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A History and Analysis Relevant to the US Border: a.k.a. "Fuck the Border"

Cole Rainey-Slavick
Bard College

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A History and Analysis* Relevant to the US Border

a.k.a. "Fuck the Border"

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Cole Rainey-Slavick

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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*Potentially

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Love and solidarity in the struggle.

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This is where I try to explain why I wrote this. I was born in the center of empire, in one of the first and most colonized corners of this continent, in a family of mostly white citizens. As such borders have generally not existed for me. Having a family that lives in various countries and is able to afford the occasional flights I've been lucky to travel. For the most part my movement has been unrestricted. The only exception for me has been Israel, during my studies at Al Quds.

I did have to lie to pass those colonial authorities and was thoroughly searched and questioned in the process literally taken off the plane and asked to turn my laptop on to "prove it's not a bomb." Israel does not recognize the university, so according to their law, I was technically an unlawful resident. Yet, being there my American passport granted me far fewer restrictions than the Palestinians who lived there. Mostly just got strange looks and a "get back on the bus" when I'd get out for the id checks. I was, though, eventually denied reentry for having had the audacity of thinking Palestinian students were worthy peers and I might have things to learn from them.

After this I was able to make a journey largely unhindered, which for many fleeing the war not too far away in Syria, including Palestinian refugees now refugeed a second time, is a life and death struggle. *Landing* in Berlin, worrying slightly about the bright red "Denial of Entry" stamp in my passport left over from the Israelis, I really shouldn't have. The outwardly Muslim people on the flight were taken aside for further questioning. My blue eyes got me an immediate stamp and a wave, "Welcome to Germany."

In Europe, Berlin but mostly in Athens I spent time in the refugee solidarity movements. In Athens I was with refugees, building furniture for refugee squats, in a boiling basement. Occasionally, we all had to rush out respond to potential raids. Here, I saw international solidarity at some of its most beautiful. But I also saw police brutality and heard stories that still haunt me. I returned home on the flight I had originally booked out of Germany, after a quick stop in Hamburg...

Coming home, fascism was seemingly ascendant. I had not been in Trump's America yet. While by no means a break from the history of this country. The reactionary street movements and growing fascist organizations seemed stronger than I remembered. I knew Hammer-Skins haunted the North Shore, but I'd never seen a Wolfsnagel tattoo on the common or fascist posters on my block before. Gladly, these movements have fractured and been beaten back somewhat. But reactionary regimes proliferate the globe and climate change... yeah, shit is dire.

I've been involved in movements at home too. My only arrest (which I attribute entirely to my whiteness and the eagerness of certain Boston cops to pocket contraband for themselves) was at an occupation of a university along with undocumented students. That was back when Obama was president. Luckily, I've been free of those charges since November. More recently I've chanted "Abolish ICE" and "Abolish Prison Slavery" with the best of them. I'll stay in the streets. I have no plans to stop organizing and acting for freedom because, simply, my liberation is bound up with everyone else's. An injury to one is an injury to all.

There is freedom in solidarity and the struggle, even when shit is fucked up beyond recognition. In all this what can you really say about borders but fuck them. Chinga La Migra. I write not simply trying to interpret the world but hoping to help change it. Abolish the border.

Intro

Borders are a major contradiction¹ of contemporary society, and without structural changes seem only likely to increase in relevance as climate change disrupts patterns of human settlement. The establishment and maintenance of intrastate borders has recently been proliferating in both physical embodiments as walls, fences, and policed ocean channels and as a tool of political rhetoric, an intrinsic part of nationalist politics and proto or openly fascist movements. They arise, in this moment, out of the complex competitive but mutually reinforcing relationship of the global capitalist economy and the nation-state. Their expansion under the neoliberal and post-neoliberal eras demonstrates the fallaciousness of the narrative of a borderless world economy beyond the nation state but also the prescient need for free movement of the working class. The contradiction illustrates the continued relevance of territorial state governance in the management, reproduction and, expansion of capitalist exploitation.

To understand borders and what to do about these contradictions we must analyze what role they serve for state authorities and what structural forces and dynamics has led to the hardening² of borders in an economy which is indeed increasingly globalized in culture, supply chains, and networks of communication. To understand the current hardening and expansion of borders we must analyze their history. While borders are especially socially and politically relevant today, they have, in different forms, existed for millennia, shaped by the needs of states under different material conditions. The social

¹ In the sense of manifesting competing, opposing, but mutually interlocking forces rather than failures of deductive reasoning; historical dialectics not logical inconsistencies.

² In the sense of increased enforcement

struggles established by and altering these forms help to explain their current manifestations. A global picture of the contemporary border regime would need to analyses of at least the US, Europe, Australia, Israel, China, UK, Canada. However, I will not attempt in this project. I will primarily focus on the US-Mexico Border, using elements of a global perspective to inform analysis of it.

Border History as Struggle

In early states borders served a dual function, they established the realm of the civilized and opposed it to the barbarian outsider.³ Put simply they were oriented towards keeping workers in and raiders out. As concentrated labor was the lifeblood of early states, collecting and controlling captive populations for production occupied much of their functions. These practices continued in early states and empires through the Greek city-states and Roman Empire. Borders, in this structure defined the integrated economic territory, worked by slaves gathered from conquest. The slave was held internally within them for productive capacity. The states relation to the enslaved workers largely revolved around maintaining their existence, or more importantly than their existence as individuals, their class's existence in its position of subservience.

In the Feudal period, when, despite the existence of peasant revolts, the lord's control over the population was largely not up for dispute. The economic integration of the whole population into the agrarian economy ensured no alternative economic model presented itself as immediately and locally viable for centuries, as the barbarians had done for the slaves of early states. The barbarians for the most part had been functionally

³ These are always contingent terms, defined on the conditions of the civilized, inherently supposing their own superiority. That does not however mean that "barbarians" will not use these differentiations to their tactical advantages to maintain their autonomy from the state when possible.

eliminated, or more generally became the part of “civilization” and the pastoral flock. So, while the peasant’s movements were typically, although not always, restricted by the lord’s permission, the policing of social boundaries became internal to society rather than external to it. The Crusades mark a notable exception to this rule as a series of violent incursions on a territorialized outside other. Here though the goal was conquest of territory rather than labor, the opposite of early states. The Crusades, and particularly the expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula would serve, ultimately, to help break Europe out of feudalism and jumpstart the colonial era.

However, before getting there, Feudal authorities in Europe would eliminate, heretics, blasphemers, witches, and others who challenged the existing power structures of religious and aristocratic authority. Where they could not do so, they would declare these people to be outside the law, legally killable by anyone. The state continued to seek to maintain the subservience of its subjects, but it began incorporating expulsion on a larger scale in order to do so. Towards the end of this period as cities expanded, prompted by the enclosure of the commons and the resultant denial of the means of sustenance for much of the peasantry, restrictions were placed on the poor, either denying them entry or incarcerating them. Incarceration was framed as supposedly for their benefit but also served to produce exploitable laborers for early capitalists and the state.

In the Colonial period borders advanced the territory of conquest. The expansion of colonial borders was pretext for the extermination of the people residing in the territory that the border crossed. Clear example of this is the genocide of indigenous people in what

is now California after the Mexican-American war.⁴ The border, in defining a territory as white and “civilized,” justified the massacre or ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people whose very existence called the reality of that claim into question.

With the indigenous population drastically reduced by murder, displacement, and disease the colonists required an exploitable workforce. To fill this gap massive numbers of African slaves were transported to the Americas. In order to perpetuate these extremely exploitative class divisions, by ensuring the allegiance of poor whites, who had occasionally sided with slave revolts, to the white slave owners rather than enslaved workers, whiteness was invented. White and nonwhite were explicitly segregated spatially and socially, with whiteness privileged on all counts, with Blackness violently suppressed. The policing of these internal borders of identity and the struggles by the state to maintain enslavement would eventually birth the modern police force in Charleston, South Carolina.

Brought together the racial logic of policing and the exclusionary logic of indigenous genocide, as well as the forces used to maintain each, helped form the structure of border enforcement in the United States. They were, and largely still are, a defense of white society from the encroachment of undesirables, Asian and Latino immigrants, as well as anarchists and sex workers. At times when the strength of the organized working class has become a legitimate threat to capital, policing immigration has served as a tool in the arsenal of state repression to counter and divert it.

Beyond targeting individual revolutionaries, the policing of immigrant groups ensures their vulnerability and exploitability by rendering them outside the protection of

⁴ Interestingly Marx and Engels celebrated this victory at the time as bringing the territory closer to revolution, as will be discussed later

regulations on capital won by class struggle. It then provides a convenient scapegoat, for the conditions of the documented working class, funneling anger away from elites and onto those vulnerable and exploitable people. Ultimately it only perpetuates their exploitability while leaving class society and the rule of capital untouched.

US Border History

With the broad historical circumstances and dynamics of borders established, I then turn to the US border. Here, I present the history of the formation US border one of imperial conquest and once established followed by periods of hardening and reorganization, responding to the social forces and broader political struggles. The periods of hardening correspond to the late 19th century to early twentieth century, world war two and the post war era, and the contemporary moment starting in the mid 1990s.

Efforts to expand and maintain slavery, to acquire new land for settlement, and to achieve relative supremacy against rival empires, shaped expansion of territory that resulted in the present alignment of the US border. As settled territory expanded, those who had lived there before the colonizers were expelled from their lands or simply killed. The line of their expulsion corresponded to the territorial extent of the colonial forces and marched as they did. When the US-Mexico Border was eventually established on its current boundary the immediate result was a genocide against indigenous people in California. The violence inflicted against indigenous people and against slaves who rebelled for their freedom served to create a new racial identity, whiteness, united in the forcible dispossession of the other. This identity, and the forces established to maintain it, would

prove crucial for later racialized immigration exclusions and for the motivations of actual border enforcers themselves.

Once the border was established, however, it was not immediately the point of national fixation it is today. At first it was largely open, with few restrictions on movement, but this would not last forever. The forces that would serve to help close it do not originate in its immediate proximity. Rather, nativist backlash against immigration would go through several iterations before turning its eye south. Focusing first on the Catholics/Irish, then the Chinese and other Asians where it resulted in the first immigration restrictions in the US, before eventually shifting again towards Mexico during the revolution there from 1910-20, anti-immigrant racism was fluid and adaptable, also responding to the changing terrain of whiteness. However, even after the 1910s things were complicated, restrictions on immigration in the 1924 Origins Act did not cover Mexicans, focusing instead on Eastern Europeans. In part this was a result of the pressure of US agribusiness and their desire to maintain their labor supply and was immediately resisted by nativists, demonstrating the complicated balance of forces involved in restricting immigration. Though originally in order to enforce that act, Border Patrol, also founded in 1924, would soon come to focus on the southern border.

Around the time of the second world war border patrol shifted again. While this was a period of hardening, involving expanded budgets, technology, and manpower for border patrol, it interestingly did not result in a noticeable increase in deportations. Border Patrol engaged in specifically racialized operations in these years, however, most crucially for our purposes it reoriented its function. This period marked an integration of border enforcement into the broader military and security apparatus, separating it more fully from

its origins in the department of labor and tying it to the FBI, and other state law enforcement agencies. As such, Border Patrol became an actively criminalizing⁵ organization rather than one that sought to simply prevent immigration violations.

In recent years we have seen the border harden again. This has been a truly remarkable period of expansion for border enforcement on the levels of technological, budgetary, and manpower, each doubling several times over since the 1990s. Here, the border originally responded to the dislocations created by NAFTA, helping shape a highly exploitable labor force, with the enforcement of the actual physical barriers increasing risk for migrants. As the source of migration to the US has shifted further south, Mexico has been incorporated into the enforcement of the US border, which divides the continental labor market further, creating new degrees of differentiation and exploitation in the labor supply. In the wake of 9/11, the integration into the military and security apparatus has only expanded. We have also recently seen the reemergence of movements explicitly relating to immigration. This has gone in both directions, unfortunately, as mass mobilizations by immigrants have been matched with militias of self-deputized white people, desperate to enforce their racial position along the border.

Fuck the Border

In the final section I will attempt to propose a politics for the abolition of borders and towards the self-emancipation of the working class. In order to do so, I will respond to the fallacious arguments that pit workers against one another, placing immigrants as a threat. I will also engage in an analysis of race, gender, and class oppression as they relate

⁵ In the sense that they sought out lawbreaking to punish

to the border, and what alternatives may emerge. However, first, it is necessary to ground the discussion in an understanding movement and its restriction in our society.

While goods largely move freely throughout the global economy, there is increasingly restricted movement of people, at least certain classes of people. The capitalist class, like their money and products, is largely able to circulate the globe freely. The concentration of wealth likewise can be seen to be more decentralized than it has been for much of the previous centuries, dominated as they were by European and American imperialism, in the specific sense of the rise of billionaires in China, India, and throughout the developing world (along with the increased ability for capitalists to live semi-nomadic existences between several houses around the world). However, while the geographic concentration of wealth may have diversified, it has never ceased to be stratified. The rich have become richer than they have been in the modern era and the continually exploited and impoverished global working class that have generated this wealth, especially those on the peripheries, has seen its movements policed in new and brutal ways.

