

# Globalization and Migration

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## I Introduction

Mankind has always migrated. This has been the case since we first came out of East- Africa. The reasons throughout history were always the same: food, shelter, security, better life. Sometimes the migration was voluntary, sometimes forced.

Sometimes migration was voluntary, sometimes forced. As a result of migration in many area's we saw mixed populations.

## II Capitalism and migration

If we look at the capitalist mode of production as described in volume one of "Capital" by Karl Marx we see, with the exception of some descriptive parts, an abstract model of capitalism. Marx describes the laws of motion of a "pure" capitalism: no state, government, laws, gender, race.

But in the real world in a concrete socio-economic formation, these factors affect the economy and the class struggle. Volume one of "Capital" pre-supposes free movement of capital and labour. But we know that this has not always been the case, indeed never absolutely. There have been periods, as at various points in the last century, when there was considerable control over movements of capital, commodities, and labour.

But today, if we look at the tendencies over the last 25 years of neo-liberal globalization we can see that we are nearing the situation as described by Karl Marx with one big exemption. We see:

- free movement of money-capital
- free movement of commodities

- relatively free movement of fixed capital (plants, machinery)
- But control over the movement of labour. Big capital wants to go where labour power is cheaper, not let workers go where wages are higher.

As an example we will look at the immigration policy of the European Union (EU).

In the EU we have a highly skilled migrants programme where fresh educated persons from third world countries are encouraged to work legally in the EU. In my opinion this a new form of colonialism. The taxpayer of developing countries invest a lot in let say an doctors' education and this newly educated doctor is not used in the country but in the developed countries. Which means that all the investments go to developed countries again. For lower skilled migrants we have te concept of circular migration. If there is a temporarily need for unskilled work in Europe low skilled migrants are allowed to work legally six months for a specific project. Afterwards they have to return to their country of origin.

In the EU we have also a very large population of undocumented workers. For the Phillipines it is especially domestic work where there is a slavery type of working conditions. More and more they are essential to support western families since both parents work full time and need support in the domestic work. So the exploitation of western women has shifted to exploitation to women from third world countries.

Capital has always found the means to get the labour force it wants, where it wants it. It has moved people around the globe to provide a labour force but also to occupy territory in order to dispossess the indigenous inhabitants.

### III Migrations under capitalism

Lets' begin at the beginning with the first big wave of forced migration under modern capitalism.

#### **1) The slave trade**

There are ongoing debates as to the relative importance, in the emergence of capitalism in North-West Europe, and England in particular, in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, of endogenous and exogenous factors. It does however seem clear that the pillage and exploitation of first Latin America then Africa and Asia played an important role in the primitive accumulation of capital. And that the plantation system (sugar, tobacco, cotton) was particularly important in the accumulation of capital in Europe. In the early stages of the colonisation of the Caribbean and Central and South America, pillage and the exploitation until exhaustion of the gold and silver mines were the main form of extraction of wealth. In the process the indigenous population was decimated by violence and disease. F.e the population of Mexico fell by 90 per cent in a century.

Consequently there was a need to import labour, and this need became permanent for the plantations which was later the main source of wealth from the colonies in the America's. Consequently the imperialist countries of that time, the Dutch and English, developed the slave trade. Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, 12 million Africans were transported to the Americas. This was only a part of the slave trade. Between 1650 and 1900 a total of 28 million slaves were taken to the rest of the world, out of Africa, not only to the Americas but also to the Middle East and countries around the Indian Ocean.

The specificity of slavery in the Americas was that it was racially based. This and more broadly the

fact that capitalism developed by the super-exploitation of non-white skins laid the basis for the development of endemic racism.

