

## Southampton to Durban on the Union Castle Line: An Imperial Shipping Company and the Limits of globality c.1900-1939

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*Abstract: This article examines the relationship between Durban and Southampton constructed by the Union Castle Line between 1900 and the 1930s. It shows how specific, long-lasting patterns of commercial organization and labour recruitment were laid down, and how they survived the contingencies of war, working class insurgency and financial crisis. The article proposes the concepts of 'maritime capital field' and 'maritime labour field' to describe the long-lasting shapes which transnational structural relationships gave to imperial shipping enterprises. A critique is made of the work of Michael Miller on European Shipping companies in this period, the article demonstrating that the Union Castle case challenges both Miller's emphasis on an expansive globalization and his emphasis on the cosmopolitanism of the shipping industry in 1914. Political and social closures and limitations were characteristic of the relations between the two ports. Restrictive forms of political, ideological and military power within the British Empire played a great role in structuring the connections between Durban and Southampton. Rather than being amorphously expansive, the movements of capital and labour in the shipping industry were, spatially and socially, tightly constrained.*

Keywords: Southampton, Durban, Union Castle Line, Pirrie, Kysant, British Seafarers Union

On the morning of 26 June, 1904, the Royal Mail Ship *Armada Castle*, a modern liner of 13 000 tons, steamed into the southern African harbour of Durban.<sup>2</sup> This was a crucial moment in the history of Union Castle Line, the ship's owners, based at Fenchurch Street in the City of London. It signalled a transformation of the pattern of connections between the port of the British colony of Natal, and the imperial centre. Until then, Durban's economic growth had been held back by the problem of the sandbar which restricted its harbour mouth.<sup>3</sup> Union Castle's biggest liners, designed with the firm's main route to Cape Town in mind, had been forced to lower their cargo and passengers into lighters, while anchored offshore. Companies with smaller ships, capable of easily entering the harbour, had given Union Castle (UC) severe competition on the Durban run, notably Bullard King's

Natal Direct Line. Durban had at last succeeded in a long struggle to deepen the channel through the bar. From that time on, there was the closest connection between Durban and UC's home port of Southampton. UC would dominate intercontinental travel to Natal until the rise of mass air travel, more than half a century later. While Cape Town would remain the prime focus of UC's passenger services to the sub-continent, the company's connection as a freight carrier to Durban would be vital to its future. In the two decades following the *Armadale's* crossing of the bar, the previously somewhat marginal Natal harbour overtook Cape Town and Delagoa Bay to become the premier port of the southern African region.

This paper examines the relationship between Durban and Southampton constructed by UC's owners, managers and workers between 1900 and the 1930s. It seeks to show how specific, long-lasting patterns of commercial organization and labour recruitment were laid down, and how they survived dramatic contingencies of war, working class insurgency and financial crisis. In doing so, it provides an analysis which is at odds with what is probably the foremost study of European shipping of this period in recent years, the formidable work of Michael Miller.<sup>4</sup> Miller provides a remarkable and deeply researched overview of major European shipping companies in the twentieth century, focusing on their role in globalization. His book is a great scholarly achievement, which puts historians of the maritime world and of commerce in his permanent debt. Yet for all the impressiveness of this work, Miller is surprisingly unreflective in relation to this central concept of globalization. He does not seriously engage either with scholars who point out the social and political limitations and exclusions which marked globalization in the maritime world,<sup>5</sup> or with those who question the very coherence of the notion itself.<sup>6</sup>

There are two key components of Miller's analysis of concern here. Miller sees a steady extension of maritime globalization across the twentieth century. His vision is of a world of expanding global connections and openings. He thus takes issue with the widely held notion that there was a 'first globalization' in the years up to 1914, interrupted by the subsequent world military and economic upheavals, and resumed in the globalization of the last quarter of the century. For Miller, the shipping industry continued the process of globalization across the whole period, albeit in changing forms. And Miller contends that European shipping companies were not solely European enterprises, but were reliant for their effective operation on their imbrication with local shipping agents in the colonial and semi-colonial world. For him the world of the shipping companies was one of cosmopolitan networks, which crossed racial and political boundaries.

Miller is right to question the idea that early twentieth century globalization simply came to an end in the era of the World Wars and Great Depression. Crises could in fact generate new lines of connection; there was no absolute break in globalization in 1914. But Miller's portrayal of the maritime world of late nineteenth and early twentieth century shipping is excessively expansive and optimistic. First, my study of the linkage between Durban and Southampton suggests a much more contained

set of connections than Miller's large vision would imply. Closures, coercion and limitations, as much as openings, were characteristic of the relations between the two ports. Second, while Miller certainly provides good evidence of cooperation between European managers and local elites in particular times and places, his work creates a false impression of the universality of this phenomenon in the colonial world. Cosmopolitanism is hard to detect in a Durban shipping world dominated by Union Castle and a small number of other European shipping companies with almost exclusively expatriate and white Natalian employees, and precious little presence of Asian or African local agents. It seems likely that Miller is underestimating the power of Western racial ideology at the turn of the century and the extent to which it constrained the behavior of shipping companies. Third, the picture provided by Miller tends to imply that the forms the industry took were primarily the product of economic dynamics. Instead, the UC case suggests that shipping's globalization was crucially encumbered by the need of maritime economic enterprises to embed themselves within other networks of social power – political, ideological and military - in order to prosper and survive.<sup>7</sup> At one level, a shipping company may be thought as an exceptionally pure form of capitalism. Peter Sloterdijk writes, with justice, that “With every ship that is launched, capital begins the movement which characterizes the spatial ‘revolution’ of the Modern Age: the circuiting of the earth by the money employed, and its successful return to the starting account.”<sup>8</sup> Yet no long-term maritime enterprise in the imperial world could have survived on the strength, purely, of its capitalist energies. As much as any, and perhaps more than most forms of capital, the shipping company was vulnerable to war and to changes in political institutions and to the rise of social movements. It had to find ways to accommodate these realities. Finally, labour is notably marginal to Miller's account of the shipping world. While the focus on the companies is a perfectly legitimate way to organize a research project, ignoring the experience of the seamen makes it much easier to portray the world of shipping as a globalizing one. UC sailors moved in remarkably limited spatial pattern, subject to tight control by captains, immigration officials and magistrates. They struggled against inadequate welfare systems and poor employment conditions. For all their extensive movement through physical space, their social world was a narrow one.

The social arrangements around shipping companies such as UC, were not characterized by uninhibited globalization. In this paper I will use the terms ‘maritime capital field’ and ‘maritime labour field’ to describe the long-lasting shapes which transnational structural relationships gave to imperial shipping enterprises. In using these terms I seek to highlight that rather than being amorphously expansive, the movements of capital and labour in the shipping industry were, spatially and socially, tightly constrained. They were, to use Valeska Huber's felicitous formulation, ‘channeled mobilities’.<sup>9</sup> Shipping Lines were exactly that – *lines*, connecting very specific places, with the limitations the word evokes.