The practical reality of the economic system is the existence of mandates for highly exploited labor in certain industries within the imperial core that by custom and by design predominantly rely upon immigrant labor. The capitalist economic system necessitates exploitation and borders help to reproduce it. By rendering workers illegal, they are stripped of basic rights, labor protection, and under perpetual threat of violent disruption of their life at the hands of the state. It is the act of criminalization by the state that produces the condition for their highly exploited labor. The creation of exploitability is done through a specifically racialized and racializing process, entwined with the broader policing system.

Additionally, it should be recognized that the state has never been a friend of the working class. Any protections it provides to workers were won through struggle by the workers themselves and mark the line of what states believe they cannot relinquish without sparking revolt. The State in the neoliberal era has not retreated. If anything, it has expanded in its capacity to enforce the divisions of class society and rule over social life. Perhaps the gravest problem here is a lack of solidarity from the working-class institutions, which should in theory stand in solidarity with these undocumented workers. The US labor movement's leadership is prone to nativism and rather than uniting with these workers for mutual emancipation has largely sought to maintain the position of the white worker above them.

The contradiction between the free movement of capital and the restricted movement of labor can serve as a useful jumping off point for tying capitalist production and distribution to the management of populations. However, it is important to note that the contradictions in social relations exemplified by borders go much beyond this. Territorial sovereignty, defined in its ambitions by the border, also stands in contradiction to the existing patterns of human group formation and migration, as well as the world historical forces of political, social, and class struggle (playing a severely limiting role on the possibilities of all three). Borders serve to bring forward the contradictions present in the governing social constructions of nationalism and national identity, race and white supremacy, encoding racialized territories into physical geography. Especially in the case of settler colonies like the US, the creation of these governing constructs is often in direct conflict with the historical composition of those territories. As such, the border serves to trans-historicize and make physical a socially constructed and bounded national identity; a

national identity that can quickly be mobilized in opposition to the continued existence of all those who fall outside of that categorization and territory. Borders serve to harden these artificially constructed social divisions.

Borders exist as physical boundaries, but they have a social function that extends much beyond the policing of the line itself. Border policing is fundamentally interconnected to the functioning of the carceral state as a whole. For an undocumented person, any interaction with the police, or really any agent of, or proxy for, state authority, can portend a violent interruption of one's life with incarceration and deportation. Criminalization, rather than rooted in the acts of an individual, is an active process of governance, manufactured by state institutions, with direct material benefits to the capitalist class by producing a highly exploitable workforce. Borders help shape labor conditions, social realities, but perhaps most importantly for delineating the territorial and social limits of our politics. These limits have particular manifestations for women and queer people where exclusion and the resultant isolation produce vulnerability that can be exploited by abusive bosses and cops.

Further, the limits to our solidarity and social project are poised to be of increasing importance in the near future as ecological devastation⁶ will cause millions of climate refugees, within and across national borders. The social contradictions of capitalism will be heightened in the periods of incoming crisis and will force massive disruptions to political systems and human settlement. The strengthening of borders around regions less likely to bear the brunt of the impact,⁷ protecting the wealth and social position of the capitalist

⁶ I will utilize the framework of social ecology, along with my interpretation of Marx's theory of expanded reproduction in relation to the production of climate change and displacement of population.

⁷ Not a natural phenomenon but a result of that wealth

class, has genocidal implications in the next century. In an era defined by international crises, produced by the global capitalist system, our solutions cannot be limited to the territorial units of capital administration (nation-states) but must formulate alternative conceptions of global governance.

Hersha Walia in *Undoing Border Imperialism*⁸ defines 4 key characteristics of border imperialism as: 1) displacement of people and securitization of movement and borders (itself a contradiction) 2) criminalization of migrants 3) the formation or expansion of racial hierarchies of citizenship, the classification of who is and who is not of the nation-state. 4) State supported capitalist exploitation of migrants (which again stands in contradiction to their criminalization). This is a very useful framing for understanding the multiple overlapping forces and goals that shape border policing and policy such as global capitalism and the nation state.⁹

With this framework situated within a global system it is possible to break down the types of borders, what they do (as an active practice and as a social function in class society), and how they are maintained. Using the examples of the US and Europe, a clear distinction emerges in discourse around what are obsessively very similar questions. In the US the discourse tends to revolve around labor¹⁰ in Europe on refugee status. Both of these frameworks have uses both in terms of political mobilization and in understanding aspects of the crises but they also both have structural limits, in understanding the problem¹¹ and

⁸ Walia, Harsha, and Andrea Smith. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Pg. 5

⁹ An isomorphic structure. Prussian education-reproducing workers and bureaucrats, Infrastructure for capital exploitation (reproducing climate change), Social regulation for maintenance social order (preventing change perpetuating crises exacerbating climate catastrophe), Bureaucracy of taxation, policing, territory for production (climate change), simple monopoly of violence framings ignore its relationship to the Reactionary mob, and Managing +reproducing class society (with its Relationship to NGO's in doing this)

¹⁰ A bizarre inversion in a country usually so distant from talking about the subject

¹¹ I don't mean migrants I mean borders

in formulating proposals for addressing it. I will address these limits as they relate to a politics of solidarity rooted in shared liberation.

The workers of all nations have a shared interest in the abolition of class society and their exploitation by capital. National chauvinism is no recipe for working-class advancement, it marks a fundamental misunderstanding of the workers relationship to the state. Left critiques of nationalism on more general terms can help frame the failures of this analysis. The argument for borders as a protection for exploited groups also has both ecological and feminist variants, which I will critique as well.

The final goal of this project will be to point towards an abolitionist project against borders, centered on working-class self-emancipation and incorporating lessons from black and indigenous liberation, as well as a social-ecological critique of capitalist society. The theoretical basis for this work comes primarily from the broad communist tradition, including the libertarian-communist, Marxist-feminist, and black communist traditions but incorporates a variety of historical examples that may or may not directly relate to these conceptions.

I will be the first to admit this is somewhat of a bizarre project for academia. It does not fit neatly into any of the department here; it covers a wide variety of topics; it has profanity and political theory; it avowedly takes a side. Yet I do honestly believe this to be an honest reflection of my studies, in their breadth and depth, including references and ideas pulled from various classes I've taken, as well as a variety of sources outside them, and run through my own particular analysis. I worked hard on this, I hope the final product reflects that.

Borders as a Dialectic History of Struggle

The State vs. Various

Our species evolved as a nomadic one, following seasonal and ecological patterns for food and shelter. Our collective ancestors eventually spread from Africa virtually across the entire globe, often murdering our genetic cousins and much mega fauna¹² along the way. The first walls we set up were likely for protection (from elements, animals, and other humans) but we also used them early on for hunting animals, guiding them into traps, eventually even capturing and then breeding enclosed animals. However our species earliest settlements were not statist, or architecturally hierarchical, and were unwalled.¹³ In fact it was over 4000 years between the establishment of these first permanent settlements, likely facilitated by climactic changes that pushed more people into settlements along flood plains, and the rise of states.¹⁴ Even after the first states emerged most of human society remained outside of their walls and generally actively sought to do so.¹⁵

In this chapter I will explore the contradictions and struggles between the included and the excluded and the relationships between the mechanisms of capture, exploitation and expulsion, through the lens of these boundaries. Neither the physical boundaries themselves nor the social structures surrounding them were static over time. Responding to and also shaping the social conditions in which they exist, these were contested by social struggles and articulated themselves in evolving ways over time.

¹² Sandom et al. *Global late Quaternary megafauna extinctions linked to humans, not climate change*

¹³ At least no remnant of walls remains in the few sites from that period.

¹⁴ Scott, James *Against the grain: a deep history of the earliest states*. Pg. 7

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 3. Pg. 15 & Chapter 7

Early States vs Barbarians

Capturing subjects

Rousseau's suggestion that "The first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society,"¹⁶ while naïve about the choice those "simple" people may have had in the equation, does bear an important element of truth. Walls, while not intrinsic to human society, were, however, a defining characteristic of early states. The erection of walls around a territory was seen as emblematic of their birth; the ruler has forcibly gathered his population and intends to keep them, and the fall of walls as emblematic of their death; people flee. The symbol carried such weight that tearing down a cities walls was both practically and rhetorically representative of its defeat in battle. The ancient Mesopotamian city-state of Uruk, is one such example. With a population growing from a small village to a functioning city-state with walls, bureaucracy, and tax collection¹⁷ between 4,000 and 3,200 BCE it became the largest city in the world with tens of thousands of people within its borders.¹⁸ It served as a model for the urbanization of other cities in the region.

¹⁶ Rosseau, Jean-Jacques, "Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality among men," in *the First and Second Discourses*, (at the very beginning of the second)

¹⁷ James C. Scott, despite recognizing the arbitrary nature of pinpointing exactly when a society is or is not a state, suggests privileging these when determining the birth of a state as they suggest territoriality, and a specialized state apparatus (Scott, *Against the Grain*, Pg. 118)

¹⁸ Modelski, George. "Ancient World Cities 4000–1000 BC: Centre/Hinterland in the World System." & Tilly, Charles. "Cities, States, and Trust Networks: Chapter 1 of Cities and States in World History."

The city walls were erected between 3,300 and 3,000 BCE, purportedly under the rule of Gilgamesh. In the epic of Gilgamesh reading, his feat in building these walls is celebrated,

He carved the stone stella all of his toils,
and built the walls of Uruk-haven [or Uruk-the-sheepfold],
the wall of the sacred Eanna Temple, the holy sanctuary.
Look at its walls which gleam like copper(?),
inspect its inner wall, the likes of which no one can equal!
Take hold of the threshold stone—it dates from ancient times!
Go close to the Eanna Temple, the residence of Ishtar,
such as no later king or man ever equaled!
Go up to the wall of Uruk and walk around,
Examine its foundation, inspect its brickwork thoroughly.
Is not (even the core of) the brick structure made of kiln-fired brick, and did
not the seven sages lay out the plans?
One league city, one league palm gardens, one league lowlands,
the open area(?) of the Ishtar Temple,
three leagues and the open area (?) of Uruk it (the wall) encloses¹⁹

His building of walls is placed prominently in the prologue, declaring the great virtue of the king and emphasizing their important relationship to his rule. Throughout the poem walls emphasize the strength of the city as well as of those who can knock them down, embodying a god-like power of destruction. Notably, while the king is praised for erecting the walls, and they are clearly seen as delineating the birth of the civic polity, forming the edge of the human pasture, these walls are still rendered holy by the seven sages who laid the foundation and in their relationship to the temple. Over thousands of years later, this bears a striking resemblance to the “god-given” justifications of more modern national projects, including manifest destiny. Despite the rhetoric, early states, as well as their modern descendants,²⁰ were not ordained by god but instead were an unstable

¹⁹ Kovacs, Maureen G. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

²⁰ Many, many generations removed and not in the sense of suggesting any several millennia long lineage of any contemporary nation-state.

construction of humanity, susceptible to disease, invasion and revolt. Then, as today, borders were not impermeable, exchange both of people and of goods continued across them, official and unofficial.

While early cities did influence territory beyond their walls, estimates for Uruk vary between 20-30 kilometers in its periphery,²¹ walls were still a defining element of their sovereignty. For most of human history the majority of people lived outside of sovereign territories²² and even today those that remain outside of state sovereignty do not do so by chance or some personal failing of development but by active and deliberate practice.²³ In the case of the Indian subcontinent stateless people may well have prevented the rise of most potential states for thousands of years considering the few that arose and their lack of durability.²⁴ In fact at many times the state's ability to exercise power was deeply limited by both those outside it or by material conditions, such as in Southeast Asia where monsoon season would largely limit the state's power to the extent of its walls.²⁵ In Uruk and elsewhere walls served to "either contain mobile populations fleeing state control or to defend against those who had been forcibly expelled" as well as to define the limits of territorial control.²⁶ In these early cities, that limit was generally the distance one could walk in a day.

²¹ Ibid. 3, Pg. 120

²² Ibid. 3, Pg. 15

²³ See "Society Against the State" by Pierre Clasteres, "The Art of Not Being Governed" by James C. Scott, or "The Dragon and the Hydra" in "Maroon the implacable" by Russell Maroon Shoatz

²⁴ Bennet Bronson "The Role of barbarians in the fall of states" in *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* edited by Norman Yoffee and George L. Cowgill

²⁵ Ibid. 3, Pg. 15

²⁶ Ibid 3, Pg. 138-139 referencing Anne Porter's "Mobile Pastoralisms and the formation of Near Eastern civilizations: weaving together society"

Eventually, though, walls came to incorporate, organize and delineate larger territories. The building of an earthen wall under the Sumerian King Shulgi (or Sulgi) around 2000 BCE marks one of the first known examples. Shulgi's intention is generally thought to be for the exclusion of Amorite barbarians, but as Anne Porter suggests also served to keep Amorite cultivators (seen as a part of Mesopotamian society and not as outsiders) within his tax base.²⁷ Owen Lattimore similarly explains the Great Wall of China as serving to both prevent invasion as well as facilitate the transformation of the lands and people on the Chinese side of the wall, who had largely also been nomadic, into participants in the dominant mode of production, agricultural cultivation, specifically rice, as subjects of the Chinese state.²⁸²⁹Lattimore also suggests that there may have even been a network of such walls spanning from the Pacific to the Atlantic, excluding barbarians but also shaping an interior of cultivation and urbanization for state based people.³⁰ These boundaries were largely limited by the potential for economic integration as determined by the cost of transportation; "The northern frontier at which an attempt was made to exclude barbarians was also the limit beyond which uniform blocks of cultivated territory with a uniform compliment of cities and administrative services could not be added to the state."³¹ Beyond this point the gathering and transportation of the taxed goods from the population would use more resources than it extracted for the state. Lattimore theorizes the expansion of "civilization" among post-roman Germanic societies into what had previously been the "barbarian" territories of Slavs in central Europe was a result of their ability to utilize rivers

²⁷ Anne porter "Mobile Pastoralisms" pg. 304

²⁸ Owen Lattimore "Origins of the Great wall of china"

²⁹ Owen Lattimore "The Frontier in History" in "Studies in frontier History: collected papers 1928-1958" 496

³⁰ Ibid. 18.