*“One characteristic which set American slavery apart was its racial basis. In America, with only a few early and insignificant exceptions, all slaves were Africans, and almost all Africans were slaves. This placed the label of inferiority on black skin and on African culture. In other societies, it had been possible for a slave who obtained his freedom to take his place in his society with relative ease. In America, however, when a slave became free, he was still obviously an African. The taint of inferiority clung to him. Not only did white America become convinced of white superiority and black inferiority, but it strove to impose these racial beliefs on the Africans themselves. Slave masters gave a great deal of attention to the education and training of the ideal slave. In general, there were five steps in molding the character of such a slave: strict discipline, sense of his own inferiority, belief in the master’s superior power, acceptance of the master’s standards, and, finally, a deep sense of his own helplessness and dependence. At every point this education was built on the belief in white superiority and black inferiority.*

Besides teaching the slave to despise his own history and culture, the master strove to push his own value system into the African’s outlook. The white man’s belief in the African’s inferiority paralleled the African selfhate”. (Norman Coombs, *The Immigrant Heritage of America*, Twayne Press, 1972, chapter 3, The Shape of American Slavery).

## **2) Post-slavery**

After the abolition of slavery by the main imperialist countries a new wave of migration took place. In many colonies a shortage of labour occurred after the former slaves were free to leave the plantation.

The example of Guyana (Northern part of South-America) following the abolition of slavery is illuminating. Freed slaves were forced to continue working as “apprentices” on the sugar plantations for six years, after which they preferred to rely on subsistence agriculture, some livestock and fishing to survive rather than becoming wage workers, though they sometimes worked for a few days to obtain some money. The planters tried various means of obtaining a stable labour force and finally imported labourers from India, who were obliged to work on the plantations for at least five years after arrival. The descendants of these workers now form the biggest ethnic group in Guyana, followed by the descendants of African slaves.

## **3) Crisis in Europe of 19<sup>th</sup> century, mass European migrations**

Due to the first crisis in modern capitalism and big famines on the European countryside an unprecedented wave of migration in history took place from Europe to the Americas and many other places in the world. It was concentrated on a few destinations, where it did help to overwhelm the indigenous populations and secure territory for emerging capitalist states.

From 1789 until 1870 most immigrants came from North-Western Europe, from 1870-1924 from Southern and Eastern Europe. About 35-40 million went to the USA, 7 million to Canada, 6 million to South America, 3 million to Australia and New Zealand (including 162,000 convicts transported to Australia between 1788 and 1868).

Why did the migrants leave? In search of a better life, part of a whole process of rural exodus which also saw people moving from the countryside to the cities and migrating within Europe. Germany, for example, was a country of emigration until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Germans emigrated to the USA. Those who could not afford the expensive boatfares stayed in Holland. At the

end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century 25% of the Amsterdam population was German and there was friction between the Dutch and German about work, housing etc.

Why were they encouraged to migrate? To provide labour power and to occupy land/ territory. That is a big difference with later immigrations waves. The white wave in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was able to obtain a lot of land and produce extra food, crops etc. In other words obtain means of production (land!). for free!. Later waves of immigration from Africa and Asia could not start producing for themselves but immediately became wage laborers.

#### **4) The period 1900-1945**

The European wave stopped because the economic conditions improved and due to the activities of the socialist movement. China was the only country at the time who produced a lot of emigrants fleeing civil war and famine in the '20 and '30. Many spread through the rest of the far east, and indeed through to world. These Chinese migrants became later the victim of racist riots in various countries f.e in Indonesia where they deprived of a nationality and were stateless until after the Suharto-period.

India produced to a smaller extend a stream towards East-Africa. They were also the victim of racist attacks after the independence in the '60 of most East-African countries.

#### **5) Decolonisation 1945-1965**

For the first time since the Roman times Europe experienced an influx of migrants. Due to the decolonisation of almost all the colonies in Africa and Asia the former colonial powers: Netherlands, UK and France were confronted with inhabitants of these countries who worked for the colonial administration and could not longer stay. F.e. the Dutch were forced to allow the soldiers of the colonial army to come to Holland including their families.

In the former colonies many tragic forced migrations took place as a result of the decolonisation proces. With the break-up of the Brits-Indies into Pakistan and India millions died.

#### **6) The period 1945-1975 in Europe**

Migrants moved to fill the needs of the prolonged period of economic expansion following the Second World War. We can say that in the advanced capitalist countries there was a concentration of capital and a labour shortage, while in the dependent countries there was a weak capital base, poverty, unemployment and an abundant supply of labour. The needs for labour were filled by drawing women into the labour force on a large scale, and also, in some European countries, peasants. F.e. migration took place from South to North in Italy and later in Spain, and from Spain, Portugal and Italy to France and Belgium. Holland and Germany drew "guest workers" (gastarbeiders), mostly from Turkey but also from Morocco and Yugoslavia.. France and Britain drew labour from the dependent countries. In the case of France it was principally North Africa. In the case of Britain it was the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent.