## Union Castle's Maritime Capital Field

Union Castle as a company, its ships and the ports which it used, formed around themselves what may be described as a maritime capital field. By this, I mean a set of enduring, spatialized and patterned ways in which activity as a sea-borne capitalist enterprise is transnationally embedded in a set of forms of social power. At its core, Union Castle was of course a profit-making venture. But in order to last across the decades as it did, the company had to build strong and stable political relationships with the British state and its imperial offshoots.<sup>10</sup> It also had to find its place in the military-strategic calculus of the British empire. Dependent on imperial trade and a stable system of world communications, and requiring commandeered tonnage in time of war, the British state needed a cooperative shipping industry. Similarly, UC had to navigate the rapidly changing forms of settler state configuration in southern Africa. As the arrival of the *Armada Castle* shows, UC was also dependent for its success on the local development of port facilities. Even an enterprise of UC's size could not simply order the appropriate harbours into existence. And the international rise of labour politics generated important, unforeseeable, political upheavals. As all this suggests, analysis of shipping as a business cannot focus too exclusively on the City of London, despite its enormous power. To survive, Fenchurch Street had to be alive to the realities of Whitehall, colonial politics, union halls and the daily life of the world's docksides. The specific shape which its maritime capital field took, was formed by its need to accommodate other types of power – political, military and ideological.

Union Castle was the creation of the shipping magnate, Sir Donald Currie. Like most of the leading figures in the British shipping industry in his time, Currie was not a scion of one of the financial dynasties of the City of London, but came from the aspirant commercial worlds of the 'Celtic Fringe' and northern England.<sup>11</sup> Such men had to fight for social acceptance in the metropolis, and none succeeded in this more comprehensively than Currie. Born on the Clydeside in 1825, he had worked for Cunard in Liverpool, before branching out on his own with the formation of the Castle Line, running between Liverpool and Calcutta, in 1862. It was only a decade later that Currie found Castle's economic niche: a steamship service to South Africa. The move followed the start of Southern Africa's 'Mineral Revolution', with the opening of the Kimberley diamond fields. By 1887, one year after the discovery of the Rand gold fields in the Transvaal, Castle had twelve steamers serving Cape Town and Durban and seven 'intermediate' ships going to South African coastal, Atlantic and Indian Ocean destinations.

Currie became heavily involved in the politics of the region. As a Liberal, he was keen to avoid conflict with the Boers. He successfully negotiated a British boundary dispute with President Brand of the Free State and acted for Whitehall as go-between with the Transvaal government. Currie's Liberalism did not, however extend to opposition to state economic intervention, at least when it came to his own interests. Currie sought a symbiotic relationship between his company and the British and Cape Colonial states. The only significant competitor on the Cape run

was the Union Line, which held the Colony's lucrative mail contract. Currie launched a political campaign in the Cape for the government to split the contract between the two companies, which he achieved in 1876. He was also well able to exploit late nineteenth century British fears about maritime security. During the 1870s, he urged the need for a telegraph line to southern Africa, a position which resonated well with the British military establishment's views. Currie argued for the importance of the British merchant marine as a manpower reserve for the Royal Navy, and that it should be made easier to employ retired naval officers on civilian shipping. He was successful, from the 1880s, in gaining a subsidy for the construction of liners configured for conversion for wartime use as gunships. By the 1880s, Currie owned his own castle in Scotland and was hosting the British and German royal families on his vessels.<sup>12</sup> The company had built a great and patriotic reputation. To a journalist writing in 1887, Castle liners represented "British solidity, British comfort and British thoroughness".<sup>13</sup> In 1900, Currie moved to absorb his rival, the Union Line, and the era of Union Castle began.

The expansion of Southampton and of Durban were both examples of the tendency of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for the growth of a few mega-ports, and the reduction of the significance of the multiple small ports of the sail era.<sup>14</sup> For colonial ports in particular, this process of consolidation was linked to a global system of energy organization. A successful port had to be a place where ships could take on coal, a 'coaling station' in the parlance of the time. The capital investment needed for this could not be evenly spread. It is noteworthy that it was sometimes local, and not metropolitan, capitalists that took the lead in this process of port consolidation.<sup>15</sup>

The dock facilities at Southampton, with their quick and convenient rail link to London, were crucial to the advance of UC. Southampton developed a very different profile from other British ports, because of the heavy concentration of employment in the ocean liner sector. The modernization of the harbour was initiated by the father and son team of Francis and Alfred Giles in 1840s. This development enabled the Royal Mail Steam Packet (RMSP) company, which was the premier service to the Caribbean, to establish itself there. RMSP later became important on the South American routes. In 1892, the docks, which were in financial trouble, were bought by the London and South Western Railway (LSWR), which invested in a significant extension of the port. In 1907 the White Star line started using Southampton for its liners to New York.<sup>16</sup> *Hamburg Amerika Linie* and *Norddeutscher Lloyd* called at the port as well.<sup>17</sup> After the First World War Cunard and Canadian Pacific moved their main services to Southampton.<sup>18</sup> In 1924, LSWR fused with several lesser companies, and the new Southern Railway took over the port and further expanded its services.<sup>19</sup> The P&O, *Rotterdam Lloyd*, *Nederland* and US lines were also prominent in the harbour.<sup>20</sup>

Durban became a viable port for UC as a consequence of changes which were made there at the turn of the century. This was not only a matter of the essential deepening of the channel which enabled the *Armadale Castle* and ships like it to sail

in. It required the transformation of Durban into a coaling port, which was made possible through the opening of significant coalfields in northern Natal during the 1890s, and the completion of the rail links serving those fields.<sup>21</sup> Also vital to Durban's economic viability was the long-delayed connection of the rail route to Johannesburg, now the region's largest and most dynamic market, in 1895.<sup>22</sup> None of these developments was the work of UC, nor were they primarily carried out by City of London interests, although the City did largely provide the capital. Rather, they were driven by Durban's local bourgeoisie of merchants, shipping agents, and sugar barons, both through private initiatives and through the sway they exercised over the Natal colonial state.<sup>23</sup>

UC did not adopt the pattern of cosmopolitanism portrayed by Michael Miller as a global norm. As of 1906, in the Durban offices of UC, the heads of the freight, passenger and claims departments and the Marine Superintendent were all white Natalians and the accountant had been born to British parents in India. The shipping agents in Durban were almost all Scottish or English, with only a few, white, exceptions like Prussian-born Alexander Denks.<sup>24</sup> The great constraints on the development of African capitalism in southern Africa, and the strong racial boundaries in Natal meant that there were no African entrepreneurs likely to be chosen as partners by shipping companies. Dada Abdulla, the one Indian shipowner in the pre-Boer war town (it was he who brought MK Gandhi to Africa, to act as his lawyer), no longer seems to have been an important force in the industry. There were very occasional cases of companies using Indian agents. For example, during the First World War, Mohammed Cassim Anglia, a wealthy and politically active merchant, worked in the docks as sub-agent under the W. Dunn company. But the exception proves the rule, for Dunn's was placed under great pressure to break off the relationship by the port's Principal Immigration Officer, G.W. Dick, who thought that Anglia was challenging both his immigration policies and the accepted racial hierarchy.<sup>25</sup>

Inevitably, UC was going to change as a company with the departure from the scene of its autocratic founder. While UC had a number of shipbuilders, its most important one was Harland and Wolff (HW) of Belfast. HW was internationally renowned for the quality of its ships, and notorious for the Protestant sectarianism of its employment practices. Lord Pirrie, the company's presiding genius, had a long financial relationship with Currie. After Currie died in 1909, UC was in danger of losing direction. Pirrie was financially involved with Sir Owen Philipps, who led the enormous Royal Mail Shipping group cartel (RMS). Together, RMS and the interlocking Pirrie-Philipps-owned company, Elder Dempster, made an offer to buy each existing UC share at three times the going price. In April 1912, UC accepted. The buyers then also bought out the management company, Donald Currie, at £ 700, 000. The total value of the transaction was £ 5,48 million of which £ 3,48 million was provided by Elder Dempster and the rest borrowed from City banks. Owen Philipps became chair of UC, and Pirrie was a board member. HW became heavy investors in UC. At the time UC had 44 vessels representing a total of 319 514 tons.