³¹ Ibid. 18, Pg. 497

in building a trade.³² Collectively these various examples help emphasize the dual nature of these walls, exclusion of enemies and integration of subject populations into a unified economic order.

Maintaining populations by force was essential for early states. Population was directly related to their power, in both labor and military capacity. But establishing and maintaining a sizable population faced several challenges, namely a high disease burden associated with population density,³³ as well as a tendency for subjects, and particularly slaves or other unfree laborers, to flee.³⁴ States, despite not inventing slavery, did expand it and in turn fundamentally relied upon it for their own expansion. In so doing they necessitated wars of conquest in which enslaved populations could supplement the losses by disease or escape³⁵, as well as practices such as social isolation (by language or geography) and punishments of runaways in attempt to hold on to as large of an exploitable population as possible. Walls and territoriality are thus intricately connected to the capture of populations. It is of little use to wall off a territory with no one to till the land and work in production. This is a practice that has evolved in different political, historical, and economic circumstances but remains an essential element of state building and governance, delineating the polity and those outside it.

Oriented to production as they were early states were ecological disasters and as modern states, they continue to be. James Scott spends Chapter Three of *Against the Grain* focused on states as concentrators of disease but importantly they were also sites of larger

³² Ibid. 18. Pg. 488

³³ Ibid. 3. Pg. 3

³⁴ Ibid 3. Chapter 5

³⁵ Ibid 3. Pages, 171-173 & 202-203

ecological transformation as demonstrated in collapses potentially associated with resource depletion, environmental transformation, and/or mono-cropping in many early civilizations and ancient empires.³⁶

The pattern and use of borders continued in much the same way at least until the ancient European empires. Gregoire Chaayou, in the opening of *Manhunts a Philosophical History*, suggests based on ancient Greek philosophy that contemporary thinking on the nature of power has under emphasized the point that “the masters power is based on the violent act of capturing their subjects.”³⁷ Of course, this necessitates a division between those who hunt, or at the very least are not to be hunted, and those who can, or even must, be hunted. In ancient Greece, the hunt was justified through a logic of the inherent inferiority of enslaved people. Enslaved people were seen as people intended to be obedient by nature, capable of understanding reason but not exercising it themselves. Those outside the fold, for which the Greeks themselves gave us the word barbarians, were acceptable to hunt. The practice was seen as a natural art of acquisition “that ought to be practiced against wild beasts and, men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit.”³⁸ Thus, those delineated as outside of civilization became fair game for exploitation by it. The hunt served a role, not just in the capture, but also in maintaining structural domination and is exemplified in the Spartan hunts of Helots, their numerically superior enslaved workforce, which served to emphasize their structural and ontological superiority.³⁹ In this period, the policing of boundaries, although also defensive against

³⁶Johnson, Scott A. J. Why Did Ancient Civilizations Fail? & Santley, Robert S., et al. “On the Maya Collapse.” *Journal of Anthropological Research*, vol. 42, no. 2, 1986, pp. 123–159.

³⁷ Chamayou, Grégoire. *Manhunts: a Philosophical History*. Pg. 4

³⁸ *Ibid.* 26, Pg. 5 from Aristotle

³⁹ *Ibid.* 26, Pg. 10

invasion of other empires, was inclusionary rather than exclusionary⁴⁰ in the sense that it was intended towards expansion of subject populations rather than the exclusion of the other.

Medieval States vs Heretics *Expelling threats*

The construction of borders and social boundaries shifted in medieval Christian Europe from ones of inclusion to ones of exclusion. The hunter (of men) was viewed with inherent skepticism, as emblematic of Nimrod, and a pastoral ethic of society was established in which sovereignty was not rhetorically rooted in the territorial acquisition of a subject population, massification of populations for easy exploitation, and rule based on force (i.e. the hunt) but, instead, ordained by god, viewing the subjects as individuals, and beneficent.⁴¹ However, this order was not free of social hierarchies or distinctions and produced its own manhunts. With this shift in the justifications for political authority, so too came a shift in the hunting of people and how these hunts related to borders of inclusion and exclusion. Rather than a policy and practice oriented toward including new subjects, hunts in this period were typified by what Chamayou refers to as “salutary ablation and beneficent exclusion,”⁴² that is hunts of those within the flock that are seen as a danger to the rest of it (i.e. witches, heretics, blasphemers).

⁴⁰ This is not to imply inclusion in the sense of being voluntary, just, or equal.

⁴¹ Ibid. 26, Chapter 2

⁴² Ibid. 26, Pg. 20

These hunts developed from the ancient Greek fear of exclusion from the polity, as seen in Socrates' preference to be a slave of the laws of men rather than a slave to men, and were elaborated into a specific form of punishment. Although banishment was also present as punishment for rebellious slaves in the early city-states, for those whose continued inclusion might pose the risk of future rebellions, it took on increased importance in the new social context. By using the above-mentioned individuation that was originally framed as protection by a beneficent ruler, to enable persecution, the outlaw was created. Outlaws would be cast out of society and subject to murder by anyone without repercussions to the assailant. This helps set the stage for modern exclusionary policies although the form and function will shift. Likewise, the targeting of non-state forms of education, medicine, and religious practice illustrated in the witch hunts helped cement the domination of the state and its market places, a form of primitive accumulation from women's reproductive labor enabling the development of capitalism.⁴³

Eric Hobsbawm saw, in instances such as simply burning in effigy when they do not actually hold the outlaw and relying on vague intermediaries to carry out the punishment, the ultimate weakness of these states and their inability to often to actually practice its domination. Put simply "everyone was entitled to kill the outlaw, because nobody was in the position to apply their law to him."⁴⁴ Not everyone was so lucky though. Agamben on the other hand regarded the outlaw as indicative of the state's power for the "lumpinization of man and humanization of the wolf" in the state of exception emphasizing the state's power over "naked life."⁴⁵ Hobsbawm's analysis seems to potentially better fit the

⁴³ Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*.

⁴⁴ Hobsbawm, E. J. *Bandits*, Pg 14 (referenced in *Manhunts* Pg. 27)

⁴⁵ Agamben, Giorgio, and Joël Gayraud. *Homo Sacer*, Pg. 117 (referenced in *Manhunts* Pg. 26-27)

conditions of medieval rituals of exclusion.⁴⁶ However, in the contemporary formulations of state power, Agamben might bear more relevance, though first important shifts to society during several periods must be elaborated.

In Europe, this period was defined economically by feudalism, which largely served as a decentralization of political authority from the previous empires. The structure itself consisted of a complex network of loyalty and patronage tied together by marriages and alliances with overlapping sovereignty and as such, borders were relatively nebulous. This did not mean that land title did not exist; in fact, the feudal economy was centrally based on ownership of land and control of the peasant and serf populations to work it. But because the relationships of authority, overlapping sovereignty, and political allegiances were so complex, shifting through war or more commonly marriage and trade, borders, as rigid boundaries, were less enforced for working people (although they were still relevant to the movement of armies). However, in the feudal system, where one's livelihood was so directly tied to land and to networks of loyalty, communities were relatively more stable geographically, especially when compared to the modern period.

By the 15th and 16th century cities began to grow, along with pre-capitalist organizations of producers and traders within them. With the rise of cities came the enforcement of anti-poor laws. These laws originally included the denial of entry into cities for those who were, or looked to be, of too low a class standing. However, this practice eventually shifted with the poor laws of Elizabethan England and the founding of the General Hospital in Paris 1656⁴⁷ from one of exclusion to one of capture and detention in

⁴⁶ Although these rituals may help form the basis of the modern and state

⁴⁷ Ibid. 26. Pg. 78

which the poor were to be detained and formed into a working class to be exploited by early capital. The efforts to detain and supposed “reform” poor people, marks a new model, one that bears obvious importance for the future structures of policing and incarceration.

Another category of exclusion in the Feudal era was of non-Christians, particularly Muslims⁴⁸ and Jews.⁴⁹ Early opposition to Islam by Christians leaders was a motivator of the Crusades, with several failed attempts by Christian armies to expel Muslims from the Levant. The catholic Castilian and Aragonese monarchies efforts to expel Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula served as the basis for the intermarriage between Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, eventually forming a united Spanish monarchy under their grandson Charles V.⁵⁰ As Joseph Pérez wrote to introduce *The Spanish Inquisition: A History*. “Between 1478 and 1502 Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon took three complementary decisions. They persuaded the pope to create the inquisition; they expelled the Jews; and they forced Muslims in the kingdom of Castile to convert to Catholicism.”⁵¹ The exclusion formed the basis for the formation of a new national identity that would become the Spain and jump start the colonial era.

Colonial States vs. The Other *Capturing slaves, killing natives and runaways*

Beginning to develop out of feudalism with the establishment and use of joint stock companies to distribute risk, the major states of the European Christian social-order

⁴⁸ Williams, John Bryan. “The Making of a Crusade: the Genoese Anti-Muslim Attacks in Spain, 1146–1148.”

⁴⁹ Voigtlaender, Nico, and Hans-Joachim Voth. “Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany.”

⁵⁰ “Chapter IV & VI.” History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic, Volume 2, by William Hickling Prescott, Nabu Press, 2012, pp. 91–131.

⁵¹ Pérez, Joseph, et al. *The Spanish Inquisition: a History* Pg. 1

conquered most of the inhabited world and transformed it into a global market place, exchanging goods as well as human beings. The Crusades, which continued until the start of this era, with the Emirate of Grenada falling in 1492, had previously served to unify Christendom against, and justify expulsions and invasions of, a religiously defined enemy, Muslims. But a massive expansion of slavery necessitated another transformation in the production of social borders, namely construction of pseudo-scientific formulations of racial identities and their supposed superiorities and inferiorities.

Chattel slavery was generally centered in agricultural production and domestic labor, racializing these sites of labor into the present, but also occasionally included other industries such as manufacturing and mining. This system of exploitation was productive and profitable on a scale not ever seen before. As a result enslaved people through their forced labor produced the surplus value necessary for the rise of racial capitalism.⁵² The process of colonization involved the creation of world empires and networks of trade and exploitation (prefiguring our contemporary world of independent states and global supply lines) but from the outset, it expanded the state form and rearticulated state governance for expansion.

Under colonialism we can see a return to the deliberate and forcible gathering of populations in order to form states. This was made essential for colonial administrators because of the formulation of new cities (i.e. Boston) or the reformulation of older cities without all or most of the original inhabitants (i.e. Mexico City). In Spanish Colonialism, the process can be seen in the form of *reducciones*, where indigenous people were gathered

⁵² Robinson, Cedric J., and Robin D. G. Kelley. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.

around Spanish settlements for dual purposes, conversion and production. Christian missions more broadly often took on much the same form.⁵³

What is new, however, is the war of extermination waged against indigenous people. While warfare had long existed, it generally served dual purposes, to defeat the enemy but also to bolster one's own reserves of population and resources. While early on there were efforts to exploit indigenous labor, it was quickly supplanted by slaves captured and trafficked from Africa. The colonial states' relations with indigenous peoples turned genocidal, with a death toll of 95-144 million people across the continents from murder, disease, displacement, and exploitation.⁵⁴ The murder of indigenous people extended throughout the Americas. For example, Sao Paulo's economy was for many years largely dependent upon hunting indigenous people.⁵⁵

Indigenous people were rendered permanently outside of civilization; their slaughter justified by their perceived savagery. While there were efforts to convert indigenous populations to Christianity and to the norms of western civilization, these too took on an exterminatory element. This is perhaps most clearly expressed in the saying "kill the Indian and save the man,"⁵⁶ the idea being that indigeneity was a sub-human category and rescuing the soul of the person relied on stripping them of their cultures, histories, and language. A part of these efforts at erasure was the boarding school system, present in the US and Canada,⁵⁷ which separated indigenous children from their families and societies in order to educate and indoctrinate them in western norms. These schools

⁵³ Ibid 3. Pg. 151

⁵⁴ Stannard, David E. American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 26. Pg. 30

⁵⁶ From Richard Henry Pratt founder and superintendent of Carlisle Indian Industrial School

⁵⁷ Churchill, Ward. Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools.

were notoriously brutal, physically punishing children for minor infractions, particularly those perceived to be related to their indigenous backgrounds.