How did the migrants get to Europe?

At this time there was nothing illegal about immigration into Europe. On the contrary, companies and governments took the initiative in recruiting migrant workers.

A Royal Commission already set up in 1949 estimated that it would require the migration to Britain of 140,000 young people every year to solve the labour shortage. But the report of the Commission also noted :

*“Immigration on a large scale into a fully established society like ours would only be welcomed without reserve if the immigrants were of good stock and were not prevented by their religion or race from intermarrying with the host population and becoming merged into it”.*

There is no doubt about the racist attitude of the person who wrote that. It is basically the attitude until today of the ruling class in Europe. But he or she put their finger on a problem: white British society was not ready to welcome non-white immigrants as equals -something the migrants learned by bitter experience.

### **6b). What did the migrants do when they arrived?**

They worked in sectors which were central to the economy: in Britain manufacturing industry, especially textiles, public transport, the building industry, the post office, and also in the health sector. In France, North African workers went in particular into the big car factories and the building industry. In both countries they lived in bad housing - inner-city slums in Britain, the shanty towns around the big cities in France.

They also had to suffer racism. The idea that white Europeans were superior to people of colour was deeply ingrained. And the fact that migrants arrived to take the lowest-paid jobs and the worst housing created a situation where white people were materially better-off than the new arrivals. Racist attacks became frequent in Britain in the 1950s and the first (white-initiated) race riot took place in 1958. Racism was systematically exploited by a series of right-wing demagogues and later on organizations emerged that were far-right, populist, even fascist, calling for immigrants to be sent home or at the very least for immigration controls. This discourse found an echo in the mainstream parties. In reaction, migrants and especially their children born in Europe adopted a more militant stance. Later riots, from the 60s onwards, were initiated by them, leading to what was an urban uprising in France in November 2005.

### **7) Change in the 70s**

From the end of the postwar boom with the recession of 1973-74., the situation began to change. The need for labour diminished in the West as the economy suffered drastic restructuring, with the destruction or decimation of entire sectors of heavy industry and mining. Many factories were moved to countries outside the present European Union because the wages were much lower.

One after another, European governments began to impose controls on immigration, controls which became more and more strict. As early as 1962, Britain passed the first of a series of immigration laws, limiting entry to those qualified for specific jobs that were needed and to former members of the armed forces.

### **8) 1985-2000**

The 1985 Schengen agreement, integrated into the Treaty of Amsterdam of EU of 1997, gave the signal for the construction of what we now call the Fortress Europe, creating an area within which movement of people was free, but making it increasingly difficult to get into that area. The immigrantworkers mainly came through family-reunification to the EU.

### **9) 2000 until now.**

As I mentioned before there is now a new trend in the imperialist countries.

1. At least in the US and the EU. In order to reduce the cost to educate highly skilled workers the EU and the US have developed migration-programs to encourage newly educated people from the

developing countries to come to the west in order to fill the gaps. But this the bourgeoisie is expropriating the workers in the developing countries who paid their taxes to make this education possible. The Dutch: picking the raisins.

2. The “new” idea of circular migration. This means that low skilled work which can not be moved to developing countries like domestic work will be done by temporary workers from outside the EU. The EU has already official programs but as always Holland is ahead and has his own “secret” program for Filipino migrant workers who work on oilplatforms in the Nordsea. They reside on the platforms outside Holland and are issued touristvisa to enter Holland once a while when they are able to rest. Every two weekends they have a weekend off. This schengenvisa is prolonged every three months. Spain has an official EU-program for circular migration with Morocco. Greece and Italy have a very cynical programme. Asylumseekers who survive the leap over the meditaranian sea are used illegally as season workers to help harvest f.e. the oranges and other agricultural products. Greece is the worst: they often arrest those asylum seekers and push them illegally over the border with Turkey where they end up in appalling prisons and are beaten in order to cooperate to their return to their country of origin. Asylumseekers are really used as circular migrants in worst sense of the word.