But questions were already being raised as to whether the RMS and HW were perhaps over-extending themselves and had become excessively reliant on loans.<sup>26</sup>

With the creation of the new, unified South African state in 1910, it became crucial for UC to develop a set of stable political relationships with the Pretoria government. That they would be able to do so was by no means certain, given Afrikaner nationalist resentment of imperial authority. However the arrangement between UC and South Africa, entered into in 1912, was one with major benefits for both parties, and set a pattern which survived the dominance of Afrikaner nationalists in government from 1924 to 1939, and indeed after 1948. UC dominated the 'conference' of shipping companies trading with South Africa, and in the agreements made between the Union of South Africa and the conference, UC was the only commercial player that really counted. The conference agreed to offer significant reductions in freight rates for South African agricultural exports, and to abolish 'deferred rates' – a kind of customer loyalty discount. In exchange, the government gave UC the lucrative contract for carrying mail from the UK to South Africa and a five-year monopoly on carrying government cargo. The agreement established an enduring pattern of trading the mail contract for shipping industry help to South African agriculture. The lines could recoup low outbound charges with high import charges.<sup>27</sup> Most importantly, the government gave notice of its willingness to treat the UC as the premier shipping line and to protect it from the competition of international companies. This was significant at time when German lines were making an impressive challenge to UC, the *Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie (DOAL)* on the Durban route and the Woermann line to Cape Town.<sup>28</sup> (The American Consul in Durban had noted in 1911 that the *DOAL's* three weekly sailings in both directions, had enabled Germany to overtake the USA as an exporter to Natal in the last five years).<sup>29</sup>

UC's image was primarily as a passenger and mail service, but both through its major liners and its smaller boats, the company was also deeply involved in cargo traffic to and from South Africa. In 1933, Southampton was receiving over 70% of South Africa's total exports to Britain.<sup>30</sup> From Britain, textiles, heavy machinery, hardware, vehicles and luxury goods were sent. From South Africa, the ships brought chiefly agricultural products and – via Cape Town - the Bank of England's supply of gold bullion from the Rand. Especially important was the South African export of fruit; by 1934 five million boxes a year arrived in Southampton.<sup>31</sup> The perishable nature of this cargo meant that the extensive cold-storage and good rail facilities in Southampton were essential in getting the product to the British markets.<sup>32</sup> In 1933, Southampton was receiving over 70% of South Africa's total exports to Britain.<sup>33</sup>

### **Union Castle's Maritime Labour Field**

Linked to this maritime capital field was what one might call a maritime labour field, a parallel spatialized and patterned field of labour recruitment and movement.

Labour recruitment is always shaped by a set of contingencies and political decisions which cannot in any simple way be pinned down to an economic logic. Although British merchant marine workers at the time were notably diverse in their national origins, Union Castle never seriously attempted to internationalize its labour force, recruiting most of its workers, at least on the routes to the major South African ports, from within England, and a majority of them, from the immediate area of Southampton. UC had, like other European employers of its era, to deal with the emergence of the labour movement, which took on a very specific trajectory in the maritime world. The company's maritime labour field was to be shaped by a very particular labour history.

The relation of the UC workforce to global space might be described as an 'encapsulated' one. Its workers tended to maintain very strong links to their home base, and this was reinforced by the extremely hostile immigration enforcement regime which they encountered in South Africa.<sup>34</sup> The workforce were anything but cosmopolitan. Every few months contingents of UC workers would journey across the world, but they would mostly return to their starting point, which was their most meaningful social location. One-dimensional versions of economic globalization do not account for the social, cultural and political relationships which produce such paradoxes of localism within globalism. Remarkably few UC workers seem to have deserted in southern African ports. Those who did, were likely to be picked up quickly by the police, and sentenced under the British 1894 Merchant Shipping Act.<sup>35</sup> Planned attempts at desertion, like that of the Italian, Henri Bettoni, who left the *Kinfauns Castle* in Durban in 1909 with the help of a fellow-countryman, and turned up working behind the bar of His Majesty's Hotel, were rather exceptional.<sup>36</sup> As an immigrant worker in Britain, Bettoni probably did not have the local connections pulling him toward Southampton that his shipmates did.

As UC constructed steady, long-term links with South African ports, it required its own labour system. In this, the formation of Southampton as a liner port had a special significance. Dedicated liner ports offered a stability in labour relationships that benefited both workers and employers. By contrast, ports specializing in tramp steamers were tough, poverty-wracked places.<sup>37</sup> Tramp steamer workers typically were extremely mobile. To take one tramp steamer seaman at random, James Ernest Altern, a Durban man of Norwegian descent, left his home town in 1923 and over the next three years travelled, successively, to Marseilles, Charleston, New York, Antwerp, Galveston, Hamburg and Ardrossan on multiple ships of various nationalities, with his voyages being interspersed with shore work, hospital treatment and imprisonment.<sup>38</sup> This kind of mobility made any kind of stable life impossible. It was difficult for such men to form families and their life trajectory was uncertain.

Such a workforce was not a desirable one for a company like UC, whose reputation rested on its respectability, reliability and efficiency. Whereas tramp steamer workers were forced to sign on for long voyages of uncertain direction and duration, the regular schedules of the liners enabled workers to establish a domestic life of

some certainty and continuity. This was especially the case if they could find steady employment with a specific company, or a specific ship. The New York run was particularly favourable for this stabilization, because of its short duration – in our period, round trips of less than three weeks were possible. Even in the case of the much longer South Africa run, by the 1930s it was possible to establish a regular schedule of seven weeks on board, followed by 12 days off at home.<sup>39</sup> This was relatively attractive to maritime workers. In the 1930s there were about 16 000 shipping employees working out of Southampton, out of whom about half lived in the city itself. Another 10% lived in nearby Portsmouth. Many of the rest were resident in the London area, an easy train ride away. Stewards and catering staff were particularly drawn from the metropolis, as of course London was the centre of the hotel trade.<sup>40</sup> Southampton had a reputation for orderliness unusual in a port, and the maritime workforce was better integrated into shore society than was the case with their counterparts in tramp ports.<sup>41</sup> Thus the city could provide the kind of workforce UC required; a large concentration of the company's workers lived in the Southampton suburb of Totton. Although, like other shipping companies, UC did not enter into long-term contracts with seamen, it established a practice whereby reliable individuals, especially in the more skilled or supervisory positions, could customarily be taken on each of a ship's regular voyages.

The stability that could be attained in this social world can be illustrated in the case of Joseph Jones. Jones was first employed by Union Castle around 1903. He was still working for them 15 years later. From around 1910 until at least 1918, he was on the *Balmoral Castle*, where he held the position of engine room storekeeper.<sup>42</sup> At the beginning of the 1930s, he was storekeeper on the *Winchester Castle*. Jones, who had grown up in Southampton, was a respected figure, a member of the Oddfellows fraternal organization and a trade union representative on his ship. There was a strong sense of approval in Southampton labour circles for someone who showed this kind of steadiness. Such service could also become a family asset. One Union Castle catering worker recalled that "It helped with the Union Castle, having a father who had been a steward".<sup>43</sup> This job security offset the downsides of working for Union Castle, such as the crew's food, which was notoriously worse than on the other liners.<sup>44</sup>

But there is plenty of evidence of movement between companies as well. And those who transgressed against the company could expect little mercy from UC. Bob James worked for the company for many years, eventually as a Shore Donkeyman (pump operator). But he was fired and blacklisted by Union Castle after a 1909 labour dispute. In the First World War he sailed on the RMSP ship *Almanzora*, which was converted into an armed cruiser, and was decorated for his military services.<sup>45</sup>

Typically, the early twentieth century Able Seamen, firemen and trimmers on UC seem to have come from Hampshire or elsewhere in southern England, and to have been the sons of large families, the father a general labourer, docker, seaman or agricultural worker.<sup>46</sup> Crew on UC ships often started young. Herbert Gallichan, himself the son of a seaman, first sailed on the *Gloucester Castle* in his early teens.

