide for any exemption. Yet the company is being allowed to continue to enjoy an exemption granted before the new Act came into force.

Now enjoying the benefit of recruitment under the Act, Anglo-Persian continued with blatantly unfair labour practices.

...Clause 10 of the agreement confers no security of tenure commensurate with his services which every employee has a right to expect. In the present case, the petitioner, in company with others, has been discharged for no apparent cause other than a forged letter containing imputations against his moral character which were not proved to be true and were subsequently withdrawn by the writer...<sup>38</sup>

### *Government of India's Weak Advocacy*

In the early 1920s, the Government of India tried to assert itself on how the emigration of Indian labour was organised. The Iraq administration had imposed restrictions on such emigration.

Your proposition that the questions of passport regulations and of emigration are distinct cannot be accepted by the G of I. Indian immigration is restricted in many countries, but their laws do not in any case, discriminate against Indians **co nomine**. And it is idle to disguise restrictions on Indians by saying that they apply equally to other immigrants, as immigrants into Mesopotamia come almost wholly from India. If unskilled labour from India is wanted in Mesopotamia, its passport regulations must be altered.<sup>39</sup>

The British Government of India also tried to assert itself on the Re. 1 fees being charged on entry by the British-run Government. However it subsequently succumbed.<sup>40</sup>

Even before the 1923 Residence Act, the Mesopotamian Passport Regulations allowed the administration to prevent the entry of ‘free immigrants’, those who did not have a specific job in the petroleum industry. From the outset, the regulation of labour was focused on the extraction of petroleum and other strategic operations such as the railways.

The Government was forced to take up a stronger stand as some members of the Indian legislature were gradually becoming more assertive on the question of Indian labour in general.

...under new Emigration Act, practical veto is accorded to Indian legislature, and in view of indications that public opinion in India will

insist on dealing with emigration problem as a whole, and will press for prohibition to all parts of the Empire which are under control of HM's govt. if in any part Indian labour under disabilities which are regarded as unreasonable.<sup>41</sup>

They might conceivably take up the rights of Indian workers in Iraq, and indeed, the entire question of why the Indian Army was there – though they had not yet done so.

The problem with Iraq, is not, therefore an isolated question, and a failure in other cases to reach a solution satisfactory to Indian opinion may lead to a refusal by the Legislature to agree to emigration to Iraq and possibly to a demand for the recall of Indian troops.

But public concern as expressed in the press and the Legislative Assemblies and other forums on specific questions of Indian labour in the Middle East was sporadic and unfocussed.

Questions were raised in the Legislative Assembly on the question of expatriate labour in Mesopotamia. Mr. J.R. Pantulu Guru asked in the Legislative Assembly on the 10th September 1921:

Has the attention of the Govt. been drawn to the editorial note headed, 'A wail from Mesopotamia' and the enclosure thereto published in the Young India newspaper of 27th April 1921, and also to the correspondence headed 'Indians in Mesopotamia' published in the Hindu newspaper of 30th May 1921.

Will the Govt. be pleased to state whether there is any foundation for all or any of the allegations therein contained in the ill treatment of Indians employed in Mesopotamia?

If there is such foundation, do the Govt. propose to take early action to have matters righted?

To which the Honourable Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru replied on behalf of the Government that the British high official in Mesopotamia said all was well:

... The matter was referred to the High Commissioner Mesopotamia, who states that all the allegations which he has been able to trace are without foundation.

Indeed, Indians were still desperate to find work there, presumably because of sheer poverty.

So far from services in Mesopotamia being unpopular among Indians, the High Commissioner reports that petitions from personnel coming under reduction in accordance with general policy are constantly reaching him begging to be exempted from repatriation.

So Sapru and the Government saw no point in protecting the interests of workers. "In the circumstances, the G of I see no necessity for taking any action in the matter."

This issue was not raised thereafter in any systematic fashion.<sup>42</sup>

And as a part of its efforts, the Government of India issued the Immigration Proclamation of 1922 whereby the procedure would be simplified. The requirement that every immigrant must have a passport would be waived under certain circumstances.

The Residence Act, 1923 was enacted to regulate the entry into Iraq of Indians and at the same time their entry into Iraq was regulated to ensure that the welfare of indigents did not become a responsibility of the local administration. Government of India's intervention on behalf of the rights of Indian expatriate labour was limited by administrative order.

This recognised that to some extent, though very limited, the Government of India within the British empire was forced by the 1920s to take into account public opinion on the general issue of the rights of Indian subjects employed or travelling outside India. But not enough. Political parties did not sufficiently mobilise on the subject, especially with regard to Indian workers in the Middle East. This is why the British Government of India did not take up the question more energetically.<sup>43</sup>

There was a constant clash between the British-controlled Iraq administration and the Indian Government with the former trying to prevent the entry of destitute Indians or those unconnected with the petroleum industry.

In 1925, further regulations were introduced to prevent the entry of indigent immigrants or anyone seen to be a potential charge on the Iraqi state, such as peddlers.<sup>44</sup> The Iraq administration fought for the right to administer and control the deposits made by immigrants as guarantees of repatriation.<sup>45</sup>

### *Protector of Emigrants Again*

The efforts of the Indian administration to safeguard the rights of Indian labour continued into the 1930s. In July 1936, the Emigration Officer in

Bombay asserted himself:

... the Emigration Officer is refusing to allow new employees to sail for Bahrain unless a contract similar to that of Anglo Iranian Oil Company Limited is signed.<sup>46</sup>

The company and not the individual was held responsible and threatened by the Protector of Emigrants with legal action for not ensuring that the Emigration Act was complied with.

I would therefore request you, as a representative of the Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited in Bombay to show cause immediately why legal action should not be taken against you under the Indian Emigration Act for infringing the provisions of the Emigration law in the case of the above mentioned two emigrants.<sup>47</sup>

Later in 1936, the provincial government of Bombay refused to allow emigration of skilled Indian workers to Bahrain unless some of their rights were protected. It specified the deficiencies in the agreements employed by the Bahrain Company and stipulated how they were to be remedied. Clearly the British Government of India and the company did not have identical interests.