Borders, edges of territorial claims of empires delineating the edge of current settlement speculations rather than seen as a permanent maximum extent, were not walled in this period. The conflicts between empires for territorial expansion occasionally allowed indigenous people to play them off of one another in order to maintain their own autonomy from the state. Nonetheless, they were also sites of violence, continually permeated by settlers thirsty for “new” land,⁵⁸ and served as lines of exclusion over which remaining indigenous people in the colonized territories would be forced to relocate to.⁵⁹ The frontier was a territory of struggle and indigenous people frequently resisted their colonization, winning territorial treaties through battle, but these were continually violated. Ultimately while the people were not completely eliminated, the entirety of the Americas came to be under the claim (if not actual governance) of settler states, first as European colonies then later as independent nation-states.

Before moving on to the question of slavery, it is worth pausing on the relationship between the nation state and colonialism. There could not have been French colonialism before turning the Gauls, Britons, Parisians, etc. into the French.⁶⁰ There could not have been the Spanish conquest of the Americas without the forcible removal of the Muslim rule from the Iberian Peninsula, and it should be seen as no coincidence that Columbus set sail the same year as the fall of Granada.⁶¹ Much has been written about the English

⁵⁸ In fact, this was a point of tension between the colonists and Britain as the British sought to prevent the reigniting tensions with French Settlers and indigenous people after the so called French and Indian War

⁵⁹ See Indian Removal Act 1830 for one such example.

⁶⁰ Bell, D. A. *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800*.

⁶¹ Reston, James. *Dogs of God: Columbus, the Inquisition, and the Defeat of the Moors*.

incorporation of lessons from their imperialist ventures within the British Isles, the name itself even carrying imperial connotations, into their broader colonial projects, including in the early stages of racialization.⁶² Fascism in Germany and the expansionist project of Nazi Germany explicitly saw itself as the third iteration of the German empire, which was originally cobbled together out of many, often feuding, feudal dominions.⁶³ Notably the concept of territorial sovereignty vested to the state under international law can be traced to the treaty of Westphalia, and scholars such as Beatrice de Graaf trace this moment to the facilitation of economic rather than political empires, for example the Dutch and British East India companies.⁶⁴ The Westphalian model marked an improvement in terms of facilitating expansive capacity from early Spanish attempts at colonialism in what is now referred to as Latin America and portended the advancement of the first stages of global capitalism, now the entrenched and hegemonic system.

The nation state form, a necessary precondition for modern colonial and economic expansion, now dominates the globe. Former colonies, now at least on paper and in popular representation, operating as independent territorial sovereigns of their own, have adopted the political and economic structures of their former colonizers. In inheriting this system, they also inherited its motivations, functions, and drivers, namely the facilitation of capitalist development, exploitation, and control of population, although they do not all practice these the same way, filling different roles in the global capitalist system.

⁶² For Example Canney, Nicholas P. "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America." Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development or Morgan, Jennifer L. "1. "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder": Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology."

⁶³ Nazis also cited US segregation racial codes and indigenous genocide as justifications for their racial policies see Scales-Trent, Judy. "Racial Purity Laws in the United States and Nazi Germany: The Targeting Process." Or Ezzell, Bill. "Laws of Racial Identification and Racial Purity in Nazi Germany and the United States: Did Jim Crow Write the Laws That Spawned the Holocaust."

⁶⁴ "The Peace of Westphalia Also Had Its Dark Side." WWU Munster

Hunts for labor also returned in the colonial period, originally practiced on the indigenous people of the Americas but soon transferred to the large-scale capture and transportation of enslaved Africans. The transatlantic slave trade brought forcible relocation of people to an astronomically larger scale than it had ever previously been practiced, with slaves serving in an inherently dehumanizing role as an essential commodity in the formation of a truly global marketplace. Intra-African rivalries and hierarchies were played off each other to expand the production of human capital. Existing practices of population capture used in times of war and by states against peripheral people for African slavery (as in slavery on the continent of Africa) were massively expanded to meet the new European demand. Quickly, this expansion included among the captured those in African society the existing trade otherwise would not have. This reality can clearly be seen in Nzinga Mbemba's⁶⁵ letter to João III of Portugal reading,

“Each day the traders are kidnapping our people – children of this country, sons of our nobles and vassals, even people of our own family...this corruption and depravity are so widespread that our land is entirely depopulated...we need in this kingdom only priests and school teachers and no merchandise unless it is wine and flour for mass...it is our wish that this kingdom not be a place for trade or transport of slaves”⁶⁶

His pleas were of course ignored, and the slave trade continued to expand, but they remain a testament to the trade's destructive role on African societies. Importantly, recognizing the slave trade as part of a global network,⁶⁷ he points to European goods as destabilizing his own power by his people being able to “procure, in much greater quantity than we can, the things we formerly used to keep them obedient to us and content.”⁶⁸ While existing

⁶⁵ Also known as Afonso I of Kongo, he sought to convert the Congo to Catholicism and was given the position of Archbishop of Utica (northern Africa) but even that did not halt the slave trade.

⁶⁶ Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: a Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Pg. 13

⁶⁷ Including a less frequently discussed trade of African slaves around the Arab world and the Indian ocean as well.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 55. Pg. 14

practices may have been exploited to birth the trans-Atlantic slave trade, these were quickly subverted by an insatiable demand for labor on plantations in the Americas.

Those plantations and the societies built around them relied on a strict racialized hierarchy that placed white people at the top and black at the bottom, with a varying degree of intermediary positions depending on the society with different degrees of freedom. Freedom in such a society, based so directly on domination, is dependent upon one's own ability to exercise domination on others. Slavery relied not only on the dehumanization of black people, to the point that it was perfectly legal for a master to kill their slaves, but also on the invention of the white race, which as Theodore Allen notably points out did not exist when the first slaves arrived in Virginia.⁶⁹ In order to establish this identity working class whites were granted a variety of privileges, although nothing resembling class liberation, and used to police the enslaved black working class.

This policing relied on massive violence but also on an intricate series of social divisions in space, delineating who could pass through, or exist, where and when, and upon whose permission. The segregated black communities from the time of slavery continue to be among the poorest and most criminalized in both the United States⁷⁰ and Brazil.⁷¹ Slaves who sought to free themselves from this bondage, by revolt or escape, were brutally punished. Throughout the United States, fugitive slave laws⁷² ensured the continuation of the apparatus of capture even into territories that barred slavery within them. The contradiction becomes less surprising considering northern industry and trade relied on

⁶⁹ Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race* Vol. II Pg. X

⁷⁰ Ballesteros, Carlos. "U.N. Officials Touring Rural Alabama Are Shocked at the Level of Poverty and Environmental Degradation."

⁷¹ "Brazil: Police Killings of Black Youths Continue, 25 Years after the Candelária Massacre." Amnesty International

⁷² See Fugative Slave Act of 1850

cotton picked by slaves and therefore the entire economic system of the United States was dependent upon the production and profits of slavery.⁷³ Slaves who escaped, but particularly slaves who violated borders of whiteness by engaging with white women,⁷⁴ were hunted, often with the spectacular ceremonies associated with royal hunts in Europe.⁷⁵ If caught, their mutilated bodies, often publicly hung or mounted on spikes, served as a warning to any others who might seek to follow their lead. These hunts often relied on intermediaries, occasionally other men of color themselves,⁷⁶ but often white working-class people. Thus, hunts for slaves served several purposes: terrorism of the enslaved population and the facilitation of disunity within it, as well as uniting the white population and its proxies in a cross-class formation around the domination of the enslaved.

The justification for this brutality relied on the formulation of hierarchical racial categories in humanity. Blackness, different from the construction of the indigenous, was not seen as permanently outside of white civilization but rather needing to be controlled and bettered by it. The necessity of this relationship was, therefore, self-justified by its continuation which demonstrated this pseudo-scientific racial classification in social reality. However, slaves did not accept this reality and frequently rebelled against their exploitation and bondage.

⁷³ Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*.

⁷⁴ This constructed danger of men of color to white women and by proxy all of white domination is continuing feature of reactionary psychology if less immanently murderous, as evident by the popularity of the word “cuck” as a political epithet on the right, tied as it is to conceptions of “white genocide” rooted in a fascist interpretation of interracial relationships.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 26. Pg. 5

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 26. Pg. 64-65

Slaves resisted these conditions in acts of rebellion large and small, from the people who threw themselves over the edge of boats to their deaths so as not to be subjugated to bondage while living, to the maroon communities in peripheral regions across the continents,⁷⁷ which served as places of refuge, but also as sites of autonomous self-governance outside of the state, and places from which to launch attacks (some of which still remain as largely autonomous communities to this day).⁷⁸ Russell Maroon Shoatz reads CLR James' "Black Jacobins"⁷⁹ and the history of Suriname to point to nonhierarchical structures as being more effective at maintaining autonomy and not aligning with the state against other maroon communities.⁸⁰ These acts of resistance culminated in several beautiful moments of self-emancipation, such as in the Haitian revolution,⁸¹ and then in the US general strike of the slaves and the brief period of reconstruction after the civil war.⁸² However, in both cases, a lack of solidarity by the broader working class, and active white reaction isolated these experiments and plunged the populations back into differently articulated but still deeply exploitative conditions.⁸³ And the problem of the Color line remained to define the twentieth century,⁸⁴ rearticulated after the end of slavery in black codes and political segregation and maintained in economic segregation (supported by the state via redlining).⁸⁵

⁷⁷ US, Jamaica, Suriname Haiti, Brazil, etc.

⁷⁸ "Dragon or the Hydra" Russell Maroon Shoatz

⁷⁹ Black Jacobins

⁸⁰ Shoatz, Russell. "The Dragon and the Hydra: A Historical Study of Organizational Methods" in *Maroon the Implacable: the Collected Writings of Russell Maroon Shoatz* Pg. 101-131

⁸¹ James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins*.

⁸² Dubois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction*.

⁸³ Oshinsky, David M. "Worse than Slavery": Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice.

⁸⁴ Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*

⁸⁵ Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law*

The State vs. the Racialized Working Class *Policing unruly populations*

The two practices, indigenous slaughter and capture of slaves, formed the backbone in terms of practice and structure for modern policing. The US state had long organized or approved militias to hunt runaway slaves and indigenous people but the first institution resembling a modern police department was established in Charleston, South Carolina, and was explicitly tasked with regulating the large urban enslaved population.⁸⁶ In following years, police forces, many of them private, although granted tacit approval by state authorities, were established in northern states to control labor unrest.⁸⁷ In Europe, policing has similar origins to the latter, growing out of the task forces designated to capture vagabonds (and training them to be wage laborers, helping facilitate the rise of capitalism),⁸⁸ and first established in a form we would recognize today in London to disrupt strikes and other manifestations of working class rebellion.⁸⁹

Policing, beyond simply beating back the gains of working class and oppressed people, served two social functions in capitalist society. Like the slave patrols and indigenous hunts, it allowed working class white men to assert their political agency and position in society by facilitating the oppression of working-class people of color and on the other end producing vulnerable workers ripe for capitalist exploitation. It serves dual social roles in wedding a subsection of the working-class to the state and the bosses, using these class traitors to enforce class rule on the rest of the class.

⁸⁶ Williams, Kristian. *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America*. Chapter 2

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 75. Chapter 5

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 26 Chapter 7

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 75 Chapter 2

The criminalization of Black people and People of Color facilitates exploitation by maintaining a permanent racialized underclass, to fill the most menial and undesirable labor. However, in the neoliberal era, much of this has shifted to direct extraction through things like fines and civil assets forfeiture and warehousing of surplus populations rendered expendable by the movement of capital. This warehousing, while including highly exploited labor that functionally amounts to, and legally is allowed to be, slavery under the 13th amendment,⁹⁰ is generally unproductive. However, state contracts and exploiting prisoners do generate profits for some sectors of capital and the institution serves as a means of social control as the state has shifted its mandate from social welfare to policing under neoliberalism.

The State vs The Immigrant *Policing the border*

By 1924, the Border patrol had formalized as its own police force in the United States. Border Patrol can be seen as part of a broader extension of federal policing,⁹¹ largely oriented towards waging counter revolutionary class war. Among the first categories of excluded people were racialized workers, particularly Chinese, sex workers, people with certain disabilities, and anarchists,⁹² but soon the priorities of border patrol in the US quickly oriented primarily to the southern border and the criminalization of immigrant

⁹⁰ Raza, A. E. "Legacies of the Racialization of Incarceration: From Convict-Lease to the Prison Industrial Complex."

⁹¹ Hernandez, Kelly Lytle. *Migra! a History of the U.S. Border Patrol*. Pg. 17

⁹² See Chinese Exclusion Act 1882, Immigration Act of 1903, and Immigration Act of 1918

workers, predominantly from Mexico.⁹³ This was done in collaboration with the Mexican state.⁹⁴

In the case of border patrol, Mexican and other immigrant workers are made exploitable by their state-imposed illegality. The capitalist class, particularly US agribusiness, actively pushed for measures that would ensure their access to workers would be uninterrupted while continuing the criminalization of those same workers to help facilitate their exploitation.⁹⁵ Here, the formulation incorporates elements from structures of both indigenous exclusion and black exploitation, using exclusion from state protections won by class struggle to facilitate the exploitation of capital, while also serving as a useful tool of social control. I will discuss this more in the following chapters.