His very first trip took place during the Russian Civil War, when the ship was diverted to Crimea, to help rescue the remnants of General Denikin's counter-revolutionary army. At the age of 18, on the *Kildonan Castle*, he was promoted from Able Seaman to Quarter Master. Herbert was interned in Cape Town during a 1925 strike. From the late 1920s, he spent six years as Quartermaster on a Bibby Line troopship. He then returned to Southampton in 1934, where he became an organizer for the Nation Union of Seamen. Two years later, he moved to Falmouth where he worked for the NUS for many years. Gallichan's career was an example of how the unions could serve as a career path for older sailors.<sup>47</sup> The ending of careers at sea could come late in life. With limited opportunities to move to less physically strenuous work, some employees on the UC ships served as in the arduous job of Able Seamen in their late fifties and into their sixties. For example 59 year old John Draper, who worked in that position on the *Balmoral Castle*, died of a heart attack soon after leaving port in 1917.<sup>48</sup>

Workers of colour appear to have been relatively rare on UC ships. Unlike British tramp steamer ports, Southampton seems to have had a low proportion of black maritime workers. Exceptions though, came from recruitment on the African coast. For example, during the First World War an African American resident of Durban, Kidd Walcott, worked on the Durban-Cape Town part of the UC route. Walcott was unusually successful in evading Durban's vigilant immigration officials. A prize fighter from Pittsburgh, he was using the work on board to supplement what he earned running a boxing school. Walcott infuriated the Durban CID not only because of his occasional petty crimes, but also because he breached Natal racial decorum by living with a white girlfriend. In July 1916 he got into a punch-up with a fellow crewman on the *Balmoral Castle*, James Walker, putting the man in hospital, but was not prosecuted, as the authorities regarded it as a 'fair fight'.<sup>49</sup> Durban's principal immigration officer, G.W. Dick, was anxious to expel Walcott from South Africa, claiming that "his conduct and behaviour cannot but have a bad effect on the native mind".<sup>50</sup> But Walcott appears to have moved on of his own accord, sailing away on a tramp steamer.

Union Castle did not employ significant numbers of South African workers. The pool of white or black South Africans willing to work at sea was small, for reasons that have not been adequately explored. Later some white officers were recruited from the training ship *General Botha*, but there was a British prejudice against these colonials as lacking in the right stuff for seamanship.<sup>51</sup>

There was one UC experiment with African labour recruitment for its Durban operations, but this was brief and became a political embarrassment. In 1898 –at the time when the arrival at Durban still required off-shore unloading into lighters - Donald Currie established the African Boating Company (ABC), in order to provide this service to the then Castle Line and other ships.<sup>52</sup> The continued viability of African subsistence agriculture in Zululand and other neighbouring areas meant that there was however, a shortage of labour. So the ABC used workers imported from the East African coast. For example, in October 1903, an Italian labour broker

called Corigliano transferred 161 labourers to the ABC. These men had been recruited for Maby Brothers of Durban by Corigliano at Zanzibar, on a license issued by the Natal Colony government. The pool of recruits which Corigliano drew on, apparently originated on Zanzibar itself, in the Belgian Congo, and in Portuguese East Africa.<sup>53</sup>

Other Durban firms also brought in East African labourers to work in the port, railway building and mines,<sup>54</sup> and the men's experiences were appalling. There were high mortality rates, shocking examples of abusive treatment and failures to pay the workers, which resulted in vigorous protests to the Natal government from the Belgian and British representatives on Zanzibar.<sup>55</sup> But Natal officialdom met such complaints with derision. Natal's Protector of Immigrants, Harry Smith, defended the companies' conduct, upheld the right of employers to have workers imprisoned for refusing to work, and callously blamed the health problems of the workers on themselves. For him, the workers were "wretched specimens of humanity, physical wrecks, largely suffering from Phthisis and other vile diseases which make them a danger to the community ... They knock up quickly in cold weather and seem to die on the slightest provocation ..."<sup>56</sup> By the middle of the decade though, the need to import labour from East Africa disappeared, as the imposition of a poll tax in Natal (violently enforced in the crushing of the 1906 Bambatha Rebellion) and declining subsistence agriculture productivity forced Natal and Zululand African men onto the job market. The lighter business declined with the improved port facilities, and UC showed no interest in recruiting these workers for its international operations.

UC did not become involved in the transport of indentured labourers from India; that trade was left to Bullard King's Natal Direct Line, which had a monopoly contract, until the practice was ended in around 1911. However, UC was implicated in an iniquitous incident in April 1907, when the *Berwick Castle* carried 2235 Indians from Durban to Lobito in Angola. The group included 1175 male labourers, who were to work in railway construction, and the remainder, including a large number of children, were their family members. In Angola, the group was devastated by disease: 386 of the men died or disappeared. When the *Berwick Castle*, *Cluny Castle* and *Alnwick Castle* returned the survivors to Durban early the next year, it appears that only 1595 of the original emigrants were left alive. And 17 of those died on the voyage back.<sup>57</sup>

### **A Union Revolt in Southampton and its Global Effects**

As the world entered the second decade of the twentieth century, Southampton's maritime workforce – and thus that of UC – became shaped by a remarkable and locally specific trade union movement known as the British Seafarers Union (BSU). The rise of seamen's unionism in the United Kingdom, had been dominated by the extraordinary personality of J. Havelock Wilson, who created the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union (NSFU) during the last years of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> In its initial stages the NSFU made some real impact in improving the lot of seamen. This

militant phase culminated in the 1911 transport workers strike, organized in conjunction with the International Federation of Transportworkers, led by Hermann Jochade in Berlin. This was arguably the first truly international strike in world history, bringing British shipping to a halt, and having significant effects in Dutch and Belgian ports as well.<sup>59</sup> But Wilson was already showing signs of problems that would dog the NSFU over the next decades. He ran the NSFU in a manner which increasingly resembled a personality cult, with his doings and utterances constantly extolled in the union newspaper.

Wilson was a cantankerous personality, his temper fed by martyrdom to arthritis. He had a thuggish group of enforcers, headed up by one Ned Tupper, who claimed the bogus rank of army captain, and was to develop ties with British intelligence. Also manifesting itself was the start of drift by Wilson and his union toward right wing populism. The NSFU became obsessed with the supposed threat of cheap Chinese labour to British seamen, and developed a hysterical racial rhetoric on the subject. Wilson, who served in parliament, but represented the Liberals and not Labour, was increasingly to the right of a labour movement influenced by Syndicalism. After 1914, Wilson took a harshly right wing tack on international affairs, calling obsessively for the post-war punishment of Germany. He also entered into a close collaboration with the owners' Shipping Federation which lasted through the 1920s, and increasingly yielded to them in negotiations.