As during the First War and immediately after, the real push for compliance with just norms came from the authority under the Emigration Act, the Protector of Emigrants. "...the Government of Bombay consider the agreements of the Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited are very unfair to the emigrants and are therefore unable to grant permission to the Company to recruit emigrants under the proposed agreements."

This official was specific in the redress that he sought:

"I want the following to be inserted:

1. free passage to all Indian employees.
2. Payment of half month salary in advance before leaving India.
3. Provision to pay the employee from the date of engagement in India.
4. Overtime clause.
5. Illness: minimum wage of half month salary.
6. Arbitration clause similar to the one approved by the government in the prescribed form".<sup>48</sup>

But even after the Protector of Emigrants insisted on fairer contracts, conditions of work changed only to a certain extent, and were still long and exhausting. The Company fought for and retained the provision that if an employee terminated his contract or it was terminated 'with cause' by the Company, he and not the Company would pay his return fare to India.

Foreign service agreement for Class II b: long term

S 2 Free passage to Bahrain from India.]

S 3 Work 6 days a week, 9 hours a day, shall also work reasonable overtime and on Sundays and when called upon to do by the Company for which he shall receive payment at the rate of the ordinary wages above specified.<sup>49</sup>

Even the Political Agents were compelled to recognise that the contracts were grossly unfair:

Incidentally, the more one studies the terms of the agreements, the more one realises that Bombay government have grounds for regarding them as unfair, e.g., **an employee can be dismissed at any time without notice for inefficiency or physical disability**, in which case he has to pay his own passage to India and gets no pay during this period.<sup>50</sup> (emphasis added)

In 1938, the Protector of Emigrants took up the question of Indians employed by a British and an American company, without formal agreements.

He demanded that they be given agreements and their rights be recognised. He also took up allegations of ill-treatment by employees who had returned to India.

Since then the local office of the Company recruited about 462 Indians out of which 202 have already been returned to India... Out of these repatriated emigrants, 153 filed their written complaints to me. They were all referred to the Company.

The company was compelled to recognise that there had been ill-treatment, non-payment of dues to these workmen and no formal agreements. "In 135 cases, the complaints were found either wholly or partially true. The claims were admitted by the Company and dues were and are being paid by the Company".<sup>51</sup>

### *Jurisdiction*

Here we look at another Middle Eastern oil producer with immigrant Indian labour.

All degrees of labour were being imported by the 1930s — clerical, skilled and semi-skilled — by the Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited, a subsidiary of Anglo-Persian.<sup>52</sup> A very large number of expatriate workers were stationed in this and other Middle Eastern sheikhdoms. Therefore it became important to define the jurisdiction of local courts of law and that of British Government of India.<sup>53</sup>

With a large number of Indian workers in Bahrain, there were complaints about labour disputes and claims for compensation.

By the 1930s, labour was becoming more confident and assertive — despite the lack of significant support from political parties at home.

The question arose as to the law and procedure that should be adopted for compensation. The Administration was reluctant to apply the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act, but finally accepted it in the absence of a local law. The operation of the Act was subjected to the arbitration of the Political Agent at Bahrain.<sup>54</sup>

### *Changing Condition of Labour*

There were specific forms of agreement by the 1930s giving some increased measure of protection to different categories of employees.<sup>55</sup>

Form of agreement in respect of clerks and other special classes of employees.

Anglo Persian Oil Company.

The Company shall provide the Employee with a free passage from the place of recruitment in India to Persia and shall supply him during the journey with food or an allowance of Rs.3 a day in lieu of food at the option of the Employer.

The Employee shall be entitled during illness or other forced idleness to a minimum wage of not less than half of the monthly pay on which he is engaged.

Free accommodation.

Form of agreement in respect to Artisans

3) Before his departure from India to take up his employment, the Company shall make to the Employee on application an advance not exceeding half a month's salary, such sum to be deducted by

the Company in 2 equal instalments from the first and second month's salary.

The Company shall provide the Employee with a free passage from the place of recruitment in India to Persia and supply him during the journey with food or an allowance of Re. 1 a day in lieu of food. Passage means, for journeys by train, a third class passage; for journeys by sea or river, a deck passage.

7) illness: minimum wage of half the pay.

8) free accommodation and medical attendance.

10) repatriation in case of illness — free food and food allowance. (Guarantee of good behavior to be made at the point of visaing the passport by the Company).

Some aspects of the extreme exploitation evident during the First War and the 1920s did not continue into this later phase.

A disagreement in the 1930s between the Bahrain Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of Anglo-Persian, and the British administration in Bahrain, arose because while the administration wanted the company to guarantee the 'good behaviour' of all employees; and to accept the responsibility of meeting expenses for their return fare; the Company was reluctant to do so.<sup>56</sup>

So we see that the Political Agent in Bahrain in the 1930s, as representative of the British Government of India, was willing, to a limited extent, to take up the question of the living conditions of workers.

"Owing to the increase in personnel of the Bahrain Petroleum Company due to the work on the construction of the Refinery, there have, I believe, been considerably more persons accommodated in the houses than would ordinarily have been the case."

This was in contrast to the Political Agents in the Persian Gulf 20 years earlier, who had acted as virtual agents of the petroleum companies.

"The hot weather is approaching and I should be glad to be assured that the conditions under which the personnel of the Company are to live are suitable."<sup>57</sup>

A government medical officer undertook some examination of the quality of accommodation provided by the Bahrain Petroleum Company. Perhaps his extravagant praise should not be taken seriously.