Throughout much of the twentieth century, another border took a more defining role in global geopolitics than the southern border of the United States: the Iron Curtain or the dividing line between market capitalist Europe and State capitalist Europe.⁹⁶ In this period, refugees from the latter were accepted fairly openly by the former (as is also true for refugees from state capitalist satellites, such as Vietnam and Cuba to the U.S.) due to the propaganda victory they served for the market states by painting their rival states as inferior, even about to collapse.⁹⁷ However, with the fall of the Iron Curtain and eventually the USSR, and with the remaining state socialist regimes either structurally isolated (as has largely been the case with North Korea and Cuba), or integrated into the global capitalist economy as cheap work houses for the production of western goods (as is the case with

⁹³ Ibid. 80

⁹⁴ Ibid. 80, Pg. 90 & 142

⁹⁵ Ibid. 80 Chapter 2

⁹⁶ James, C. L. R., et al. *State Capitalism and World Revolution*

⁹⁷ Geddes, Andrew, and Peter Scholten. *The Politics of Migration & Immigration in Europe*.

China and Vietnam), this propaganda victory in accepting refugees has vanished, as has the political bifurcation of the world.

This is a world no longer shaped by an existential battle for political and economic hegemony between two global systems, with far more in common than generally acknowledged by partisans of either, but is instead a world of global economic integration with many cores to be defended from many peripheries. We have since seen the border move from the center of Europe to its periphery now demarcating a white supra-state to be defended from black and brown migrants from the Middle East and Africa. We have also seen the rise of border policing in countries on the inner periphery, such as Mexico, Turkey, and Morocco, supported by the interests of the imperial core and primarily oriented toward defending its borders, as well as the walling off of regions such as Iraq and Syria that have become the bleeding ground of empires and their battles over natural resources and the hardening of borders drawn by European colonialism.⁹⁸

These borders are enforced not only with manpower but with new technologies of surveillance, proving themselves a testing ground for such technology. In this world of high-tech monitoring, of identity and data collecting, the policing of exclusion might have more relation to Agamben's discussion of the outlaw discussed above. The border offers a state of exception, advancing a regulation of identity and body, through increasingly developed systems of classification. All movements are monitored and all citizens lumanized, the unregistered border crosser asserts, in a sense, a similar humanity to that shown in the outlaw.

⁹⁸ I.e. Africa, Latin America, Middle East.

In the present moment, the function of borders and their expansion serves as the hardening of the capitalist state, at a time when human population seems inevitably poised for mass spatial disruptions and resettlement, due to another environmental crises rooted in state facilitated economic production, this time on a global scale. But, more on that later.

A History Relevant to the US-Mexico border *Establishment and Hardening of a Boundary*

The US-Mexico border has not always been a fixture of the landscape. In fact, it divides the homelands of several indigenous nations including the Tohono O’doham nation.¹ Rather, it was established through colonial expansion and inter-imperial negotiations and treaties in a history of violent dispossession and territorial conquest. Even since its demarcation along its current position, the southern US border has also not always resembled what it does today, a militarized region and zone of exclusion tied into a broader system of policing and exploitation. It was once much more open than today, largely permitting free, or mostly unrestricted, movement across it. So how did it become the point of national fixation, the site of massive violence, the technological testing ground, the funnel of policing revenues, that it is today? This chapter will attempt to provide a sketch of this history, connecting to the contradictions discussed in the previous chapter to allow for a development of a critique in the following chapter. Among the themes discussed in this chapter are settler colonialism, white supremacy, nativism, labor struggles, and state power. The functioning of the border and its enforcement intersects with is shaped by and helps shape each of these social forces.

¹ Luna-Firebaugh, Eileen M. “The Border Crossed Us: Border Crossing Issues of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.”

Drawing the Line *The Border as a Creation of Colonialism*

The formation and expansion of the US border came through and helped shape the practice of imperial conquest and indigenous genocide. This conquest has been organized from the top down but also propelled from the “bottom”² up. The first real borders set up around colonial institutions that eventually became the United States were those immediately around settlements, used to defend the colonizers against the resistance of indigenous people. These defenses proved essential for colonization, offering enough protection to establish long standing settler populations, and many cities today stand on and around sites of colonial fortresses including Fort Worth, Richmond, Detroit, Louisville, Des Moines, and many other cities both large and small.

The first attempt by the British colonial power to establish a border, in the sense of a long territorial boundary, was established by the British King George III along the Appalachian Mountains in the Royal Proclamation of 1763.³ This was neither intended to be a permanent or an uncrossable boundary, but simply a line demarcating the current legal extent of colonial settlement, functioning as a measure to temporarily appease indigenous people, while providing a legalistic mechanism for future expansion. In this sense it was to be similar to the borders of ancient states, defining the excluded as well as an integrated economic territory. But, its establishment annulled land grants given to settlers and, as counter revolutionary Edmond Burke was quick to point out, “If you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without

² More honestly from middle sections that use the oppression of those below them to attempt to advance their own standing.

³ Clinton, Robert N. "The Proclamation of 1763: Colonial Prelude to Two Centuries of Federal-State Conflict over the Management of Indian Affairs."

grants. They have already so occupied in many places”⁴ foreshadowing the threat of insurrection by these settlers.

While the actual impact of the Proclamation on the upcoming war for secession (it was hardly a revolution in that social relations on the ground were not overturned but were preserved, with the ruling class in the colonies remaining the ruling class post-independence) has been debated, it did anger land speculators and would-be settlers. As Burke suggested, they did continue to settle west of the boundary.⁵ Their settlement was, in part, legalized with the expansions of the boundary by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, the Treaty of Hard Labor in 1768, and the Treaty of Lochaber in 1770,⁶ demonstrating a willingness of colonial forces to utilize extra-legal means to advance the larger colonial project.

After the colonial ruling class achieved its independence, the lands between the French and Spanish colonial territories, with the exception of British Canada, were given over to the new United States government (extending from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River north of Florida). This government was, at first, largely decentralized with the national government relatively weak, largely tasked with international affairs, and much of the actual governing left to the individual states.

The national government, however, quickly began consolidating its power after recognizing the inability to effectively repress Shay’s Rebellion from 1786 to 1787. Shay’s Rebellion was a revolt of farmers, including many veterans of the war for secession, in rural

⁴ Burke, Edmund. “The Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq; on Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775.”

⁵ Holton, Woody. “The Ohio Indians and the Coming of the American Revolution in Virginia.” Pg. 454

⁶ Donis, Jay. “Imagining and Reimagining Kentucky: Turning Frontier and Borderland Concepts into a Frontier-Borderland.”

Massachusetts over an exploitative tax structure and evictions by debt collectors, involving direct action against debtors' courts.⁷ The Massachusetts State Militia and private forces were used to crush the rebellion because the federal government was unable to raise the funds to do so.⁸ The failure of the central state and the struggle of local authorities in its absence provided legitimate cause for fear of rebellions overcoming these authorities among the planter and merchant classes.

This fear was successfully used by Federalists⁹ to argue that the Articles of the Confederacy were inadequate, contributing to the constitutional Convention of 1787 which formed the new and still current constitution of the United States. This constitution granted the federal government more authority, particularly in military affairs and these new powers were soon put to the test when George Washington crushed the Whiskey Rebellion in 1791, which was another tax rebellion mostly in western Pennsylvania against a tax on distilled spirits.¹⁰ With this newly centralized government of the planter and merchant class came the need for a coherent national policy regarding expansion into indigenous lands, necessitated by the quest for new sources of profits and the need to open new lands for settlement and as to serve as a damper on class struggle.

Soon after independence, the US state began expanding. The first major expansion was the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. This purchase was facilitated by a French retreat from the continent after their defeat in the Haitian revolution,¹¹ the first large scale successful slave revolt in the Americas, starting in 1791 and eventually resulting in the emancipation

⁷ Szatmary, David P. *Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection.*

⁸ Cain, Michael J. G., and Keith L. Dougherty. "Suppressing Shays' Rebellion."

⁹ Newman, Simon. "The World Turned Upside Down: Revolutionary Politics, Fries' and Gabriel's Rebellions, and the Fears of the Federalists."

¹⁰ Kohn, Richard H. "The Washington Administration's Decision to Crush the Whiskey Rebellion."

¹¹ DuBois, Laurent. "The Haitian Revolution and the Sale of Louisiana."

of the enslaved people and the first Black Republic in 1804.¹² The purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States but left certain boundaries ambiguous, particularly its western edge, which had not been defined in the previous treaties exchanging the same territory between France and Spain (the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762 and the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1801) as well as the south-eastern boundary with the then Spanish held Florida.¹³ These new territories had a sizable number of enslaved people, up to half of the non-indigenous population,¹⁴ and served as a refuge for French slave owners and other white people after the revolution in Haiti.¹⁵ These new slaveholding territories encoded slavery into their law and with statehood added to the slave holding block in US government. As the territories were increasingly settled, resulting in colonial violence against the indigenous populations (a process which only accelerated after the Civil War and westward expansion), the question of whether or not they would have slavery was hotly contested in the US government and on the ground. The question even resulted in battles between those who sought to establish free and slave states. These battles in Kansas were where John Brown got his start in militant abolitionism.¹⁶

The Northern Boundary of this territory was established along what remains the current boundary (the 49th parallel) by the Anglo-American Convention of 1818 which exchanged US held territory north of the line for British held territory south of it.¹⁷ The southern boundary with Spanish colonial territory was clarified somewhat by the Adams-

¹² With independence declared December 31st 1803 James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins*. Pg. 370

¹³ Stenberg, Richard R. "The Boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase."

¹⁴ Final report of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission.

¹⁵ Bell, Caryn Cossé. "'Haitian Immigration to Louisiana in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.'

¹⁶ Brown, John. *Life and Letters of John Brown, Liberator of Kansas and Martyr of Virginia*.

¹⁷ Paullin, Charles O. "The Early Choice of the Forty-Ninth Parallel as a Boundary Line."

Onís Treaty of 1819, which also ceded Florida to the United States.¹⁸ When Mexico achieved its independence from Spain later that year, the boundary between the now independent nation-states remained the same, as recognized by the Treaty of Limits between the US and Mexico, which was signed in 1828 and binding in 1832,¹⁹ although, this would soon break apart.

With Florida now under US control, a push for settlement followed. Florida had previously been somewhat of a refuge and site of relative autonomy for indigenous peoples of various nations, particularly the Muscogee people.²⁰ It was also a refuge for people who escaped slavery and had their freedom acknowledged by the Spanish state, some of whom had joined and integrated into Seminole society, becoming known as Black Seminoles.²¹ The US soon began to ethnically cleanse the “Five Civilized tribes”²² Cherokee, Muskogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Ponca, along with the Black Seminoles and Black people enslaved by the other nations,²³ to what was then called “Indian Territory” in present day Oklahoma.²⁴ This ethnic cleansing is commonly referred to as the trail of tears, a fitting name as the forced emigrations were deadly killing thousands, through disease and counter insurgency. About Half of the Cherokee, Muskogee, and Seminoles who were forced to march died along the journey, along with around 15% of the Chickasaws and Choctaws.²⁵

¹⁸ Castillo, Richard Griswold del. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: a Legacy of Conflict*. Pg. 8

¹⁹ See “Document Regarding the Treaty of Limits”

²⁰ Frank, Andrew K. “Taking the State Out: Seminoles and Creeks in Late Eighteenth-Century Florida.”

²¹ Amos, Alcione M., and Kenneth W. Porter. *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People*.

²² The name racist of course, called that because they practiced systems of government and economics the colonists found to resemble their own enough to be civilized.

²³ Doran, Michael F. “Negro Slaves Of The Five Civilized Tribes.”

²⁴ Debo, Angie. *And Still the Waters Run: the Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes*.

²⁵ Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Pg. 113

The colonial settlement in and forced relocation of indigenous people from the newly acquired lands included three wars: The First Seminole War, was an invasion by Andrew Jackson in 1818. The Second Seminole war, from 1835 to 1842 came after the Treaty of Payne Landing in 1834, which called for the removal of indigenous people from Florida and their westward relocation and was rejected by the remaining indigenous people of Florida, mostly Seminoles. Some managed to hold on in the reservation in central Florida but most were expelled. The third Seminole War came in response to raids by settlers on those who remained and resulted in the removal of most of the remaining Seminoles from Florida, with only a few hundred people remaining in Big Cypress Swamp.²⁶

The case of ethnic cleansing from Florida was only one such example of targeted warfare against indigenous communities in newly acquired lands. Another example of this violent dispossession following expansion is what is typically referred to as the “Indian wars,” for what is now the western United States. A series of violent military campaigns by state and volunteer militias, they included numerous massacres of indigenous people such as the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 of hundreds Cheyenne and Arapaho people, a majority of whom were women and children,²⁷ and the Marias Massacre in 1870 of hundreds of Piegan Blackfeet, many of whom were already dying of small pox.²⁸

But again, even this expanded boundary did not last very long, as thirteen years later, in 1845, the US annexed Texas. Negotiated by President Tyler, the annexation was an

²⁶ Missal, John. Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict.

²⁷ Fowler, Loretta. “Arapaho and Cheyenne Perspectives: From the 1851 Treaty to the Sand Creek Massacre.”