The NSFU branch in Southampton was, at the beginning of 1911, a small organization of only about 400 members. However, in the lead up to the strike it achieved a remarkable transformation under the leadership of its president, Thomas Lewis.<sup>60</sup> Lewis was a local man, a sometime watchmaker and jeweler, who had been an activist of H.M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation before becoming a Labour City Councillor. Southampton was the very first port to go on strike in 1911, and the results were spectacular, with thousands of new local members being recruited, turning a largely unorganized harbour into a *de facto* closed shop in a matter of weeks. This led to the collection of about £ 1000 in dues, and under the rules of the union this sum had to be turned over to the head office. But by this time Lewis and his colleagues had become suspicious of Wilson, and especially of his lack of financial transparency. After much conflict, this resulted in the Southampton branch deciding to break away, and forming a new organization, the British Seafarers Union (BSU).<sup>61</sup> Shortly thereafter, an organizer of the Glasgow branch of the NSFU, a Jewish former tailor by the name of Emmanuel Shinwell, got into a similar dispute with Wilson, and this also led a breakaway, which then joined the BSU. These two local nodes remained the core of the BSU throughout the eleven years of its existence, but they both had a powerful impact in their very diverse local settings. The Glasgow BSU became a bastion of the strong syndicalist trend that emerged in the war years, with Shinwell a notable leadership figure in the wave of regional militancy that became known as the Red Clyde.

An important early test of the BSU was the mass fatalities of its Southampton members in the 1912 *Titanic* disaster, which Lewis handled with great dignity, and

the union gave very effective support to survivors and the relatives of the deceased.<sup>62</sup> Under Lewis, the BSU became a very strong force in the port, drawing a significant proportion of liner workers into a cohesive and culturally rich local labour world, and producing a monthly magazine of outstanding quality, the *British Seafarer*. Lewis, a life long bachelor and teetotaler, gave an apparently monastic devotion to his work, and enjoyed enormous personal loyalty. Part of his success was his ability to draw of the skills of both sympathetic members of the middle class, like Mrs. E. Palmer, who chaired the Southampton Board of Guardians,<sup>63</sup> and experienced labour organizers, such as Matthew Connor, who had moved to Hampshire after union work and Independent Labour Party activism in the tough world of Harland and Woolff's Belfast shipyard.<sup>64</sup> Both served on the BSU board of trustees. The BSU was sometimes critical of the use of Asian crew (more so in Glasgow than in Southampton) but it did not engage in the rabid racism and chauvinism of the NSFU. The *British Seafarer* sometimes portrayed workers of colour in a positive light,<sup>65</sup> and BSU leaders took a relatively conciliatory attitude toward the German working class, both during and after the war.

An example of the day-to-day work of the BSU is its role in taking up the cases of workers whose careers were interrupted by injury and who faced the difficulties posed by an inadequate welfare system. Obtaining compensation required lobbying of the company, and frequently, recourse to the courts, so effective union representation was crucial to the outcomes. For instance, Joseph Loades was working on the *Walmer Castle* in June 1913, when he had an accident to his hand. The 54-year-old Loades had four subsequent operations. He not only lost a finger and a knuckle, but blood poisoning set in. UC initially paid him compensation, but then stopped. Loades subsequently went on two voyages on the *Edinburgh Castle*, but was put on light work, and on the second voyage suffered psychological collapse. He applied for work with the company onshore, but was refused. However, he did briefly get renewed compensation, and received further hospital treatment. His hand remained as bad as ever though, and Loades was hospitalized for depression for most of 1915. The BSU took Loades' claim for long-term compensation to court. There, UC opposed the application, claiming that it was still possible to work with the type of injury that Loades had, and that his incapacity was due to drink. The judge found in favour of Loades, and awarded him a payment of 10 Shillings a week from the company.<sup>66</sup>

### **Union Castle and the War – Openings and Closings**

The First World War did not close down the Durban-Southampton relationship, but did modify it. The British government needed to requisition a significant proportion of UC's tonnage for troop transports, hospital ships and use as armed cruisers. These ships were then dispersed to other British and foreign ports. The government also needed to keep enough ships sailing on the regular South African service to maintain mail services, food imports and war-related passenger movement. However, Southampton became the main port of embarkation for British troops

going to France, and was wholly given over to this enormous logistical operation. The UC ships that did keep to their normal routes to South Africa now operated out of other docks – particularly London’s Tilbury.

These changes potentially threatened Southampton’s established position as the source of labour for UC ships; men could have been recruited for the ships in other ports. The BSU was largely responsible for saving the jobs of their members through arrangements with UC and RMSP in which the union would provide crews for their ships. This was crucial to the success of the union, and it helped preserve the cohesion of the Southampton working class during the war. Southampton crews travelled by train to their embarkations.<sup>67</sup> The BSU extended in its activities geographically, with modest success in the Thames docks.<sup>68</sup> Voyages inevitably became longer and more unpredictable.<sup>69</sup> As the BSU executive explained in June 1918, “The war has completely changed the character of the work of the members of the Union, for whereas the bulk of the men were engaged on regular-running lines sailing from different ports, they are now engaged in a variety of ships and are scattered all over the world.”<sup>70</sup> But at least the employment of Southampton seamen was preserved.

The BSU fought vigorously for the interests of the workforce, taking advantage of the government’s urgent need to keep the ships running. It won wage increases,<sup>71</sup> and represented the UC crews on standard union issues, such as the quality of food.<sup>72</sup> It obtained pensions for the dependents of men killed in sinkings.<sup>73</sup> The union complained against the vindictiveness of Southampton’s magistrates who were handing out sentences of three month’s hard labour for brief absences from ships.<sup>74</sup> It ensured that the men got compensated for their train fares between Southampton and the ports from which their ships were sailing.<sup>75</sup> Union representatives were assiduous in visiting the UC ships in their ports.<sup>76</sup>

The men managed to maintain a remarkable *esprit de corps*. The crew of the *Gloucester Castle* crew won a local football league in Port Said, victorious in nine out of ten games.<sup>77</sup> A notable feature of the worker culture in UC was the generosity of crews to needy or deserving fellow crewmen and their families, with frequent collections for ill or retiring members and for the families of deceased ones.<sup>78</sup>

Although the ships on the South African run sometimes took a long diversion west of St. Helena in an attempt to avoid submarine attack, this imminent threat seems to have impacted relatively little on passengers’ consciousness. A Belgian army officer who travelled second class to Durban on the *Walmer Castle* in 1916 gave a remarkably up-beat description of life on board, praising the comfortable cabins and the very good food, and revelling in the Crossing-the-Line ceremony.<sup>79</sup> The relatively free availability of good food in South Africa probably allowed a standard of cuisine that besieged Europeans were no longer used to.