#### **IV. What is the reality of immigration today?**

Neo-liberal globalization affected the whole world, but the South much more severely. The dismantling of protective barriers left dependent economies vulnerable and often led to the destruction of native industries.

Wars broke out, particularly in Africa, over control of valuable resources, creating refugees.

#### **Population of migrants**

In 2002 there were in the world a total of 174,781,000 migrants.

They were located as follows:

Africa: 16,277,000 (9.31 per cent)

Asia: 49,781,000 (28.48 per cent)

Europe: 56,100,000 (32.10 per cent)

Latin America/Caribbean: 5,944,000(3.4 per cent)

North America: 40,844,000 (23.37 per cent)

*Source:* International Migration Report 2002, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division

Where do they come from ?

We can get a pretty good idea if we look at the top 10 countries recipients of migrants’ remittances for the year 2001 (in billions of US dollars)

India: 10.0

Mexico: 9.9 Philippines: 6.4

Morocco: 3.3

Egypt: 2.9

Turkey: 2.8

Lebanon: 2.3

Bangladesh: 2.1  
Jordan: 2.2  
Dominican Republic: 2.0

*Source:* World Bank, Global Development Finance 2003

Since the above countries have very different population levels, we get a better idea of what remittances represent for the migrants' countries of origin by looking at them as a percentage of GDP, again for 2001.

Jordan: 22.8  
Lebanon: 13.8  
El Salvador: 13.8  
Morocco: 9.7  
Dominican Republic: 9.3  
Philippines: 8.9  
Sri Lanka: 7.0

*Source:* World Bank, Global Development Finance 2003

Where do they go to?

The 10 countries with the largest migrant populations (2000) In number of migrants and in percentage of the total population of the country of arrival

USA: 34,988,000 (12.4 per cent)  
Russian Federation: 13,259,000 (9.1)  
Germany: 7,349,000 (9.0)  
Ukraine: 6,947,000 (14.0)  
France: 6,277,000 (10.6)  
India: 6,271,000 (0.6)  
Canada: 5,826,000 (18.9)  
Saudi Arabia: 5,255,000 (25.8)  
Australia: 4,705,000 (24.6)

*Source:* International Migration Report 2002, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division

Migrants being defined in these statistics as resident non-citizens, the figures for Russia and Ukraine probably concern essentially residents from other parts of the former Soviet Union. Leaving that aside the figures show that most migrants go to the imperialist countries and the Gulf States.

The 10 countries with the highest percentage of migrants (2000)

United Arab Emirates: 73.8 per cent (1,922,000 migrants)  
Kuwait: 57.9 (1,108,000)  
Jordan: 39.6 (1,945,000)  
Israel: 37.4 (2,256,000)  
Singapore: 33.6 (1,352,000)  
Oman: 26.9 (682,000)  
Estonia: 26.2 (365,000)  
Saudi Arabia: 25.8 (5,255,000)  
Latvia: 25.3 (613,000)

Switzerland: 25.1 (1,801,000)

*Source:* International Migration Report 2002, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division

In Latvia and Estonia “migrants” are essentially Russians who arrived during the Soviet period. Israel’s figures are explained to a large extent by Jewish immigration (though it is estimated that there are now around 200,000 non-Jewish migrant workers) Jordan’s by its large Palestinian population. The other figures confirm large-scale emigration to the Gulf states and show a high level of migration to Switzerland and Singapore.

## **Refugees**

If we look at the refugees an other picture arises:

Refugees by regions and in the world (2002): number of refugees and percentage of world total

Africa: 4,173,000 (21.09 per cent) Asia: 8,821,000 (44.59 per cent)

Europe: 4,855,000 (24.54)

Latin America/Caribbean: 765,000 (3.87)

North America: 1,087,000 (5.49)

Oceania: 81,000 (0.41)

Total: 19,782,000.

*Source:* UNHCR (<http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/statistics>)

## **Conclusion**

So whereas economic migrants go especially to the imperialist countries, the Gulf states and the richer countries of East Asia, the bulk of refugees fleeing wars, famine and dictatorships are to be found in Africa and Asia.