I am of the opinion that the employees of the Bahrain Petroleum Company live under conditions that will not be equalled by the average European for the next 10 years.<sup>58</sup>

The Medical Report — in spite of its praise for the living conditions — was compelled to mention severe overcrowding; which the representatives of the Company dismissed as being inevitable.<sup>59</sup>

The Political Agent happily agreed, and expressed the view that 'overcrowding is a question of some discomfort rather than of medical importance'.<sup>60</sup>

There were highly stratified living arrangements undertaken for different classes of people working there — whites, then '*better class Indians*' and '*others*'.<sup>61</sup>

### *Fluid labour*

The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf was anxious to retain the existing abbreviated procedure whereby Political Agents could quickly decide matters without excessive attention to norms of civilised justice. He wished to serve the interest of the Company identifying it with the Empire: "I should prefer to keep the labour situation as fluid as possible."<sup>62</sup>

He wanted to keep all matters informal with no right of appeal to Indian courts and no rules of procedure, nor any right to assistance or representation by lawyers. He feared that Indian labour agitations could be imported if any of this were allowed:

I think the Political Agent can influence matters in directions which suit us and probably obtain a greater measure of justice for an individual if he deals with cases politically rather than legally in the first instance.

The Political Advisor, Bahrain, would not take up requests for redress and improvement even in the late 1940s. However, there are indications that by then Indian workers were beginning to become more assertive about their rights. "...In one of the place here, all sort of RUBBISH is dumped over and this is sure to spread serious diseases, specially MALARIA..."

But no action was taken on this complaint.<sup>63</sup>

### *Discriminatory Agreements*

Agreements drawn up in 1945 by labour contractors on behalf of the oil companies continued to be discriminatory. They provided that in the case of illness, the minimum wage would be reduced to half of their monthly pay or less.

They even provided that the burden of proof was on the workman to show that his illness was caused by circumstances beyond his control. If not, he could be dismissed without any notice or salary.

In the event of the said employee becoming incapacitated through illness brought on by causes within his control as to which the decision of the Medical Officer referred to in Clause 8 and therein provided shall be final or willfully committing a breach of any of the conditions of this agreement... it shall be lawful for the Company to dismiss the employee with or without notice...

This was a clause that was often used by the Company to terminate the services of Indian workers. There was some nominal recognition in the contracts that the employees should receive free accommodation and medical treatment.

In practice, this often did not happen as there were a number of complaints of inadequate compensation for privately contracted accommodation.<sup>64</sup>

The agreement did not provide for compensation in case of work-related disability. While the Political Agent in Bahrain protested, the contractors refused to change it.<sup>65</sup>

Contractors for the oil companies failed to comply with even the minimum compensation to their Indian staff laid down even by the Political Agents who administered such rules and resolved disputes. With inadequate compensation for accommodation, living conditions for workers were very poor. Workers appealed that the house rent allowance should be raised to Rs 70:

Regarding house allowance, we have to say that one cannot get a house being to live in on Rs. 50 per month.<sup>66</sup>

But this request was not granted and requests for humane treatment were ignored:

Hence it looks very urgent and needful to think over again with an open heart and allow the terms and conditions of Agency to your foreign staff (to allow them) to live at least a human life and work with an interest for your Company.



There are numerous instances of unfair labour practices employed by Anglo-Persian's local subsidiary, the Bahrain Petroleum Company and its agents.

This included dismissal without notice for some categories of labour:

He shall be liable to dismissal without notice, and the Company will accept no responsibilities whatsoever in connection with his repatriation etc. from Bahrain.

### *Dismissed for Ramadhan*

As in the case of Chotu Ram Bux, Muslim worker who had asked to work in a single shift, rather than split shifts, as he was fasting for Ramadhan. He was dismissed.<sup>67</sup>

Mr Bux refused to sign the receipt of the company's letter and to work according to these instructions. This was followed by another letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 1947 terminating his services for 'non compliance with Company instructions'. This letter was signed under duress by Bux. On 29<sup>th</sup> July 1947, Bux wrote a letter to the Political Agent, explaining that he had refused to work shifts as he was fasting for Ramadhan, and that he had worked for 3 years for the Company. However, he was not reinstated; nor was any other form of redress made to him.

Medical facilities were inadequate:

It was found on arrival to Bahrain that the Company had no proper hospital arrangement and that the Company was relying on the discretion they had with regard to the nature of such facilities. Our LT Employees Association had been requesting the Company for a long time for better medical aid. At last, the Company constructed a well equipped hospital for the Indian employees at the Company premises 14 miles away from our residence.

Not only do we have to travel the distance when ill, as regards the employees with family, the visiting hours and days are so strictly stipulated that it was difficult for the wives of the employees to visit their sickly husbands.

### *Racism*

Even at the point of dismissal there was a marked difference in the way that Indian and European employees were treated.

A.S. Duncan, a British national dismissed for violent conduct on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1935, was given a first class ticket and £10 for incidental expenses as part of his repatriation. Criminal proceedings were not started, though Duncan had assaulted people, damaged property and intimidated staff.<sup>68</sup> It was important not to punish Englishmen in the presence of colonial subjects.

By contrast, there was widespread racism in dealings with Indian employees.<sup>69</sup> P.A. Menon was terminated without notice when he himself gave notice terminating his contract in protest against Indian employees' services being terminated when they demanded adequate medical care.<sup>70</sup>

When I came, I was appalled to see and experience the conditions under which your non staff employees were labouring. The lot of Indian employees, who are unaccustomed to local conditions and who constitute a vast majority of the non-staff clerical category of your employees, was particularly deplorable.

...an aggressive and narrow type of *racism* was the basis of their (Company's) policy in the treatment of their employees.

Employees' services were terminated in case of accident without any compensation. During this period there were repeated individual protests against unfair treatment and racialism.

The Indian workforce gradually ceased to be dominant, and Iraqi workforce replaced them. Iraqis proved easier to organise, and the underground Communist Party had a large following among Iraqi oilfield workers, who went on a major national strike on political grounds in 1953.