²⁸ “The Marias River Massacre, January 23, 1870.” Oh What a Slaughter: Massacres in the American West, 1846-1890, by Larry McMurtry,

effort to ensure slavery was continued in the territory, seeing the end of slavery in México, and the push by English abolitionists for the same in Texas, as a threat to continued exploitation of enslaved Black labor in the United States.²⁹ Texas, which at least in part fought for independence from Mexico to maintain slavery³⁰ was seen as an opportunity to expand the power of slave states. Tyler, who himself was a slave owner, continued the push for annexation until his last day in office, but the decision was ultimately ratified by Texas and signed into law under President Polk, who was a strong supporter of annexation, having run on a platform of Manifest Destiny.³¹ Notably, México had already abolished slavery and so many enslaved Black people viewed the other side of the Mexican border as freedom³² and by 1951 thousands of people escaped slavery by fleeing to México.³³

The southern and western boundaries of this new territory were immediately disputed, with the US continuing the claim of the briefly independent Texas that the territory extended to the Rio Grande, and Mexico claiming that the boundary was the Nueces River, based on differing interpretations of the Treaties of Velasco in 1836.³⁴ In 1845, Polk sent Zachary Taylor to amass forces in the disputed territory and later sent an offer to purchase all of the land up to the Rio Grande, including most of what is now California, Arizona, and New Mexico for \$25 million.³⁵ Mexico, at the time, was dealing with great political instability and leaders such as including multiple forcible changes in

²⁹ Roeckell, Lelia M. "Bonds over Bondage: British Opposition to the Annexation of Texas."

³⁰ Lack, Paul D. "Slavery and the Texas Revolution."

³¹ Rathbun, Lyon. "The Debate over Annexing Texas and the Emergence of Manifest Destiny."

³² Kelley, S. "'Mexico in His Head': Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860." *Journal of Social History*

³³ Tyler, Ronnie C. "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico." *The Journal of Negro History*,

³⁴ *Ibid.* 18. Pg. 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 18. Pg. 13.

government³⁶ and rejecting the American expansion became a point of national pride. War quickly became inevitable.

The Mexican-American war was a decisive victory for the United States, taking most of the disputed territory in only a few months and eventually seizing Mexico City in September 1847.³⁷ The result of the war was a massive expansion of US held territory, far greater than the original disputed area. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in addition to establishing the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas, also gave the US the territory of the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, the majority of Arizona, and parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. The territorial losses for Mexico amounted to about half of its territory before the war.

Almost immediately after the war and before the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was even signed, gold was found in Coloma, California, igniting the California Gold Rush, which brought hundreds of thousands of settlers to the territory. The Indigenous population in California had already dropped by about half under Spanish rule, but under this new wave of colonization, they were almost wiped out, dropping to as low as 30,000 people in 1870 from 150,000 prior to 1848.³⁸ This was the result of active dispossession of indigenous lands by the state of California, militias established to kill indigenous people, and disease, which collectively demonstrate the potentially exterminatory relationship of top down and “bottom-up” white supremacy.

During this same period, the northern boundary of what is now the extent of the contiguous United States was also established, with only a few discrepancies to be worked

³⁶ Ibid. 18. Pg. 7.

³⁷ Ibid. 18. Pg. 28.

³⁸ Ibid. 25 pg. 129

out later.³⁹ The border was clarified through the resolution of a boundary dispute between the US and Britain in which Britain claimed lands north of the Columbia river (the current boundary between the states of Oregon and Washington), whereas US expansionists, namely in the Democratic Party of which the sitting President, Polk, was a member, urged the taking of all lands in the area up to the 54-40th parallel,⁴⁰ (the furthest southern extent of the then extant Russian presence in the Americas), although he himself always supported the compromise on the 49th parallel. With the threat of both northern and southern border wars looming, the US and Britain agreed to a compromise along the 49th parallel (excluding the southern tip of Vancouver Island which would remain in British control).⁴¹

The southern border, however, had one remaining piece of expansion before it reached its current boundaries. With the goal of being able to build a transcontinental railroad along the southern United States and avoiding difficult mountain terrain, and ultimately expanding the reach of the US,⁴² as well as that of slavery, in the west, Ambassador James Gadsden (an arch supporter of slavery, seeing slavery as a blessing and abolitionists as a curse)⁴³ negotiated a treaty known as the Gadsden Purchase (1854) for the purchase of lands in what is now southern Arizona and New Mexico (including the current city of Tucson). In exchange for the territory México was given \$10 million and an agreement to prevent Comanche and Apache raids across the border.⁴⁴ The agreement has

³⁹ Such as control over the San Juan Islands.

⁴⁰ Schuyler, R. L. "Polk and the Oregon Compromise of 1846."

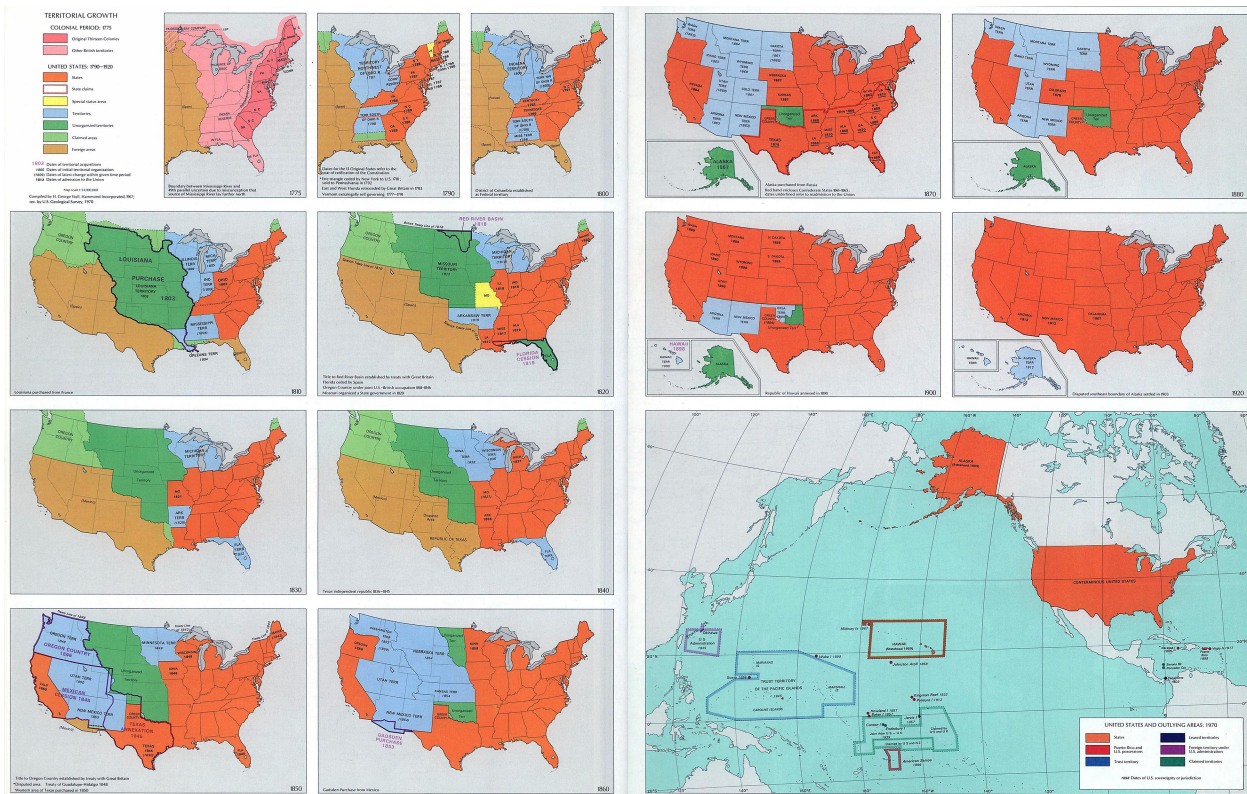
⁴¹ Anderson, Stuart. "British Threats and the Settlement of the Oregon Boundary Dispute."

⁴² Schmidt, Louis Bernard. "Manifest Opportunity and the Gadsden Purchase."

⁴³ Richards, Leonard L. The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War.

⁴⁴ Park, Joseph F. "The Apaches in Mexican-American Relations, 1848-1861: A Footnote to the Gadsden Treaty."

several important points to reflect on. The mutual agreement between the two states to enforce the border, a process which will generally continue in unfolding forms until the present, demonstrates a collaborative process rather than an antagonistic relationship between the two states in terms of border enforcement. The explicit targeting of indigenous people in the enforcement of this boundary to defend the interests of settler states marks a continuation of the anti-indigenous violence discussed above into border enforcement. Now, like the northern border, the southern US border reached its contemporary territorial extent with only a few minor remaining discrepancies (such as the Chamizal Dispute).⁴⁵



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⁴⁵ Hill, James E. "El Chamizal: A Century-Old Boundary Dispute."

⁴⁶ A map of US territorial expansion, including all those discussed above. Description reads: Compiled by George Stool. Hammond Incorporated 1967; rec. by U.S. Geographical Survey, 1970

Hardening a Boundary *Making a border a border*

Looking at the US-Mexico border today and the technology and manpower that surrounds and enforces it, it might be easy to assume that it always resembled the militarized zone of exclusion it does today, but it is important not to trans-historicize the contemporary moment of rigid border policing. For the most part, throughout the 19th century the boundary existed (if it existed at all besides on maps) more for regulating trade between the capitalist states than the movement of people. In fact, between 1895 and 1904 only 3,000 crossings of Mexican were registered.⁴⁷ This should not be taken to mean that the border was seldom crossed, much the opposite, rather it implies that these crossings were seldom enforced, or even seen as important enough to register. Cross border communities, such as El Paso-Juarez, remained largely as single communities, with economies and social ties integrated across the boundary, although the specific functions were often mediated by the side of the border.⁴⁸

However, this relatively open border would not last forever and soon began to harden.⁴⁹ As in the current moment where the expansion of border policing has responded to and helped shape crises in global capitalism, the border soon began to be used to restrict the movement of certain people, corresponding to broader social control policies under the US state and capitalism. The expansion of border policing can be seen as largely occurring in three periods of hardening, the first being from the 1880s to the 1920s being perhaps

⁴⁷ Moloney, Deirdre M. *National Insecurities: Immigrants and U.S. Deportation Policy since 1882*. Pg. 6

⁴⁸ Fischer, Robert. "Mobility and Morality at the Border — A Lefebvrian Spatio-Temporal Analysis in Early Twentieth-Century Ciudad Juárez and El Paso."

⁴⁹ Hardening is a common way to refer to the tightening of borders, i.e. increasing restrictions, surveillance, barriers, guards, etc. It can be expanded also to the hardening of social divisions between included and excluded, exploited and exploiter, etc.

the most explicit and open in the its targets and intentions, the 1940s through the 1950s, with expanded capacity from the war machine, and the most recent starting in the mid 1990s and continuing largely uninterrupted to the present day. The remaining sections of this chapter will focus on these three periods.

Nativism, White Terror, & Exclusion Acts *Precursors to border enforcement*

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in United States were marked by a series of economic as well as social crises which collectively shaped the conditions for the hardening of the southern US border. These crises included white supremacist terrorism intended and largely succeeding to beat back the gains made by the black working class under reconstruction, economic recessions both large and small,⁵⁰ and the First World War. This was also a period of intense and bloody class conflict, including the Haymarket affair (1886-1887), the Coal Wars (1890-1930), the Homestead Strike (1892), the Pullman Strike (1894), the Colorado Labor Wars (1903-1904), the New York Shirtwaist Strike (1909), and many others. The timeframe also includes both the first and the beginning of the second era of the Ku Klux Klan. The former focused mainly on destroying the new freedoms won by and for Black people during reconstruction⁵¹ but the second era included virulent anti-

⁵⁰ Including the Long depression 1872-1879, depression of 1882-85, panic of 1893, Panic of 1896, panic of 1907, and depression of 1920-1921 (more mild ones in 1887-88, 1890-91, 1899-00, 1902-04, 1910-11, and 1913-14)

⁵¹ Dubois, William Edward B. Black Reconstruction. Chapter 16 "Back Towards Slavery" Pg. 670-710

immigrant and anti-semitic thinking and action alongside⁵² the more commonly known anti-Black terrorism.⁵³

At the same time, however, the working class did make many gains. The period from the 1890s to the 1920s is often referred to as the “Progressive Era,” in which many reform⁵⁴ initiatives of various stripes were pushed for and passed. The real driver of the changes which actually made gains for the working class, such as a shortening of the work day to 8 hours (which usually fell outside the reforms proposed by progressives) was not the progressive politicians, who were more often interested in the preservation of the capitalist system, but by the working class itself.⁵⁵

During this time, the organization and struggle of the working class saw several radical manifestations. In 1876, the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) of America was formed (originally as the Workingmen’s Party of the United States), which was involved both in rank and file actions as well as electoral campaigns. In 1901, some of SLP’s members split and merged with the Social Democratic Party of America (founded in 1898) to create the Socialist Party of America. In 1919, the Socialist Party itself split apart with some members going on to found the Communist Party USA (CPUSA).

Perhaps the most radical manifestation of the time was embodied in the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905. The IWW rejected the business and trade union approaches of the mainstream union movement, sought to organize all workers on

⁵² Onion, Rebecca. “The ‘Second KKK’ of the 1920s Was Virulently Anti-Immigrant. And Their Rhetoric Sounds Disturbingly Familiar Today.”