But the war was enormously traumatic, as ship after ship went down to submarines and raiders. In May 1917 the *British Seafarer* reported the loss of the *Gloucester*

*Castle*, the *Alnwick Castle* and three other ships on which the union had members. A greaser on the *Gloucester Castle*, T. Rutherford, who had been through a previous sinking, survived three days in a life boat.<sup>80</sup> In the same sinking, another greaser, A. Miell, suffered through six days in a freezing open boat with twenty nine others, of whom five died.<sup>81</sup> In April 1918, the *British Seafarer* reported that the *Gleanart Castle* had gone down with heavy loss of life, "about 15 only of our members being saved".<sup>82</sup> The sinking of the *Llandovery Castle* in July 1918 was particularly gruesome: the vessel was serving as a hospital ship, and the attacking submarine rammed lifeboats and fired on those escaping the sinking vessel, in an apparent attempt to cover up its violation of the law of war.<sup>83</sup> In October of the same year, the *British Seafarer* reported that 13 union members were amongst the heavy loss of life on the torpedoed *Galway Castle*, on its way to South Africa. The BSU played a crucial role in ensuring that families received death benefits.<sup>84</sup> A not untypically catastrophic experience was that of the Bendell family. They were children of a general labourer in Itchen on the edge of Southampton. The parents had nine children out of whom eight survived. Before the war, Frank Bendell was a fireman on the *Kildonan Castle*, but then signed for the *Titanic* and died in the disaster. Brother Frederick was torpedoed on the *Britannic* in 1916, but got away with his life. Another brother, Bertie, was on the *Galway Castle*, when it went down, and died.<sup>85</sup>

Perhaps predictably, the ending of the war brought a surge of militancy. The *British Seafarer* reported in October 1918 that "Seamen are becoming very restive and all over the country requests are being made for higher wages."<sup>86</sup>

## Survival

The coming of peace and the subsequent return to its Southampton base allowed Union Castle to rise to new levels of dominance on the southern African run. In Durban in particular, this was manifested in UC buying out, in 1919, its old, but now minor, rival in the Durban passenger trade, Bullard King's Natal Direct Line. Bullard King did however continue to operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of UC. This made for a more complicated set of UC-linked labour fields, as Bullard King's services, now focused on East Africa and India, had exclusively Indian 'lascar' crews under British officers.<sup>87</sup> The immediate post-war period saw challenges to UC from the Holland-Africa Line, the US Shipping Line and the remarkably resilient *DOAL*. However, in 1924-5, the three rivals were all brought into the South African conference in positions which gave them scope for profitable activity, while institutionalizing UC's premier position.<sup>88</sup>

After enjoying a UC voyage to South Africa in 1922-3, Owen Philipps was inspired to market the country to upper middle class Britons as a tourist destination.<sup>89</sup> This project was quite successful, supplementing the existing business travel trade, and offsetting the rather low levels of British emigrant traffic resulting from the South

African government's negative attitude to immigration.<sup>90</sup> UC was aided in this endeavor by the South African Railways and Harbours' (SAR&H) development in the mid-1920s of luxury train travel services for tourists.<sup>91</sup> UC subsidized SAR&H's advertising campaign for tours of southern Africa,<sup>92</sup> which was boosted by a South African pavilion at the Wembley Empire Exhibition in 1924.<sup>93</sup> In one of his plays, Noel Coward included a scene in which it turns out that the complicated emotional lives of the characters have led them all to decide to travel to South Africa. The main character, Garry, a Coward self-portrait, remarks dryly: "It's certainly a big day for the Union Castle Line".<sup>94</sup> The joke is incomprehensible to most people today, but Coward's intended fashionable West End audience in 1930s London would have got the point immediately: UC was virtually synonymous with stylish voyages to South Africa. An almost entirely unresearched component of the UC workforce, which expanded with the tourist trade, were the stewardesses who worked on the line. The sisters Cis and Dot Ambler, who were stewardesses on the South Africa run may be representative. They were the daughters of an archetypally respectable northern artisan who had moved to London, and were exactly the sort of aspirational workers for whom UC could provide a tough but exciting alternative career, given the limited options open to women. (Cis was remembered by her nephew for bringing exotic treats from Durban).<sup>95</sup> Also little known is the social world of gay catering workers on Union Castle. After the Second World War, there was a large proportion of gay men in this sector on the company's boats.<sup>96</sup> It is unclear whether this was the case before the war. It seems likely, but even researchers who have specifically pursued this question for the interwar liners, have found material on gay life on the liners in this closeted period hard to obtain, as compared to a more open presence in the post-war years.<sup>97</sup>

In 1923, Owen Philipps was raised to the peerage as Lord Kylsant. This signalled his immense prestige, and that of UC, within the British establishment. By now, Kylsant was possibly the most powerful single shipowner in the world. And South Africa was locked into UC's company's strategic role; there was no viable rival that had the specialized shipping resources and political clout to play the same role for the South African economy, even though South African politicians occasionally ineffectually huffed and puffed about going to another company with the mail contract.<sup>98</sup>

The success which the BSU had achieved in organizing UC crews was not to be sustained. Still largely confined to its Southampton and Glasgow strongholds, the union was under considerable attack from the NSFU. Havelock Wilson's union sat on the powerful state-instituted National Maritime Board, and ensured the exclusion of the BSU. In 1921, Havelock Wilson fell out with the cooks and stewards union led by Joe Cotter, and the National Transport Workers Federation. These bodies now supported a new union in which Cotter's union would fuse with the BSU, and this came to pass, with the founding of the Amalgamated Marine Worker's Union (AMWU). However, Wilson had a very effective counter-strategy. He had secured the employer's agreement to the institution of a document known as the PC5, which would be required to get employment on ships and had to be endorsed by the Shipping Federation and the NSFU. Although the scheme's uneven implementation

gave the AMWU some space in which to operate, the squeeze was on. And Cotter proved a poor leader.<sup>99</sup>

In desperation, and hoping to outflank Wilson from the left, the AMWU, in conjunction with the Communist-led National Minority Movement, in 1925 launched a strike against wage cuts.<sup>100</sup> Though rather ineffectual in the United Kingdom itself, the strike took off in Australasian and South African ports, seriously impairing the imperial transportation system. Because of the union's strength in Southampton, the strike was especially effective on Union Castle ships. There may have been a deliberate Minority Movement strategy to trigger the strike in South African ports. This is suggested by the case of Richard Mooney, the key initiator of the strike in Durban, a Liverpool Irishman, (and suspected by the authorities as a Communist and *Sinn Feiner*) who had previously worked on other lines, and who was on his first trip on a UC boat aboard the *Sandgate Castle*.<sup>101</sup> Large numbers of seamen were interned in Cape Town. In Durban however, the strike received an enormous amount of public support, largely because Kilsant threatened the use of lascars from Bombay to replace the strikers, thus inflaming the anti-Indian racism of white Durbanites.<sup>102</sup> In the end though, the union was defeated. Exhausted by the strike, the union suffered a legal defeat the next year, when Wilson got a court ruling declaring the amalgamation of the BSU and Cotter's organization invalid. It was the end of the AMWU. But a legacy of the BSU was the consolidated link between UC and the Southampton workforce. The death of Wilson in 1929 and the lack of any other effective maritime union allowed the left to slip back into the NSFU, and by the 1940s the organization (which became known as the National Union of Seamen) was to become something more like a conventional British Labour Party – aligned union.