The international oil companies could no longer rely on the Iraqi workforce, or the local puppet governments of Nuri Said or the Hashemite monarchy; the latter two collapsed in 1958:

Today Indian labour is again imported; as a report from the *Asian Age* makes clear, the conditions of work are abominable.<sup>71</sup> Hundreds of agricultural labourers from several drought-hit villages of Andhra Pradesh are migrating secretly to Iraq to make a living doing menial jobs in US military camps, construction sites and transport companies.

Several are working as dhobis (laundrymen), scavengers, cooks, drivers and construction workers in war-torn Iraq for salaries paid in US dollars.

Officials are quoted by the newspaper as saying that about 500 workers from Karimnagar district alone fly to Gulf countries in search of work every month, and that a major chunk of them slip into Iraq to make some quick money.

The majority of the people leaving for the Gulf are from Telangana districts, such as Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Adilabad, and coastal districts, such as East and West Godavari... over 1,000 youth from Chalgal village, which has a total population of 5,000, migrated to different Gulf countries in the last few years. Several hundred of them are now in Iraq.

A sub-inspector of the immigration wing told the newspaper that most of the youth were employed for menial tasks in military camps, such as washing and ironing clothes and cooking food.

They get about \$800-\$1,000 a month, which is a big sum for them, he said... Sometimes the travel documents say that a person is an AC mechanic, or an electrician, but most of them are agricultural labourers.

Konka Mahesh, 23, of Mutyampet in Malyal mandal, returned home penniless after spending about one month at the base camp of US-led forces stationed on the outskirts of Baghdad:

A visibly shaken Mahesh said that he, along with eight others from Mutyampet, Thatipalli and Gollapalli, left for Dubai on June 23, 2004, by paying Rs 1.10 lakh each to a mandal based sub-agent. 'After spending two days at Alkush area in Dubai, we were airlifted to Baghdad by a white man. We realised that we were in Iraq only after landing at Baghdad international airport,' Mahesh said. 'We were taken to a military camp 15 km from the airport where we were entrusted with tasks like cleaning clothes and washing utensils for \$1,200 per month,' he said.

There were workers from Kerala, Gujarat and other parts of the country. Laxmakka, Mahesh's mother, said that their family was now heavily in debt because her son's trip abroad, for which he had taken a large loan, had proved unsuccessful.

### III

#### The Indian Subsidy

Various arrangements — financial, technical and military — for oil exploration in Mesopotamia were negotiated through India and the Indian authorities.<sup>72</sup> This phenomenon is what Rajni Palme Dutt described in *India Today* as the role of India, to provide finance and labour to the British Empire, paying for the Mediterranean Fleet, the domination of North Africa and the control of the Suez Canal, among other imperial undertakings.

#### *GoI Financial Assistance*

In 1905-6, the Government of India and the Foreign Office considered whether to advance loans to the penurious Persian government in return for concessions for contracts to build roads and construct irrigation projects. The Government of India had already advanced Sterling 200,000 in 1903 and Sterling 100,000 in 1904. As the Persian State collapsed, the expanding British Empire stepped in to fulfil various functions.

What is the importance of these sums? Consider that the **total** UK Government investment in the Anglo-Petroleum Company — which later became British Petroleum — to secure a controlling 51 per cent share was £2.2 million; then we see that these repeated amounts from Indian revenues of the order of £50,000 and £100,000 were very significant. No benefit was received by India commensurate with the profits derived from the oil, since it was not really a commercial decision; Indian revenues were invested for the benefit of the Empire.

The search for petroleum competed before the First War with imperial expansionism and the Great Game with Russia. There was a degree of competitiveness with the Russians to give loans (and acquire concessions). A tripartite arrangement between Britain, Russia and France was reached in 1906 and the British government made over a loan of £50,000 at the end of 1906.

The Indian Government contributed very substantially to these arrangements.<sup>73</sup>

In 1912, a loan to the Persian government was made of £200,000 of which half was provided by the Russian government, £50,000 by the UK government and £50,000 by the Government of India. Further advances were made out of Indian government revenues, in a matter that had nothing to do with Indian interests, but everything with Britain and her Empire.

7<sup>th</sup> February 1912.

Minute

This application for a British India advance to the Persian Government simultaneously with a Russian advance of like amount is a renewal of proposals made in 1906 and again in 1910...

The only other outstanding British Indian loan to the Persian Government is, it may be explained, in respect of advances of 200,000 pounds in 1903 and 100,000 pounds in 1904 and this is being repaid in accordance with a scheme arranged in 1910.

Minute dated 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> April 1912.

It is now proposed in certain circumstances to make another joint advance of 100,000 pounds, of which the Indian share will be 25,000 pounds.<sup>74</sup>

India paid for everything possible. Even in as small a matter as tents for the British Consulate at Shiraz in Persia – and one remote from the concerns of the Indian peasant — half the expenditure was charged to Indian revenues.<sup>75</sup>

Loans continued to be made to the Persian Government in the 1920s out of Indian revenues.<sup>76</sup>

Yet when there was a significant surplus in Iraqi revenues, it was not reinvested in Iraq; it was not shared with the Government of India which had contributed in numerous ways to the Iraqi administration. It was simply handed over to the British government.<sup>77</sup>

### *Government of India Aid*

From the very outset, when no support or finance was available internationally, the Government of India supported with technical assistance and its security and military forces, the British exploration and production of oil in the Middle East.

By 1904, D'Arcy, the promoter of Anglo-Persian, realised that there were productive oil fields in Persia. Looking around for capital to be invested in the venture, he turned to the Government of India. As a civil servant noted, the

Latest report from D'Arcy are to the effect that wells are yielding fair quantity of oil.

He had already approached the Paris Rothschilds, who for the moment were not willing to participate in the undertaking. D'Arcy was in touch with Sir Ernst Cassel, but apparently without much prospect of success. So he asked "whether any assistance could be expected from the G of I."<sup>78</sup>

In this manner from the very beginning of the exploration of petroleum in Persia and Iraq in 1905, the Government of India provided manpower and technical and financial assistance when financiers were too timid to do so.