⁵³ I use Terrorism in the sense of violence intended to inspire terror among a population, in this case this includes both state and vigilante manifestations.

⁵⁴ I do not use reform here to mean anything inherently positive and prohibition for example was undoubtedly a negative reform of the era.

⁵⁵ Engberg, George B. “Collective Bargaining in the Lumber Industry of the Upper Great Lakes States.”

an industry wide bases regardless of race or gender (including, among other often overlooked workers, sex workers since its founding), and rejected participation as an organization in the electoral process or even support for “political or anti-political sects.”⁵⁶ All of these formations, perhaps particularly the IWW, had bases of support amongst immigrant workers.

Taken together, these forces, in addition to the organizing and struggle of members of the working class acting autonomously from these institutions and organizations, in wildcat strikes, rebellions, and other actions that frequently flew in the face of the more reformist leaders of the unions, in which these workers may or may not have held membership in, mounted a legitimate threat to the capitalist system. Something had to be done about it. Aside from open repression of the labor movement, with federal troops, local police, and private militias such as the Pinkertons, and reforms oriented toward placating workers with select material gains (to be chipped away at the soonest possible opportunity) rather than altering the relationships of production or power in any fundamental sense,⁵⁷ one of the key methods employed was to increase racial resentment. This served to and channel anger over exploitative conditions away from those responsible (i.e. the capitalist and political classes) onto other, generally even more vulnerable, workers.

A frequent element of strike breaking tactics employed by bosses was the use of newly arrived immigrant workers as scabs. These efforts elicited varying responses from the labor movement, unfortunately those included several instances of racialized violence

⁵⁶ “Preamble, Constitution, and General Bylaws of the Industrial Workers of the World.” Article VIII – Political Alliances

⁵⁷ Wolff, Richard. “Capitalism's Betrayal Of The Working Class Could Be Its Undoing.”

against vulnerable sections of the working class.⁵⁸ However, there were also exceptions where unions immediately organized these workers and involved them in the strikes. A notable example is the organizing of Italian workers during the Battle of Blair Mountain in West Virginia, while wearing red bandanas and identifying as rednecks as a sign of working-class solidarity.⁵⁹

While so called “nativist”⁶⁰ sentiments had been present in the US since the colonial era, with the already settled settlers opposing the newly arrived, particularly those of other ethnic groups (including those now firmly grouped into whiteness such as Germans, Irish, and Southern and Eastern Europeans), it reached a high water mark during this era. At first, the opposition to immigration largely focused on Catholic immigrants, as can be seen in the “Know Nothing” or American Party, founded in 1854.⁶¹ However, by the 1860s, Asian people, especially in the western states, became a primary target of nativist backlash, which often went as far as race riots targeting Asian communities. Such riots included the Chinese Massacre of 1871, where a mob of hundreds hung 17-20 Chinese men,⁶² the San Francisco riot of 1877 which left 4 dead,⁶³ The Rock Springs Massacre where European immigrant miners killed at least 28 Chinese miners in Wyoming,⁶⁴ The Tacoma Riot of 1885, which ethnically cleansed the town of Chinese people forcing their exclusion to

⁵⁸ Black, Isabella. “American Labour And Chinese Immigration.”

⁵⁹ Huber, Patrick. “Red Necks and Red Bandanas: Appalachian Coal Miners and the Coloring of Union Identity, 1912-1936.”

⁶⁰ “Nativism” has nothing to do with support for the native peoples of this continent and it shows the settler colonial ownership attributed to whiteness.

⁶¹ Anbinder, Tyler. “Nativism and Prejudice Against Immigrants.”

⁶² Dorland, C. P. “Chinese Massacre at Los Angeles in 1871.”

⁶³ Ethington, Philip J. “Vigilantes and the Police: The Creation of a Professional Police Bureaucracy in San Francisco, 1847-1900.”

⁶⁴ Ichioka, Yuji. “Asian Immigrant Coal Miners and the United Mine Workers of America: Race and Class at Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1907.”

Portland and destroying their buildings,⁶⁵ The Seattle Riot of 1886 where the local Knights of Labor expelled over 200 Chinese residents and clashed with federal troops,⁶⁶ the ambush and murder of thirty-four Chinese miners at what is now known as Chinese Massacre Cove in Oregon,⁶⁷ and a series of riots targeting Asian immigrants down the west coast in 1907.⁶⁸ These Riots and violent acts had a complicated relationship to the law. Often, though not always, in active collaboration with the state and including officers amongst the vigilantes, even when extra-legal these acts of violence served to tie white settlers, including elements of the workers movement, to the white nation-state.

These racist attacks were often led by the Irish and German immigrants who had themselves been the targets of previous waves of nativism.⁶⁹ While Noel Ignatiev does not touch on this specific example of duplicity on the part of Irish workers, it does add further evidence for his argument that the Irish became white⁷⁰ through pushing down those below them in the racial hierarchy and actively enforcing white supremacy and for the constructed, fluid, and potentially expansionary⁷¹ nature of whiteness more broadly

Continuing the top down, “bottom” up functioning of whiteness, the racist targeting of Asian, and particularly Chinese, immigrants was also manifested in policy. The first federal restriction on immigration, the Page Act of 1875, targeted Chinese and East Asian women, and particularly sex workers.⁷² It deemed these women workers undesirables, a

⁶⁵ Laurie, Clayton D. “‘The Chinese Must Go’: The United States Army and the Anti-Chinese Riots in Washington Territory, 1885-1886.”

⁶⁶ Ibid. 65.

⁶⁷ Nokes, R. Gregory. “‘A Most Daring Outrage’: Murders at Chinese Massacre Cove, 1887.”

⁶⁸ Lee, Erika. “Hemispheric Orientalism and the 1907 Pacific Coast Race Riots.”

⁶⁹ Hill, Herbert. “Anti-Oriental Agitation and the Rise of Working-Class Racism.”

⁷⁰ Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*.

⁷¹ At least for those willing to practice violence in its name

⁷² Dadhania, Pooja R. “Deporting Undesirable Women.”

threat to white families,⁷³ and proponents, including its namesake Horace F. Page, pushed the idea that it would help end cheap Chinese labor⁷⁴ which was seen as a threat to the white worker (the framing inherently blaming the workers and not the bosses for exploitation). The act was expanded upon both by the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act which barred Chinese working men from entry to the United States as well,⁷⁵ and the Immigration Act of 1903 which barred all sex workers from entry as well as other categories of undesirable people, including anarchists, beggars, and people with epilepsy.⁷⁶

The labor movement itself, at least in certain sections, played into this racist sentiment. In the northwest, the unions were sometimes the primary agents of ethnic cleansing.⁷⁷ The Knights of Labor were perennially reactionary.⁷⁸ The American Socialist Party endorsed Asian exclusion, The AFL and Gompers also excluded Asians as well as Black people⁷⁹, but the IWW actively organized with Asian workers as well Black people⁸⁰, including in the Fresno Labor League,⁸¹ and promoted Asian inclusion in broader society and the labor movement.⁸² In one notable example, Har Dayal, who was influential in the Gadar Independence Movement in India, was an active IWW member and an ally of Ricardo Flores Magón while in California.⁸³

⁷³ Ibid. 72. Pg. 57-60

⁷⁴ Peffer, George Anthony. "Forbidden Families: Emigration Experiences of Chinese Women under the Page Law, 1875-1882."

⁷⁵ Soennichsen, John Robert. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

⁷⁶ Kraut, Julia Rose. "Global anti-Anarchism: The Origins of Ideological Deportation and the Suppression of Expression."

⁷⁷ Ibid. 69.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 69.

⁷⁹ Honey, Michael K. Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers.

⁸⁰ Cole, Peter. Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive-Era Philadelphia

⁸¹ Rosenberg, Daniel. "The IWW and Organization of Asian Workers in Early 20th Century America."

⁸² hoi, Jennifer Jung Hee. "The Rhetoric of Inclusion: The I.W.W. and Asian Workers"

⁸³ Kahn, Tariq. "3. Living Social Dynamite: Early Twentieth-Century IWW- South Asia Connections." Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW

After the turn of the century, the focus of anti-immigrant reaction shifted again. With Asian immigration effectively restricted (an easier proposition for long distance maritime travel than for immigration over a land border), Black gains from reconstruction destroyed by white terrorism and the convict lease system, and the Irish and other European immigrants increasingly being brought into whiteness through active support for reactionary policy and practice, there needed to be a new target for reactionary backlash as the social contradictions of capitalism only became more apparent. The outbreak of the Mexican revolution in 1910 and a variety of radical activity in the border region during the same period provided just this opportunity for capital. By the end of the 1910s, with the revelation of the Zimmerman telegram,⁸⁴ the war horns blaring, and increasing tension in the border region, it was enough to install the first border barriers, ending, at least in certain urban border communities, the open border that had existed between the US and Mexico up to this point.

The open border had served as an important resource for revolutionaries in both The US and Mexico. Revolutionaries based in both countries used the other as a refuge from political repression. Ricardo Flores Magón, the anarchist theorist, journalist, and prominent member in the ironically named Mexican Liberal Party,⁸⁵ and influential ideologue and organizer in the run up to the Mexican Revolution, fled to the US in 1904 to avoid repression after the Mexican state banned the publication of his writings.⁸⁶ Although he would eventually die in Leavenworth Penitentiary in Kansas in 1922,⁸⁷ he was highly active

⁸⁴ A secret telegram between Germany and Mexico proposing a military alliance between the two, which was intercepted by the UK and used to drum up support for WWI in the US

⁸⁵ It was much more radical of an organization than the name suggests, especially in the Magonista influenced sections, it had much more ideological similarity to anarchist-communism.

⁸⁶ Morris, Brian. "Flores Magon and the Mexican Liberal Party."

⁸⁷ Heatherton, Christina. "University of Radicalism: Ricardo Flores Magón and Leavenworth Penitentiary."

in the United States, participating in the IWW (the Los Angeles GMB, his former local, still bears his name),⁸⁸ agitating for revolution in Mexico, and organizing brigades of revolutionaries to support the revolutionary forces in Mexico.

In the other direction, many Italian anarchists, particularly followers of Luigi Galleani, including Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, fled to Monterrey in order to avoid the US draft in the lead up to WWI.⁸⁹ They were successful in avoiding the draft but this fact that was later used as evidence against Sacco and Vanzetti in the political trial that led to their executions.⁹⁰

Pancho Villa also attempted to use cross border raids to replenish supplies in New Mexico in 1916, albeit to mixed results at best as, in response, the US launched an expedition, known as the Punitive Expedition, to capture Villa. Although they did not succeed in capturing him and were eventually repelled by forces aligned with Venustiano Carranza of the constitutionalist revolutionary faction, they did force Villa into retreat and killed over 100 people in his forces.⁹¹ This effort was one of the most notable manifestations of many similar clashes along the border between 1910 and 1919 often known sometimes collectively as the Border War.⁹²

Another important manifestation of these struggles along the border, particularly as it relates to border enforcement, was the battle of Ambos Nogales in 1918. The battle started when US soldiers demanded Zeferino Gil Lamadrid, a Mexican carpenter, pass through security inspection and ended up firing a shot (possibly in warning but this had

⁸⁸ "Los Angeles GMB." Los Angeles GMB | Industrial Workers of the World

⁸⁹ Mcgirr, L. "The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti: A Global History."

⁹⁰ Temkin, Moshik. The Sacco-Vanzetti Affair: America on Trial. Pg. 11

⁹¹ Scott, James Brown. "The American Punitive Expedition into Mexico."

⁹² Richmond, Douglas W. "Mexican Immigration and Border Strategy During the Revolution, 1910-1920."

followed the deaths of several other Mexican border crossers in the town at the hands of US troops in the last year and tensions were high) with the Mexican officials responding in kind. The battle was bloody, fought largely between US forces and Mexican civilians and left between 15 (Mexican government estimate) and 125 (US government estimate) dead on the Mexican side, predominantly civilians. The US, on the other hand, only had 6 deaths, 4 of whom were soldiers. Felix B. Peñaloza, the mayor of Nogales, Sonora, sought to end the conflict by waving a white flag and attempting to convince those on the Mexican side to lay down their arms but he was killed by someone on the US side. The shootout ended when Mexican officials flew a white flag over their customs building and, in the subsequent negotiations, both sides came to agree with US general DeRosey Cabell's (who had served in the Punitive Expedition) suggestion of a border fence along the border, the first of its kind.⁹³

Lynchings, most often associated with anti-Black terrorism, were also employed against Mexican and Latinx people in this period. While several thousand were killed between the end of the Mexican-American War and 1928⁹⁴ this was particularly concentrated in the period of the Mexican Revolution with 124 people lynched, only surpassed by the decade immediately after the Mexican-American War (1950-1960) with 160 and the 1970s with 147 both of which were also periods of tension in the border lands.⁹⁵ In the 1910s, this terror took on counter-revolutionary characteristics with US ranchers interested in preventing the spread of revolution into the United States.

⁹³ Parra, Carlos Francisco. "VALIENTES NOGALENSES: The 1918 Battle Between the U.S. and Mexico That Transformed Ambos Nogales."