UC was technically unadventurous. Although oil-burning technology was viable before the First World War, it was still building coal powered liners – the *Llanstephan Castle* and the ill-fated *Landoverly Castle* – in 1914. UC only launched its first steam turbine ship – the new *Arundel Castle* – in 1921, and its first diesel liner, *Carnarvon Castle*, in 1926.<sup>103</sup> This, obviously, started to bring to an end the age of the fireman and the trimmer on UC. Slowness in making the change was typical of British shipowners; in the mid-1920s it was the Scandinavian countries that were the front-runners in oil-fired merchant shipbuilding. It is possible that this reluctance was connected with the importance of coal in the British economy, and especially the export trade, and the overlapping interests of shipowners with that industry.<sup>104</sup>

As a brief period of optimism about the shipping market at the start of the 1920s faded, it became clear that there was going to be a long worldwide glut of shipping capacity. (Despite the heavy wartime losses, extensive US wartime shipbuilding had replaced many of the sunk vessels; but world trade did not return to pre-war levels). RMS propped up the share prices of their companies by getting the richer ones to buy the shares of their less well-performing brethren. Pirrie died in 1924, leaving behind a considerable mess at HW, especially in regarded to loans made earlier to

the company by the Lloyd George government. Kysant had to take sole responsibility for the viability of RMS and HW. He did so by moving money around between the companies and adopting a relentlessly expansionary policy. This culminated in RMS's purchase of the White Star Line in 1927, for £ 9 million, of which UC took £ 1 million in shares.<sup>105</sup> By 1928 the whole enterprise was headed for disaster. In that year UC's balance sheet showed a balance of £ 137 000, but this was the product of transferring reserves – in fact it had made a loss of £ 99 000.<sup>106</sup> White Star was in debt to the tune of multiple millions.<sup>107</sup> 1929 was a bad year to be in this situation, for the group's troubles came to a head just in time for the crash of the New York Stock Exchange. Kysant had begged Prime Minister Baldwin and Chancellor of the Exchequer Churchill to help with HW's problem in dealing with its debts, but they refused, leading to the company's default. Disastrously, Kysant then clashed with his brother, the financier Lord St. Davids over the management of RMS's accounts. St. Davids went fratricidally public with his criticisms of Kysant. Kysant was simultaneously challenged by a board member of RMS-owned Lamport and Holt, who alleged the company was headed for insolvency. Kysant was forced to admit to a Treasury Committee that RMS's debts were unpayable. RMS collapsed, and Kysant was to serve a short prison term.<sup>108</sup>

Somewhat amazingly, UC managed to survive as a separate company.<sup>109</sup> Crucial to this was the capacity of the company's new leadership to maintain its connections to both the British and South African states. They were aided by long existing ideological investment of Whitehall and the City in the enterprise. In the struggle to save the company, the notion of UC as an essential British strategic interest played a great role. A restructuring campaign saw free use of patriotic rhetoric to attract support and to see off attempts by foreign capital to buy into the company.<sup>110</sup> In South Africa, UC also proved adept at taking advantage of the rapprochement between Hertzog and his pro-imperial rival, Jan Smuts, leading to the coalition 'Fusion' government in 1933. In 1934, after returning from a visit to South Africa during which he had landed a ten-year freight agreement for government cargo and perishable produce,<sup>111</sup> the company's chair, Robertson Gibb, was able to claim, that relations with the South African government "had never been better".<sup>112</sup> Together with a new mail contract won by Gibb from South Africa in 1936, this provided the basis for the company's extensive building programme, with fourteen liners and cargo ships coming into service between 1935 and 1939.<sup>113</sup>

The leading institutional leadership role in the rebuilding of the company was played by Sir Vernon Thomson, an investment banker who became a director of UC in 1932 and later, long-term managing director and chairman. Thomson was well connected in Whitehall and the City. He had a key part in the British government's attempts to regulate of the tramp steamer industry in the mid-1930s. He chaired the Chamber of Shipping in 1936-7, and became senior shipping advisor to the Ministry of War Transport from 1939 to 1945.<sup>114</sup> A revived UC, entrenched within the British establishment, was to retain something like its existing form for another half century.

## Conclusion

Approaching the history of UC from the point of view of currently accepted versions of globalization, one would expect to find – at least for some periods - an expansive world of global connection. But one does not encounter that, either in its labour system or its organization as a company, at least as far as its major routes to South Africa were concerned.

UC crews were part of a remarkably shut-in British social world, a community, as it were, extended to southern Africa and then retracted homeward on a regular basis. The ‘encapsulated’ UC workforce always remained very much part of the British working class world. And as a company, Union Castle was an imperial, rather than a truly global enterprise. It was enormously successful, despite the near-disaster of Kylsant’s crash. But it was no product of an ever-opening global market. Rather, its survival reflected the ability of the company to come to terms with the very specific needs and requirements of the British and southern African states, and the pressures of labour organization. Rather than being open to the global economy, UC played the cards of patriotism, protectionism and imperial defence. The company and its workforce were part of a world that was closed in at least as many ways as it was open – both before and after the First World War.

The ‘global turn’ in historical writing has played an enormously creative role in freeing historians from the prison of ‘methodological nationalism’. But at the same time, amorphous notions of ‘globalization’, ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘transnationalism’ can be dangerous traps. While the nineteenth and twentieth century saw enormous expansions of links across global space, these connections were radically fragmented and uneven. In particular, given the British dominance of world shipping at the time, the politics of the British Empire was crucial to the way in which space was partitioned. As Micheal Mann points out, “the global expansion of rivalrous empires did not unite the world but divided it into segments ...”.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, as we have seen, there were differentiated centres of power within the British empire. Union Castle’s case shows how the politics of specific imperial spaces and places were crucial in creating – but also importantly, *limiting* – global flows. Historians of twentieth century globalism need to chart these restrictive complexities, rather than assuming a universal trend to connectedness.

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Rosenthal, *Schooners and Skyscrapers* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1963), p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> Lucille Heydenrych, 'Port Natal Harbour, c. 1850-1897', In Bill Guest and John M. Sellers, eds., *Enterprise and Exploration in a Victorian Colony* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1985), pp. 16-46.

<sup>4</sup> Michael B. Miller, *Europe and the Maritime World: A Twentieth Century History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> G. Balachandaran, *Globalizing Labour? Indian Seafarers and World Shipping c. 1870-1945* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 91-112.

<sup>7</sup> The approach to the analysis of power in this paper draws on the work of Michael Mann. See Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 3: Global Empires and Revolution, 1890-1945* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior of Capital* (Cambridge, Polity, 2013), p. 84.

<sup>9</sup> Valeska Huber, *Chanelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869-1914* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 318.

<sup>10</sup> Marischal Murray, *Union-Castle Chronicle 1853-1953* (London, Longman's, Green, 1953).

<sup>11</sup> Robert Kubicek, "The Proliferation and Diffusion of Steamship Technology and the Beginnings of the 'New Imperialism'", in David Killingray, Margarete Lincoln and Nigel Rigby eds., *Maritime Empires: British Imperial and Maritime Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press/ The National Maritime Museum, 2004), pp. 100-110.

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<sup>13</sup> Anonymous, 'Currie', p. 20. 11

<sup>14</sup> Miller, *Maritime World*, 23-68 and Kenneth McPherson, 'Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change: The Indian Ocean, 1890s to 1920s', in Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly eds., *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 75-95.

<sup>15</sup> Sandip Harazeesingh, 'Interconnected Synchronicities: the Production of Bombay and Glasgow as Modern Global Ports c. 1850-1880', *Journal of Global History*, 4:1, 2009, pp. 7-31.

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<sup>17</sup> Jean Cottier, 'Le port de Southampton', *Annales de Géographie*, 45:255, 1936, p. 246.

<sup>18</sup> Cottier, 'Le port', p. 246.

<sup>19</sup> Cottier, 'Le port', p. 246.

<sup>20</sup> Cottier, 'Le port', p. 248.