Petroleum was clearly a strategic necessity for the Empire and needed the long term planning that oil companies were unable to undertake; so too the Bush Administration plans for US interests today.

Mr. W.K. D'Arcy "whose efforts to develop the petroleum industry from Persia have, on previous occasions been supported by His Majesty's Government"...said he was "anxious to obtain from the G of I..the loan of a properly qualified assistant engineer.. from India..."<sup>79</sup> This he did obtain.

The Anglo-Persian Oil company negotiated with the Indian Government for assistance to protect their oilfields. This followed an attack on an Englishman by local Bakhtiari tribesman. The Government of India agreed to send 20 soldiers and two British officers and to share the expenses.<sup>80</sup> Today, oilfield security for the oil companies is provided by the US Government and its allies, and private security agencies they have employed. This Indian security force was provided until 1909.<sup>81</sup>

Lt. Wilson of the Indian Army conducted a survey of the likely petroleum areas for the Anglo-Persian and was given Indian soldiers to assist him.<sup>82</sup>

With the breakdown of the Persian state, and of law and order in the years before the War, Indian armed force became indispensable for guaranteeing the secure extraction of petroleum.

In conclusion, I am to say that Lord Morley is willing to ask the G of I to lend officers of the Indian Army should their services be required... I may add that the measures contemplated in the first instance by HM'sG in the event of the Persian Govt's failure to restore order within the period named, involves the organisation for the policing of the roads in question of a local force of some 1000-1200 men levied and commanded by a number of British officers from the Indian Army.<sup>83</sup>

Right till the outbreak of the war in 1914 there was an effective subsidy from Indian revenues for the Indian troops stationed in Persia.<sup>84</sup>

Important local potentates were subsidised or were advanced loans if they served British petroleum interests. The Sheikh of Mohammerah signed a secret agreement with Anglo-Persian in 1909.

Sheikh should be told that HM's Government are willing to advance to him £5000 or £6000 on the understanding that he concludes arrangement with Oil Company on above terms... You may inform Sheikh that HM's G are prepared to advance at once 10000 pounds at conditions already mentioned... He (Sheikh) is apprehensive that he may incur the hostility of the present National leaders and Ulema in account of the execution by him of such an agreement with a Foreign Company and he begs that the execution and the terms of the agreement may be kept quiet for the present...<sup>85</sup>

Local magnates could be bought off. But peasants agitated repeatedly, as they did in 1912 against the alienation of their land by the Anglo-Persian oil company.<sup>86</sup>

We have given only a few instances of such imperial subsidies. But there will be many more, and ours can serve **as illustrative**.

## Conclusion

There is scope for much further study. It would be useful to see whether workmen were employed through agents of their own community, who would in some sense stand guarantee for them. These contracts should be compared both with oil workers at, say, Digboi in India, and with other labour such as at the tea estates, to compare the rights they enjoyed.

Scholars have written on working class history in India<sup>87</sup> and in a few cases indentured labour (such as Prabhu Mohapatra on Indian indentured labour in Fiji<sup>88</sup>). South Asian labour studies have occupied conferences such as that of the International Institute of Asian Studies in 1995 and have discussed issues such as "labour in pre-colonial India, the legal regime of imperialism, the formation of class and community, South Asia labour overseas, and theoretical approaches to labour history..."<sup>89</sup> But no history of oil has been written from the perspective of India. Nor has any one dealt with Indian expatriate labour in the Middle East. Although these were effectively conditions of indenture, these were the only such indentured labourers who had no right of settlement — unlike those sent to Fiji, Ceylon or East Africa.<sup>90</sup> In this manner, imperialism denied any measure of security to this workforce. Their struggles have not been so far recorded save in

the dusty files of the archives. Abstracted from both India and the Middle East, imperialism rendered these workers relatively powerless. And hundred years later, the situation of contract labour in the Middle East has elements in common; and the situation of Indian workers in Iraq today has not significantly improved. This was a workforce critical to the global production of the raw material central to most modern industrial manufacture and the projection of armed force throughout the world — far more important for the British Empire than, say, tea garden labour — so it is surprising it has not been studied.

Perhaps this is because it is not generally accepted that the extraction and transfer of the surplus from the colonies or the Third World, and the enforcement of this transfer by force, constituted the central business of empire, then and today. Nothing is more critical to industrial processes than petroleum; it is as important to deny it to other powers as it is to own it. Harry Magdoff says<sup>91</sup>: "Monopolistic-type control over raw materials supplies became increasingly important both as a competitive weapon among giants and as a guarantee for the security of the capital invested in the new industries" of the "second Industrial Revolution".

The labour histories of the Third World that have been written are often not situated in any discussion of specific industries, productive process and those industries' relation to global exchange; so the basic issue is absent; they run the risk of becoming anecdotal of working class culture or a plea for charity<sup>92</sup>. In the case of workers in the Bombay textile mills, for instance, such a discussion should embrace issues such as the question of why British policy changed from one of discouraging textile manufacture to one of encouraging it, in order to promote the textile machinery industry; the failure of the Communist leadership under Dange and others, and its compromises with the British and thereafter the Congress; the central question that it is the stagnation of the Indian economy that rendered the textile industry less and less profitable compared to the speculative returns of real estate. By that very token, our discussion of oil workers struggles is incomplete until it is situated in the context of imperialism and its exploitation of West Asia.

We have only provided a glimpse of the Indian subsidy to the development of petroleum. Much more can be done on this. All this must be situated in the central role played by the control of petroleum in two world wars. As a result of the British control of petroleum so early in the century, the Royal Navy was able to switch over from coal; this meant immense efficiencies and mobility in comparison to the German fleet. But the United States was critical to Allied victory; and the price of that was that it gained access to West Asian petroleum equal to that enjoyed by France and Britain.