## **Position of migrant workers.**

How do the migrant workers get to their country of arrival? In the Gulf states, usually legally, via recruiting agencies and inter-governmental agreements. In the imperialist countries, with great difficulty and very often illegally.

What do they do? Work in hospitals as nurses, auxiliaries, cleaners, agricultural work, often seasonal, hotels and restaurants, construction Clothing workshops. In some cases, doctors. Cleaning offices, cleaning houses, care of children and the elderly. In fact women from the global South leave their own children and parents in the care of other family members or people paid to do it. They come to Europe and North America to ensure the maintenance of living quarters and the care of children force so that both parents can work. They contribute in fact to the reproduction of the labour force in the countries they work in. So you can see that there is a chain of exploitation. The domestic workers is exploited in the west and the local family in Asia is taking care of the children of the domestic worker which is often unpaid labour by grandparents etc.

Compared to the previous period, today’s migrants are much less involved in production, working essentially in the service sector and in jobs (agriculture, construction) that are seasonal or for a limited period.

Most migrants are men, but in some sectors (hospitals, domestic work) and from some countries,



women are in the majority and often suffer the worst working and living conditions and all forms of abuse.

### **The example of domestic workers in Lebanon**

One example, extreme but not unique, is the case of women domestic workers in Lebanon.

There are over 250,000 women domestic workers in Lebanon; representing one in 16 of the population. That is a remarkable figure for a country of 4 million people and indicates the presence of a substantial middle class, no doubt the product of Lebanon's position as a centre of banking and commerce in the Middle East.

Of the total, 90,000 come from Sri Lanka, 40,000 from the Philippines, 30,000 from Ethiopia. The Filipinas, who are the best-educated, earn 200 dollars a month, the Ethiopians 150, the Sri Lankans 100. There are 380 recruitment agencies in Beirut. An Ethiopian maid costs the employer 2,400 dollars (airfare, visa, medical examination, etc.) of which 60 per cent goes to the agency.

Once there, the domestic workers are virtually prisoners in their employers' apartments. Non-payment of wages is quite frequent, especially for the first three months of employment. According to a poll conducted in 2007, more than 91 per cent of employers confiscate their employee's passport, 71 per cent forbid her to go out on her own, 31 per cent beat her, 33 per cent limit her food, 73 per cent control who she sees. No one admitted to rape, though that also happens. According to a lawyer who defends domestic workers, there has not been a conviction for rape in Lebanon for 30 years. Between 2003 and 2007, 45 Filipinas, 50 Sri Lankans and 105 Ethiopians committed suicide. About 400 domestic workers are in prison, on usually imaginary charges of theft. This is the standard reaction of employers when their employees try to run away.

During the Israeli bombardment of Beirut during the 33-day war in 2006, 30,000 women domestics were locked in apartments while their employers and their families fled the city. Their plight only received publicity when many of them tried to escape, several of whom were killed jumping from the windows of apartments.

The conditions of these women should be considered as slavery.

## **V. Effects of migration on the countries of origin**

Large-scale migration can have drastic effects of the countries of origin. For 4 million people who live in Puerto Rico, 3 million live in the USA. It is reckoned that about 50 per cent of Surinamese live in Holland. Mexico has population of 100 million, and there are 23 million Mexicans in the USA, including an estimated 3 million undocumented.

### **The example of Philippines Overseas Workers**

To demonstrate the consequences of large-scale migration, we will take the example of the Philippines. The Philippines is sometimes described as a "newly industrializing country". This sounds like black humour. It is in fact a newly de-industrialised country. One of the effects of removing any protection against competition from more developed economies (a key aspect of neo-liberal globalization) as been the destruction of much of local industry, one of the factors acting to accelerate emigration.

The Philippines has population of 90 million. The active population is around 35 million, of which

one-third are self-employed (which in the Philippines means mostly the informal sector) and 12 per cent are unpaid family workers. The workforce is employed 50 per cent in the service sector, 35 per cent in agriculture, 15 per cent in industry.