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- <sup>32</sup> Wentworth-Shields, 'The Port', p. 8.
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- <sup>48</sup> *The British Seafarer*, March 1917.
- <sup>49</sup> NASA Pta BNS 112/21 (1/A/729), S. Grimaldi, Head Constable CID, Durban to Principal Immigration Officer, Port Natal, 26 July 1916.
- <sup>50</sup> NASA Pta BNS 112/21 (1/A/729), G.W. Dick, Principal Immigration Officer, Durban, to Secretary for the Interior, Pretoria, 27 July 1916.
- <sup>51</sup> See the comments of Rev. William P. Wyllie, *Sea Breezes* (New Series), 10, 1950.
- <sup>52</sup> Murray, *Union-Castle Chronicle*, p. 274.
- <sup>53</sup> NASA Pmbg IRD 23 John Sinclair, Acting British Agent and Consul General, Zanzibar to Governor, Natal, 30 January 1904.
- <sup>54</sup> NASA Pmbg IRD 22 Applications from Dan Taylor, Benningfields, 1903 to 1904; IRD 23 G.W. Dick, to Dan Taylor, Benningfield's 13 December 1904; IRD 23 Captain Rosa, Durban to Immigration Restriction Officer, 25 November 1903.
- <sup>55</sup> NASA Pmbg IRD 23 L. Greseaux, Belgian Consul, Zanzibar, n.d.; IRD 23 John Sinclair, Acting British Agent and Consul General, Zanzibar to Governor, Natal, 30 January 1904.
- <sup>56</sup> NASA Pmbg IRD 23 Smith to Secretary for Native Affairs, 24 March 1904.
- <sup>57</sup> India Office Records, British Library IOR L/P&J/6/801 'Particulars of Indians who left for Lobito Bay 13<sup>th</sup> April 1907 and left there for Natal and Indian, February and March 1908'.
- <sup>58</sup> J.M. Conville and John Saville, 'Wilson, Joseph Havelock, 1858-1929', in J.M. Bellamy and John Saville, *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Volume IV (London, Macmillan, 1977), pp. 200-208.
- <sup>59</sup> Bob Reinalda, 'The Early Years of the ITF (1896-1914)', in Bob Reinalda ed., *The International Transportworkers Federation 1914-1945: The Edo Fimmen Era* (Amsterdam, IISG, 1997), pp. 38-43.
- <sup>60</sup> James Macfarlane and John Saville, 'Lewis, Thomas (Tommy) 1873-1962', 1873-1962 in J.M. Bellamy and John Saville, *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Volume I, (London, Macmillan, 1972), pp. 215-217.

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- <sup>61</sup> MacFarlane and Saville, 'Lewis'; Basil Mogridge, 'Militancy and Inter-Union Rivalries in British Shipping, 1911-1929', *International Review of Social History*, 6:3, 1961, pp. 375-412; MRC MSS 75/6/BSU/1 British Seafarers Union, Minute Book, Southampton Branch.
- <sup>62</sup> MRC MSS 75/6/BSU/1 British Seafarers Union, Minute Book, Southampton Branch, 22 April 1912.
- <sup>63</sup> *The British Seafarer*, May 1916.
- <sup>64</sup> *The British Seafarer*, March 1919.
- <sup>65</sup> *The British Seafarer*, April 1916, for example, put a photograph of the racially mixed ship's band of HM Messenger Ship *Trent* on its front cover.
- <sup>66</sup> *The British Seafarer*, May 1916.
- <sup>67</sup> *The British Seafarer*, April 1916.
- <sup>68</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Jan 1916.
- <sup>69</sup> *The British Seafarer*, May 1918.
- <sup>70</sup> *The British Seafarer*, June 1918.
- <sup>71</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Dec 1916.
- <sup>72</sup> MRC MSS 75/6/BSU/1 British Seafarers Union, Minute Book, Southampton Branch, Special Meeting of the Southampton Branch: minutes 2 May 1916.
- <sup>73</sup> *The British Seafarer*, July 1916.
- <sup>74</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Jan 1916.
- <sup>75</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Jan 1916.
- <sup>76</sup> *The British Seafarer*, July 1916.
- <sup>77</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Nov 1916.
- <sup>78</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Dec 1920.
- <sup>79</sup> Louis van der Plas (Jan Dillen and Jan van der Plas eds.), *Kongolese Oorlogsdagboek 1916-1918* (Erpe-Meere, De Krijger, 2009), pp. 59-71.
- <sup>80</sup> *The British Seafarer*, May 1917.
- <sup>81</sup> *The British Seafarer*, May 1917.
- <sup>82</sup> *The British Seafarer*, April 1918.
- <sup>83</sup> Daniel J. Demers, 'The Sinking of the Llandovery Castle', *Canadian Naval Review*, 11:2, 2015, pp. 25-28.
- <sup>84</sup> *The British Seafarer*, April 1918.
- <sup>85</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-victim/f-bendell.html> downloaded 23 May 2016.
- <sup>86</sup> *The British Seafarer*, Oct 1918.
- <sup>87</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 44.
- <sup>88</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 60.
- <sup>89</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 62.
- <sup>90</sup> Edna Bradlow, 'Empire Settlement and South African Immigration Policy 1910-1948', in S. Constantine ed., *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions between the Wars* (Manchester, 1990), pp. 174-201.
- <sup>91</sup> Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts" or "Home we have always known"?: The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29:3, 2003, pp. 657-680: see also Gordon

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- <sup>92</sup> Pirie, "Elite Exoticism", p. 82.
- <sup>93</sup> Pirie, "Elite Exoticism", p. 76.
- <sup>94</sup> The play is *Present Laughter*, written in 1939.
- <sup>95</sup> Eric Ambler, *Here Lies: An Autobiography* (New York, Mysterious, 1985).
- <sup>96</sup> Rodney Gascoyne-Shaw, "Life at Sea", <http://members.shaw.ca/GascoyneR/LifeAtSea.htm> downloaded 1 June 2016.
- <sup>97</sup> Paul Baker and Jo Stanley, *Hello Sailor: The Hidden History of Gay Life at Sea* (Oxford, Routledge, 2014).
- <sup>98</sup> As did Jan Smuts in 1924: Smuts to E.H. Walton, 7 May 1924, Jean van der Poel ed., *Selections from the Smuts Papers; Volume V September 1919 – November 1934* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 146.
- <sup>99</sup> Mogridge, 'Militancy and Inter-Union Rivalries', pp. 392-406.
- <sup>100</sup> Baruch Hirson and Lorraine Vivian, *The Seamen's Strike of 1925 in Britain, South Africa and Australasia* (London, Clio, 1992).
- <sup>101</sup> NASA Pta 1/2/80 A3040 G.W. Dick to Secretary of the Interior, 7 October 1925.
- <sup>102</sup> For my analysis see Jonathan Hyslop, 'A British Strike in an African Port: The Merchant Marine and Dominion Politics in Durban, 1925', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43:5, 2015, pp. 882-902.
- <sup>103</sup> David Hughes and Peter Humphries, *In South African Waters: Passenger Liners Since 1930* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 105 – 129.
- <sup>104</sup> As suggested by the Communist organizer, George Hardy. George Hardy, *The Struggle of British Seamen* (London, Seamen's Section of the Workers Minority Movement, 1927).
- <sup>105</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 68-70.
- <sup>106</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 84.
- <sup>107</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 84.
- <sup>108</sup> Green and Moss, *A Business*, p. 85-94.
- <sup>109</sup> Murray, *Union Castle*, pp. 191-195.
- <sup>110</sup> *The Times*, 28 November, 1934.
- <sup>111</sup> Murray, *Union Castle*, p. 199
- <sup>112</sup> *The Times*, 27 April 1934.
- <sup>113</sup> Murray, *Union Castle*, p. 375.
- <sup>114</sup> *The Times*, 9 February 1953.
- <sup>115</sup> Mann, *Sources*, p. 2.