Hitler saw the control of petroleum as one of the most important objectives of the war. Japan's requirement of petroleum was one of the most important reasons it went to war. British control of West Asian petroleum was critical to Allied victory in the Second War, since German armies ran out of fuel both in their attempt to control North Africa and the Suez Canal, in the war in Europe, especially the war against the Soviet Union.

Post-war, the control of West Asian petroleum has been a key feature of the American empire. This control was threatened by nationalist movements after the war. Today America makes the boldest gamble in its own history, in its attempt to control the world's supply of this critical raw material.

For the present US invasion and occupation of Iraq there are, above all, three reasons<sup>93</sup>. First, the United States, the largest consumer of oil in the world as well as a large producer, is itself increasingly dependent on oil imports — already a little over half its daily consumption of 20 million barrels is imported, from sources as diverse as Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. But its own production is falling, even as its consumption is unchecked. "No other economy rivals that of the United States for the growth of oil imports. Over the past decade, the **increase** in the US share of the oil market, in terms of trade, was higher than the **total** oil consumption in any country, save Japan and China"<sup>94</sup> (emphasis added).

Moreover, US domestic production is falling. As a consequence, as Morse and Richard point out, "The US increase in imports accounts for more than a third of the total increase in oil trade and more than half of the total increase in OPEC's production during the 1990s". This is why the United States will remain the single most important force in the oil markets in the world.

The hegemony of the United States dollar — which ensures that the US can borrow from the rest of the world at any rate it sets and can repay by simply printing more of its own currency and need never keep reserves of any other — depends on the dollar being the universal currency of settlement and exchange, which is in turn dependent significantly on the global oil trade being carried out in US dollars. Venezuela, Iran and Iraq have carried out initiatives inviting Russian, Chinese and French firms; this trend of diversifying away from the US and the dollar began in the oil trade; the US was increasingly threatened, especially by the Euro; the seizure of OPEC's oilfields, beginning with Iraq, but going onto Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, has been central to the agenda of retaining the primacy of the US dollar. And, last, the third purpose of the US invasion today is to deny

other countries oil, to use as a lever of its global dominance, the ability to control the most important strategic and industrial requirement for every modern economy. The invasion is the most important among a number of measures which seek to make Europe, Japan and China, among others, totally dependent on America.

### *Oil, water, cucumbers*

The incursion of the Americans into the Middle East meant, as we have seen, that the Anglo Persian could not intimidate Arab States even inside the British zone of influence. The Sheikhs had acquired a modest room for manoeuvrability by opening up discussions with the Americans — whom Britain and the Indian Government were unable to confront. An attempt to persuade the Ruler of Sharjah that the Anglo Persian Oil Company wanted to drill for water in Sharjah — and was uninterested in oil — was received with scepticism.

The Shaikh and his advisers cannot conceive of the company (or anyone else) spending considerable sums of money without any prospect of getting something in return. They therefore, suspect that there is something behind this readiness to look for water... Even the prospect of getting a good water supply does not appeal to them as strongly as a cash payment would..... they do not regard us as being primarily altruistic.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>: Arrived Abu Dhabi 5.30 pm. Called on Shaikh Shakhbut who received us rather coldly. His attitude was that they had had plenty of rain and there was no shortage of water; he did not therefore need anyone to search for water for him. Friday 15<sup>th</sup>... We then suggested, as our personal advice to him, that if he asked for it the company might conceivably undertake the survey at their own expense in return for being allowed to look for oil in his territory.

The Political Agent at Kuwait even played a critical role in negotiating Anglo-Persian's concessions with the Sheikh. But for his sagacity Anglo-Persian might have obtained from Kuwait not oil but agricultural produce. "Political Resident Bushire Kuwait 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1936

Reference your Express letter No. 395-5 of the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1936. KUWAIT NEUTRAL ZONE. I offer certain comments on the Arabic version of the Kuwait Neutral Zone option.

ARTICLE 4: Option is translated as KHIAR which means cucumber.

It is true that the dictionary gives KHIAR for both "choice" and "cucumber" but local usage hereabouts is for it to mean cucumber. Option should have been translated as "HAQQ AL IKHTIAR", an expression in currency everywhere.

His Excellency the Sheikh has already pointed out to the negotiator the document appears to refer to "cucumber time" rather than "option period"....

I have no other comments. GS de Gaury Captain, Political Agent Kuwait."

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Persia for most of the period under study.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier called Mesopotamia.

<sup>3</sup> We are referring to not only the surplus value directly created by that labour, the value added in production minus the wages; but also the fact that oil plays a critical role in the appropriation or realisation of surplus value elsewhere, for oil is needed for all industry, and for the military; and the military and administration contributed significantly though they do not create surplus value.

<sup>4</sup> The Hidden History of the Iraq War, Edward Greer, Monthly Review, May 1991, cited in Behind the Invasion of Iraq, Research Unit for Political Economy (RUPE), Monthly Review Press, December 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Stork, Middle East Oil and the Energy Crisis, 1975, cited *ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Tanzer, The Energy Crisis, World Struggle for Power and Wealth, 1974.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance, Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*, Simon & Schuster, 1991, and William Stivers' excellent history, *Supremacy and Oil*, Cornell University Press, 1982.

<sup>8</sup> IOL/L/PS/11/153. P3032. (1919).

Re: Mesopotamia. Oil: British and American interests.

Report by Mr. J Brown on the Kifri Coal Field and a Geological Reconnaissance from Kifri to Tuz Khurmalti and Gil. Dated 26<sup>th</sup> July 1918.

Petroleum production originally began on a small scale. A report on the operations at Kifri gives a good idea of how the business was run during the war, its costs and its profits — before the consolidation of production and the use of Indian labour.