According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), in December 2006 there were 8,233,172 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), including an estimated 875,000 irregular (undocumented). Of this total 1,839,684 were in the Gulf states 1,223,678 in East Asia 888,000 in Europe 3,577,292 in the Americas (mostly in the USA) 70 per cent were women, average age 25-29. Of migrants leaving between 2000-2003, 79 per cent were women. The remittances sent back by these migrants amounted to 12.7 billion dollars for the year 2006, which is more than foreign direct investment in the country. That does not include money sent by undocumented workers. OFWs represent 10 per cent of the population but, 20 per cent of the active population, mostly young.

For the period 2000-2003, migration from Asian countries was:

Philippines: 867,000

Sri Lanka, 195,000

India: 277,000

Pakistan: 130,000

Indonesia : 387,000

*Source* : International Labour Organisation International Labour Migration database, as of 10 January 2006.

Taking into account the overall population of these countries. 277.000 from India is nothing compared to the population of 1 billion. Phillipines is a lot bigger but it is Sri Lanka who has the most output due to ongoing civil war in Tamil if you compare it to the total population.

For the same year, 2006, the main destinations of domestic helpers were Hong Kong, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon For nurses: Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the United Kingdom, Taiwan and Ireland. The biggest number of teachers went to the USA. But only 591 teachers migrated, as against 91,000 domestic workers.

In the four years to 2005, 3,500 doctors left the Philippines to work In other countries as nurses. This is an extreme but far from unique example of migrant workers taking jobs below their qualifications (which in many countries of the North are not recognized). Lawyers, engineers as well as doctors are re-training as nurses.

The Philippines exports more nurses than it trains. As a result 10 per cent of Philippine hospitals have closed, as have 3 out of 39 medical schools, after a 74 per cent drop in enrolment. After India, the Philippines provides the biggest number of nurses working abroad (25 per cent). Of these, 57 per cent are in Saudi Arabia, 14 per cent in the USA, 12 per cent in the UK

Consequences of migration for the Philippines:

- 1) loss of vital forces for economic and social development, especially brain drain of qualified people
- 2) prolonged family separation, leading to children being brought up by one parent and/or by close relatives, mostly in the absence of the mother

But, say some people, including the Philippine government, in return, the OFWs send more than 12 billion dollars a year. That can't be bad, can it? Well, actually it can...

Where does the money go?

In the first place, it goes to guarantee that the families of the migrants have access to basic necessities, like food. Secondly, it goes to compensate for the inability of the Philippine government to provide essential public services like health care, education and pensions. Money is spent on care and medicine for elderly people, and above all: Migrants send their children to private fee-paying schools rather than the run-down, cash-starved public education system. But these educated young people will not use their educational qualifications to help the Philippines develop. They will in their turn migrate, so what is being produced is a generation of highly qualified migrants, in particular nurses. Money is also spent on "luxury" consumption - high tech products, designer clothes. All over the Philippines, shopping malls exist to attract the money that this new "middle class", totally divorced from the productive economy, is able to spend because of money that comes from migrants. Practically none of the money that flows into the country is used for productive investment that could create jobs and generate wealth. The money goes just as fast out of the country to the West and China as it went in. So, the overall effect of migration is negative for the country.

## **VI Effects in countries of destination**

We will deal here with the rich capitalist countries which as we have seen are the main destination for migrants. When politicians, the media and much of the native white population talk about immigrants or immigration, they do not just mean non-citizens or even first-generation immigrants who have acquired citizenship, they mean all non-European immigrants and their descendants of the second and third generation, who were born in Britain or France or Germany, and in the first two cases at least, have full citizenship rights. So we have in fact two categories of immigration: the established, legal, citizenship-possessing population; and the illegal, undocumented workers.

a) The established "immigrant" population, including the second and third generations, continues to suffer racism - from the police and the state and from much of the indigenous population - and in the case of the Muslim populations, Islamophobia. They are more likely to be poor and they suffer discrimination in jobs and housing. This situation has become endemic. Immigrants and their descendants continue to have lower paid jobs than native Europeans. In some countries, in France in particular, they now represent an important part of the blue collar workers. The high levels of social deprivation and racism suffered by young people from immigrant backgrounds has led to repeated riots (in Britain in the 80s, in France and elsewhere) culminating in the urban uprising that shook the working-class suburbs of France's cities in November 2005.