"The mine employees lived in a village which overlooks the workings... The houses are built of mud and have... plaster walls. Most of them are still in good condition and would provide accommodation for miners. The manager's house is also in good condition.

'Labour: If the deposit is to be worked open cast as it has been a minimum of labour would be required. With one or two experienced miners to supervise, the bulk of the work could be done by the natives in the vicinity...."

Note that the labour is local and not Indian expatriate labour, which was presumably used in large centres of production where economies would permit the import of a workforce.

"The staff today is: Manur (1) salary Rs. 100 monthly. Distillers (3) salary Rs. 105 monthly.

Transportman (4) salary Rs. 160 monthly. Well-men (3) salary Rs. 120 monthly. Groom (1) salary Rs. 30 monthly. Waterman (1) salary Rs. 30 monthly. Tinsmith (1) salary Rs. 45 monthly. Storeman (1) salary Rs. 30 monthly. Total 15 people, salary Rs. 620."

The scale of the entire operations appears primitive in the extreme, given that this was an important resource not just for the Royal Navy, but also for the armoured cars and aircraft in wide use in Mesopotamia by the Indian Army and the Royal Flying Corps at the time.

"The routine is: Animals leave Tuz for Palkana at 5 a.m.; the well-men who live by the wells take out the oil out of the wells (in scoops) fill the leather bags carried by the donkeys, which then return to Tuz laden with crude oil. A donkey carried 20 gallons thus. The gas from the hot oil passes out of the aperture at the top of the side of the still, through a worm-tube which runs down a barrel of water."

Actually this is a very wasteful use of gas, which is an important hydrocarbon; but its industrial use for petrochemicals and fertilisers had not yet taken place. Measures were taken to separate the oil from water: "At the wells, a channel is being cut to a cistern, at a level below the wells which would take off the oil without taking its invariable companion, water and make the output of more than one well readily accessible. A better shelter for the workers there is being arranged. The cistern will probably be rooted in water."

No proper access roads having been built, production processes were crude and wasteful. "Difficulties: The wells are 7 miles from civilisation, the path thereto impassable for wheels. All attempts to find a better approach have failed. This makes transport to the stills arduous. To shift the stills to the wells would be difficult (owing to weight thereof) and would fair (sic) little, as the oil, whether crude or refined must come to Tuz for distribution and not more than 8-10% is lost in distilling. The wells and stills are separated also by the Ag-Su, which is at times impassable in winter."

A table lays out the economics of the operation.

"Expenses	Rs.
Establishment	620
Fodder	180
Saddling and gear	50
Building and repairing	100
Sundries	50
Estimated profits	Rs.
Crude oil to Army	2,250
First quantity to public	560
2 <sup>nd</sup> quantity to public	815"

Such cottage production ceased once the Mandate for Mesopotamia came into effect, the British strengthened their hold in the country, were able to bring in Indian labour, and to conduct industrial operations on a large scale.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183.

<sup>10</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183. April 13, 1917.

<sup>11</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183. Pro 248, Telegram 9177 of 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

<sup>12</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183. Pro 252, Telegram 9267 of 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

<sup>13</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183. Pro 269, Telegram 9760.

<sup>14</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183. Pro 274, Telegram 9915.

<sup>15</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi (NA) Proceedings 183-303, Telegram P, Simla Records 1, 1919, GOI, F&P Deptt., Secret-war, Proceedings June 1919, Nos. 183. Pro 278, Telegram P.No.9927, 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1918.

<sup>16</sup> NA, Pol-1858-19 /B322. Simla Records / GoI F&P Dept. / Secret / War / Proceedings June 1919// Mesopotamian Oil Policy/

<sup>17</sup> NA Pol-1858-19 /B322. Simla Records / GoI F&P Dept. / Secret / War / Proceedings June 1919// Mesopotamian Oil Policy/. P49 Annexures I-V. Enclosure No. 5-213-10-181/207/

<sup>18</sup> IOR/F/PS/11/158. P 6628.

Re: Mesopotamia. Attempt at Anglo Persian Oil Company to secure monopoly at Kuwait.

Telegram from Political Baghdad to India Office. Copy to India. 14th September 1919.

<sup>19</sup> IOR/F/PS/11/158. P 6628.

16<sup>th</sup> September 1919. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

<sup>20</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1253.

Affairs of Bahrain State.

Subject: Miscellaneous Correspondence re: Municipality and Public Health arrangements.

<sup>21</sup> NA. 1918. F&P. General B Proceedings. June 1918. Number 484.

<sup>22</sup> NA GoI Proceeding Nos. 1-12 of the Deptt. of Commerce for July 1920 / Emigration, July A.

<sup>23</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

Subject: Labour employed by the Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited Bahrain. November 1935-December 1938.

<sup>24</sup> NA GoI Proceeding Nos. 1-12 of the Deptt. of Commerce for July 1920 / Emigration, July A.

<sup>25</sup> NA 1920 GoI Deptt. of Commerce Emigration July A, Proceedings No. 1-12, Proceeding No. 3, P2, Govt. of Bombay No. 9879, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1919.

<sup>26</sup> NA. 1920 GoI Deptt. of Commerce, Emigration, 694-D, Page 6, Proceedings Nos. 1-12.

<sup>27</sup> IOR/L/PS/11/158. P 6287.

Re: Mesopotamia: the Postal Strike.

Copy of telegram. From Baghdad to IO. 8.10.1919.

<sup>28</sup> IOR/L/PS/11/158. P 6264.

Re: Recruitment of Personnel for Mesopotamia.

Telegram dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1919. From Baghdad.

Copy of telegram from Viceroy. Recd at IOL. Dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1919.

<sup>29</sup> NA. (489 N of 1926 GoI, F&P Deptt Near East, Serial No. 1 Bolshevik propaganda amongst employees of Anglo-Persian. Also F.No. 470-N of 1926).

<sup>30</sup> NA. 1920 GoI Deptt. Of Commerce, Emigration July A Proceedings Nos. 1012, page 3.

<sup>31</sup> IOR. L/PS/ 11/ 145. 1919.

<sup>32</sup> IOR/ L/PS/ 11/ 145. 1919.

Copy of telegram from Viceroy to S of S. dated 11.12.1920. recd. 13<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> IOR. L/PS/ 11/ 145. 1919.

Subject: Mesopotamia Labour Recruitment.

Telegram number 1222/S.

From Foreign and Political Department Simla to High Commissioner Baghdad Number 1222/S. dtd. : 21, recd. 22 Oct. 1922.

<sup>34</sup> NA. (1920 GoI, Deptt. of Commerce, Emigration July A, proceedings 1-12, P.No.8, Govt. of Bombay No. 4818, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1920).

<sup>35</sup> NA. (1920 GoI, Deptt. of Commerce, Emigration July A, proceedings 1-12, P.No.8, Govt. of Bombay No. 4818, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1920).

<sup>36</sup> IOR. L/PS/ 11/ 145. 1919.

Summary of information referring persons entering Port of Basrah and number of Indians employed in railways and Director of Labour Dept.

<sup>37</sup> IOR. L/PS/ 11/ 145. 1919.

<sup>38</sup> NA. Edu, Health and Lands Nov.1925, Proceeding Nos. 19-28, Report on the working of the Indian Emigration Act, 1922 for 1923 from Bombay, ROC No. 544 of 7<sup>th</sup> May 1924.

<sup>39</sup> IOR/L/E/7/1201. File 379 (i.).

<sup>40</sup> IOR/ L/E/ 7/ 1384. File 1472/ 1925.

Copy of telegram from Viceroy, F&P to S of S. date: 15th May 1926.

<sup>41</sup> IOR/L/E/7/1201. File 379 (i.).

Enclosure 2: India Office to Colonial Office: J & P 1587. Dated 21st March 1921.

Letter signed J.E. Ferard.

<sup>42</sup> IOR/L/E/7/1201. File 379 (i.).

<sup>43</sup> IOR/ L/E/ 7/ 1384. File 1472/ 1925.

Subject: Indians in Iraq.

Residence Law, 1923.

<sup>44</sup> IOR/ L/E/ 71563. File 6248.

<sup>45</sup> IOR/ L/E/ 71563. File 6248.

<sup>46</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

30<sup>th</sup> July 1936.

<sup>47</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>48</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>49</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>50</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>51</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>52</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>53</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>54</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

Memorandum

31<sup>st</sup> December 1935.

<sup>55</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>56</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>57</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>58</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>59</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>60</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>61</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>62</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

<sup>63</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1253.

<sup>64</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

Subject: Conditions of employment of Indian staff in Messrs Grey, Mackenzie and Company.

<sup>65</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

Political Agent. Bahrain. To Messrs Grey, Mackenzie and Co. Ltd.

Dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 1945.

<sup>66</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1717.

Bahrain, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1949.

To Manager, Messrs Grey, Mackenzie and Co. Ltd. from employees.

<sup>67</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1719.

<sup>68</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1720 (1935).



Subject: Claims and Complaints of the Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited against their employees.

<sup>69</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1720 (1935).

<sup>70</sup> IOR/R/15/2/1720 (1935).

<sup>71</sup> "Andhra poor young men brave Iraq death trap/ Asian Age, March 2, 2005/ P. Sridhar and U. Sudhakar Reddy/ Karimnagar/Hyderabad, March 1: Andhra Pradesh's agricultural labourers prefer the scorching deserts of Iraq to the barren fields of their home state. ..."

<sup>72</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/88. P 3531.

<sup>73</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/9. P 2410. Part 2.

<sup>74</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/220.

<sup>75</sup> IOR/L/PS/11/22. Register 251.

<sup>76</sup> IOR/L/PS/11/158. P 6582.

<sup>77</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/868. File 6665. (1919).

<sup>78</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/143. P 1421. (1904-8).

<sup>79</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/143. P 1421. (1904-8).

<sup>80</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/143. P 1421. (1904-8) "Increase of Alwar Guard. Government of India are prepared to send 20 men with 2 British officers. Cost: G of I agree to pay half the cost for six months."

<sup>81</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/143. P 1421. (1904-8).

<sup>82</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/177.

<sup>83</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/163.

<sup>84</sup> IOR/L/PS/10/868. File 6665. (1919).

<sup>85</sup> IOL/L/PS/10/144. P 1421.

<sup>86</sup> IOL/L/PS/11/9. P 672.

<sup>87</sup> Dipesh Chakravarty, *Rethinking the Working Class*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1990, which deals with Indian labour in the jute industry in Calcutta in the colonial period.

Radha Kumar, 'Women Workers in the Cotton Mill Industry' in J Krishnamurty, ed, *In Colonial India*, OUP, New Delhi, 1989.

<sup>88</sup> Mohapatra, Prabhu P., "Longing and Belonging: The Dilemma of Return among Indian Immigrants in the West Indies 1850-1950", in *IIAS Yearbook 1995*, pp.134-155.

<sup>89</sup> Dilip Simeon, *IIAS Newsletter*, No. 10.

<sup>90</sup> Marina Carter, *Voices from Indenture: Experiences of Indian Migrants in the British Empire. New Historical Perspectives on Migration*. Leicester University Press, London and New York, 1996.

<sup>91</sup> "Imperialism: A Historical Survey", in *Essays on Imperialism and Globalization*, Cornerstone Publications, India, 2002, p.29.

<sup>92</sup> *One Hundred Years One Hundred Voices. The Millworkers of Girangaon: An Oral History*, Meena Menon and Neera Adarkar with an Introductory Essay by Dr. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar.

<sup>93</sup> The following discussion is largely based on the RUPE publication earlier cited.

<sup>94</sup> *The Battle for Energy Dominance*, Edward I Morse and James Richard, Foreign Affairs, March-April 2002.