There is a qualitative difference in the way immigrants of non-European and European origin are treated. Generally speaking, the first generation of immigrants of European origin meet with xenophobic reactions ("they take our jobs, houses", etc.). The second generation just blends into the society, and the only way you can tell their origin is by their non-European family names. This has been true of all waves of migrants from Europe except Jews, who of course suffered from anti-Semitism.

But the European countries with colonial empires like England, France and the Netherlands had had problems dealing with the presence of substantial populations of non-European origin. They don't blend that easy. Even after the third generation there is a difference. F.e. the people from the Mollucas in Indonesia where the main source for the army of Colonial Dutch Indies. After the independence in 1945 most of this Army including their families were transported to Holland because there was a real fear of revenge. Until now there problems and the the decendants still have problems obtaining jobs etc.

That is why the preferred source of migrant labour is now the new EU member states of central and Eastern Europe. Between 2004 and 2007, half a million East Europeans came to Britain. In the first place, their countries of origin are near enough for them to work for a period in Western Europe and then return home, or to come and go for seasonal work. And if they do decide to stay, their integration presents no problems. This is of course also because of the good cars and roads which has reduced the effort in time and money to come to Western Europe. (To a lesser extend today it is the same for migrants from developing countries. There is much more air-traffic for cheaper prices. Before the 80 it was impossible to pay for air-traffic. Now people sell everything they have and can afford exactly one ticket to become an undocumented worker)

## **b) The undocumented workers**

They arrive in the rich capitalist countries, principally Western Europe and North America, by a variety of means, sometimes via networks where they pay to be smuggled in, sometimes on their own initiative. They live in a state of permanent insecurity, can be deported at any time. They can make a decent income, but have no sick pay, paid holidays, pensions. Those who are brought in by networks often have to do unpaid labour for months or years in clandestine workshops to pay for their passage.

The Chinese f.e are trapped in form of slavery. The Chinese undocumented workers need the assistance of international Chinese criminal networks which we call " Snakeheads". They have to lend a lot of money. Often up to 10.000 -15.000 Euro's. They pay an interest of at least 1 % a month. So they have to pay 100-150 Euro's a month without ever getting rid of the loan. They earn 400 a month of which 100 is paid to Snakeheads, 200 for housing and food, and 100 for the family in China. For this money they work 6 days, 12 hours a day in the Chinese restaurants as cook. They are trapped for ever and cannot return to China. So when they are arrested they do not cooperate in their return and choose to stay the maximum detention period of 1,5 year for undocumented persons rather than to return.

These undocumented migrants are a source of cheap labour in the sectors that we have already mentioned. They are useful to the capitalist economy. It is enough to keep up the pressure and deport just enough to keep the others intimidated and public opinion reassured.

In spite of the insecure existence and risk of deportation immigrants keep coming to the advanced capitalist countries. Not only can they earn more than in their own countries, they also earn more than elsewhere. For example a Filipina domestic worker can earn 200 dollars a month in Beirut (in the conditions we have described), 500 in Dubai, but 1500-2000 euros or more in Amsterdam. Of course we have to take into account the very different levels of prices in the different parts of the world. For housing in Amsterdam f.e. you often have to pay at least Eur. 500,- per month

## **VII What to do?**

1) We have to demand the regularisation of all undocumented workers, full political rights (right to vote) for all immigrants, whether or not they choose to take the nationality of the country where they live. And to oppose all forms of racism, in particular the current wave of Islamophobia. And fight for every partial regularization.

2) We should demand a compensation for all the brain drain. In the end we cannot stop people to migrate. It is a crucial freedom for everybody. But we should demand that at least a part of taxes paid by the highly skilled migrants should be paid somehow to the developing countries f.e. to the very fashionable micro-credit organizations.

3) The question of "integration". With the presence of sizeable populations of non-European origin who are clearly here to stay, indeed were often born here, European governments feel the need to take measures to try and make the new citizens adopt the language, customs and attitudes of the native population. This obliges them to try and define what it means to be "British", "French", "Dutch", etc. France now has a "Minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development in Solidarity". In Britain prospective citizens have to pass a "Life in the United Kingdom" test. Similar tests exist in the Netherlands, Germany and elsewhere. All this is new. France got by for about a thousand years without a ministry to define its national identity, including when it was experiencing substantial immigration from Europe. This is because in France, as in other European countries, national identity was implicitly linked to being white, Christian in culture if not necessarily in belief, and to the inherent superiority of European civilisation and values. What is called integration is actually an attempt to assimilate immigrants, to force them to speak the language of the country and not their native language, to force them into the cultural mould of the country. This is quite blatant in France, with its tradition of centralism and assimilation of minorities. It is now becoming increasingly the case in countries with more multicultural tradition like Britain and the Netherlands. Of course it is useful for immigrants to learn the language of the country they live in. But while demanding full political rights we should also demand full cultural freedom and the right and the means to practice their own language, culture, religion. Integration has to be voluntary and it is impossible to talk about integration of non-European migrants, especially from former colonies, without challenging and breaking from the heritage of colonialism, racism, militarism and European superiority. The migrant-organisations should define what migrants need to live in an western-country. It is not a question of immigrants acquiring a pre-defined national identity, but of them helping them to take their position and being a part of redefined a national identity.

4) How to organize? The starting point is that the working class and the population in general, especially youth, is now multi-coloured. Great flexibility is required in organizing this working class. Of course, it is desirable to recruit migrants to unions and parties. But there are many other forms of organization. The starting-point for the regularization of undocumented workers has been the self-organisation of these workers, beginning with the sans-papiers in France in 1996, similar experiences in Britain, Belgium and elsewhere, the demonstrations in the US on may 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Once undocumented workers start to organize, unions should support them and recruit them; In some cases it will be practical to organise workers by country of origin, in others not. Experience has also shown that youth (and not only youth) of immigrant origin create their own organizations in their neighbourhoods.

5) The problems of unification of a working class that is not only diverse in origin, but as we have seen, also extremely heterogeneous in its conditions of work make the question of politics central. Unification on a purely economic basis is much less possible than it was when the class was more homogenous. As we have said, we should be flexible in approaching the question of how to organize specific groups. We should organize over the frontiers and create NGO's who can support overseas workers from the start in f.e the Phillipines until their arrival and work in western countries. It is remarkable that groups in f.e Holland start either as a front organization for a political party as the maoist or completely independent more or less spontaneous by workers with some classconscious. But never organized from the independent working class organizations from the Phillipines.

6) Migration is in the end an individual decision for an individual problem. The NGO's should systematically support the overseas workers in every aspect.

- In strikes me every time again that in spite of television and internet (or maybe because of television and internet) people are really not well informed about the difficulties they will meet in

western countries.

\*They systematically underestimate the psychological consequences of being undocumented. Always the fear of being arrested and deported. People are detained for years because they cannot travel back. People change and become increasingly westernized and find it often difficult after years of being in the west to return. Many get depressed.

\*We should see that just sending remittances is creating a new dependency. The person in the west is working in more or less slavery-type situation and the extended family stays dependent for primary consumption without being able to change this situation. I often hear that parents in the west support their children even if they have had a very good education and have reached ages of 25 and more.

\*The project of being an overseas worker is often for indefinite periods. People should be aware that they should define a project both in terms of money and time. And such an NGO should be able to give advice before they make an investment of US\$ 10,000 to 15,000 Dollar to enter the EU.

\*Paying remittances is very expensive. NGOs should set up systems without the goal of making profit for sending money to the country of origin.

\*At least a part of the remittances should be invested in local development. One of the groups of Philippines domestic workers in Holland I am working with has two interesting projects:

- A part of their savings is put in a Philippine micro-credit organizations. These savings are guaranteed by a big western developing NGO (Cordaid)
- Secondly there is a project to set up a system where life-insurances will be sold to undocumented workers from Manila.

## **VIII. Need for broad workers party**

But to organize and unify the whole class, politics are necessary, and politics means parties. Not narrow, elitist parties, but broad mass parties which can unite the working class in its diversity around a project, a programme, expressed through political initiatives, and providing continuity and an accumulation of experiences.

**Piet Engelschman**

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**P.S.**

\* <http://www.iiremanila.org/index.php/migration-and-globalization>