⁹⁴ Carrigan, William D, and Clive Webb. "When Americans Lynched Mexicans."

⁹⁵ Carrigan, William D., and Clive Webb. "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928." Pg. 423

During these years, deportation also became a tactic to deal with radicals, and labor organizers already in the United States. This included internal and external deportations. In the Bisbee Deportation of 1917 over one thousand striking miner workers (including several hundred members of the IWW) and their supporters were arrested by the Cochise County Sheriff at the urging of the Phelps Dodge mining company and shipped through the desert by train to New Mexico with a warning not to return.⁹⁶ This was in flagrant violation of the law and amounted to a kidnapping of thousands of people but no one was ever charged for it.⁹⁷ The Palmer Raids, under authority of the immigration act of 1918,⁹⁸ and conducted in 1919-1920 (during the first red scare and responding to fear of revolution in the US) over 10,000 mostly Italian and Eastern European anarchists and labor organizers were arrested, 3,500 of whom were held in detention, and 556 were eventually deported,⁹⁹

⁹⁶ O'neill, Colleen. "Domesticity Deployed: Gender, Race and the Construction of Class Struggle in the Bisbee Deportation." Pg. 257

⁹⁷ Ibid. 96. Pg. 271

⁹⁸ (a) aliens who are anarchists;

(b) aliens who advise, advocate, or teach, or who are members of, or affiliated with, any organization, society, or group, that advises, advocates, or teaches opposition to all organized government;

(c) aliens who believe in, advise, advocate, or teach, or who are members of, or affiliated with, any organization, association, society, or group, that believes in, advises, advocates, or teaches:

(1) the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all forms of law, or

(2) the duty, necessity, or propriety of the unlawful assaulting or killing of any officer or officers, either of specific individuals or of officers generally, of the Government of the United States or of any other organized government, because of his or their official character, or

(3) the unlawful damage, injury, or destruction of property, or

(4) sabotage;

(d) aliens who write, publish, or cause to be written or published, or who knowingly circulate, distribute, print, or display, or knowingly cause to be circulated, distributed, printed, or displayed, or knowingly have in their possession for the purpose of circulation, distribution, publication, or display any written or printed matter, advising, advocating, or teaching opposition to all government, or advising, advocating, or teaching:

(1) the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all forms of law, or

(2) the duty, necessity, or propriety of the unlawful assaulting or killing of any officer or officers of the Government of the United States or of any other government, or

(3) the unlawful damage, injury, or destruction of property, or

(4) sabotage;

(e) aliens who are members of, or affiliated with, any organization, association, society, or group, that writes, circulates, distributes, prints, publishes, or displays, or causes to be written, circulated, distributed, printed, published, or displayed, or that has in its possession for the purpose of circulation, distribution, publication, or display, any written or printed matter of the character in subdivision (d).

⁹⁹ Goldstein, Robert Justin. "An American Gulag - Summary Arrest and Emergency Detention of Political Dissidents in the United States."

among these were the notable anarchists and Russian immigrants Emma Goldman¹⁰⁰ and Alexander Berkman.¹⁰¹

1924 saw the passage of the National Origins Act, which expanded the exclusion of Chinese immigrants even further to ban all immigration from Asia. The act also established national quotas for European immigrants and a cap of 165,000 immigrants for all countries outside the western hemisphere.¹⁰² Pushing deportation for immigrants who exceeded the national quotas, the act authorized the formation of a border patrol to enforce these quotas. Two days later, the border patrol was granted \$1 million and became an agency of the Department of Labor. While the law included no limits on Mexican immigration, due to pressure from US agribusiness, this was immediately pushed back on by nativists.¹⁰³ The border patrol operated along both the southern and northern borders of the United States and, shortly later in 1925, along the coasts as well. At first, the budget was rather small, dwarfed tenfold by the budget of the Narcotics Division of the Prohibition Unit,¹⁰⁴ and much of border patrol's own work was aimed at preventing liquor smuggling, meaning the northern branch was more heavily manned, although the forces shortly shifted focus to and then firmly remained on the southern border.

For most of its first year of existence, border patrol had no power of arrest or clear direction in its priorities. However, in February 1925, border patrol was given the power to intercept and arrest immigrants until they reached their internal destinations and to search vehicles within any US territory, they believed to harbor immigrants in violation of the law

¹⁰⁰ Goldman, Emma. My Disillusionment in Russia

¹⁰¹ Berkman, Alexander. The ABC of Anarchism

¹⁰² Hernandez, Kelly Lytle. Migra!: a History of the U.S. Border Patrol. Pg. 26

¹⁰³ Ibid. 102. Pg. 32

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 102. Pg. 33

(without a warrant).¹⁰⁵ Until 1946, this policy continued to be their general mandate but many of the specifics and priorities were still largely left up to the officers. The number of people arrested by border patrol remained largely consistent in its first decade of existence with the number of interrogations even dropping.¹⁰⁶ However, while the border patrol remained relatively small, by the end of the Great Depression, its focus increasingly became centered on undocumented immigration along the southern border. A racialized and racializing process, immigrants from the south became increasingly tied to illegality in popular and political consciousness, which would soon be expanded upon again.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 102. Pg. 35

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 102. Pg. 52

(Depicted below: Ambos Nogales before (c 1888-89) and after the Battle and the erecting of the wall (1918) as well as more recently (2016)



The State and Capital *Legalizing exploitation, criminalizing labor*

During World War II, the mandate of border patrol changed significantly. Border patrol was tasked with the internment of Japanese people and, to a lesser extent, Germans and Italians under the Enemy Alien Control Program, as well as monitoring submarine traffic in US coastal waters.¹⁰⁷ Border Patrol shifted from the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice. In so doing it became more centralized, it also doubled its officer count and budget between 1939 and 1942 by over 700 men and to total nearly \$4 million.¹⁰⁸ Border and immigration enforcement became more closely associated to the broader federal law enforcement apparatus, working in collaboration with the FBI and other agencies. Along with increased technological capacity in the form of radios and planes,¹⁰⁹ these collaborations tied border enforcement more closely into the developing security state, a bond that has not since been broken.

Beginning in the middle of the Second World War, the Bracero Program also shifted the role of border enforcement. The Bracero Program allowed for the admittance of a limited number of approved agricultural workers from Mexico and granted them certain protections: a fixed wage of 30 cents (lower than the prevailing rate in the US but higher than the prevailing rate in Mexico), supposed admittance into white spaces, and guaranteed basic living standards, However, the program also legally barred these workers from striking;¹¹⁰ instead, the workers had to rely on Mexican inspectors.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 102. Pg. 103

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 102. Pg. 104

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 102. Pg. 105

¹¹⁰ Mandeel, Elizabeth W. "The Bracero Program 1942-1964 ." pg. 177

¹¹¹ who were drastically understaffed, especially in the northwestern United States and so consequently some of these workers did in fact go on strike themselves, although in other instances they were used as strike breakers

With various reasons for supporting the program, the agreement was organized between the governments of the United States and Mexico, with sizable input from US agribusiness. On the US side, the support for the proposal came mainly out of an interest in recreating¹¹² and regulating a highly exploitable labor force, which was made more pressing by the demands on labor and human life made by World War II. On the Mexican side, they largely sought to ensure at least a base living standard for their emigrant workers under conditions in which the Mexican unemployment rate was unlikely to diminish¹¹³ and so emigration was seen as preferable to insurrection.

While it may at first seem counter intuitive, the program of legalized entry also further restricted the border. Many workers in Mexico were ineligible for the program or unable to access it¹¹⁴ and so undocumented immigration continued. Employers were largely happy to take advantage of the cheap labor source, but the US government saw it as a threat to national security during war time. In 1943 in a meeting with representatives from the Department of State, Department of Justice, INS, and Border Patrol, the Mexican Government, viewing undocumented immigration as a drain on their own labor supply, requested for stricter border enforcement from the United States.¹¹⁵

The US state had long been trying to rid the unions of radicals, including the Palmer Raids discussed above, but with Taft-Hartley in 1947, which rendered solidarity strikes illegal,¹¹⁶ allowed states to pass anti-union legislation, and required unions to adopt anti-communist policies,¹¹⁷ and the broader post war settlement it largely succeeded. Much of

¹¹² During the great depression more Mexican workers returned to Mexico than entered the United States

¹¹³ Ibid. 102. Pg. 110

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 102. Pg. 110

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 102. Pg. 116

¹¹⁶ Meltzer, Bernard D. "Single-Employer and Multi-Employer Lockouts under the Taft-Hartley Act."

¹¹⁷ Daykin, Walter L. "The Operation of the Taft-Hartley Act's Non-Communist Provisions."

this stability of this settlement was predicated on the social programs of the new deal and housing, however this was not universally accessible.

The New Deal excluded farm labor and domestic labor from the same labor protections as other industries, particularly the National Labor Relations Act [and] the Fair Labor Standards Act,¹¹⁸ even originally excluding workers in these industries from social security.¹¹⁹ The labor force in these industries were and predominantly still are Black and Latinx and exclusions such as these served, along with programs like the Bracero Program, to officially sanction the and maintain the racialization of these industries extended from slavery through Jim Crow. This racialization largely continues to this day, with brief efforts to use white labor to do the same work at the end of the Bracero Program considered absolute failures.¹²⁰ By rendering these workers outside the protection of the state, the state ensured a level of paternalism in these professions unseen in other industries. This paternalism, and in case of domestic labor that the site of labor is in the home of the employer, produces conditions rife for gendered violence, besides subjugating Black and immigrant woman workers to dual burdens of social reproductive work for an employer and for their own families.

By exempting these workers from collective bargaining protection,¹²¹ making any action by multiple workers to improve conditions or their own safety a legitimate friable offense, the state ensured that any efforts for unions to break this division and organize

¹¹⁸ Perea, Juan F. "The Echoes of Slavery: Recognizing the Racist Origins of the Agricultural and Domestic Worker Exclusion from the National Labor Relations Act."

¹¹⁹ DeWitt, Larry. "The Decision to Exclude Agricultural and Domestic Workers from the 1935 Social Security Act."

¹²⁰ Arellano, Gustavo. "When The U.S. Government Tried To Replace Migrant Farmworkers With High Schoolers."

¹²¹ Something that continues to this day in all but 10 states

these workers would face a variety of structural obstacles beyond those of other workplaces. In so doing, the state serves to differentiate strata of labor to divide solidarity and facilitate greater degrees of exploitation. Encouraged by such deliberate initiatives by the state, and along with general societal anti-communism and the predominance of business unionism (a model exported around the world)¹²² the unions came largely to represent the interests, not of the working-class as a whole, but a particular subsection of it. This happened despite Black revolutionary worker activity.¹²³ Even for this subsection of workers, it would not be on their own terms, but led by union officials. In this time, the unions generally took on a position more oriented towards protecting these worker's position within capital than on challenging the system itself, one that has allowed for reactionary politics around immigration to emerge, even among those organizing immigrant workers.¹²⁴

In 1952, border patrol was given a 25-mile area around all borders in which they could conduct warrantless stop and searches, expanded to 100 miles in 1953.¹²⁵ Harboring undocumented people was also made a felony, with a specific exemption for employers in 1952.¹²⁶ Two years after the extension of the Bracero Program, in June 1954, the US government launched Operation Wetback (The slur giving a good indication of the deep interrelationship between white supremacy and border enforcement), a campaign targeting Mexican workers for deportation. Operation Wetback involved increases in the number of border patrol agents as well as for the budget and technological capacities of

¹²² Forman, Erik. "Workers of the World."

¹²³ Maines, David R., and James A. Geschwender. "Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency: The League of Revolutionary Black Workers."

¹²⁴ Hesson, Ted. "Cesar Chavez's Complex History on Immigration."

¹²⁵ "ACLU Factsheet on Customs and Border Protection's 100-Mile Zone."

¹²⁶ "8 U.S. Code § 1324 - Bringing in and Harboring Certain Aliens."

immigration enforcement. however perhaps the more importantly it redshifted the focus of border patrol from migration to crime,¹²⁷ collaborating with the Mexican state in doing so,¹²⁸ and in the process firmly wedding border patrol to policing in general.

Throughout the long civil rights movement from the 1950s (arguably 40s) to the 1980s, repelling Black struggle for civil rights and liberation, as well as anti-war resistance, took a more central emphasis than immigration for domestic law enforcement and reactionary backlash. At the same time, immigration of refugees, and to some extent immigrants in general,¹²⁹ became of propoganda value in the cold war. This was particularly true for refugees and migrants from countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain who could be used as an indictment of the USSR and an endorsement of the US as a bastion of opportunity. However, crucially, deportations never ceased.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 102. Pg. 195

¹²⁸ Ibid. 102. Pg. 184-185

¹²⁹ As Can be seen in Reagan's support for the Immigration Reform and Control act of 1986

Year	Removals	Returns	Year	Removal	Returns
1892	2,801	N/A	1913	23,399	N/A
1893	1,630	N/A	1914	37,651	N/A
1894	1,806	N/A	1915	26,675	N/A
1895	2,596	N/A	1916	21,648	N/A
1896	3,037	N/A	1917	17,881	N/A
1897	1,880	N/A	1918	8,866	N/A
1898	3,229	N/A	1919	11,694	N/A
1899	4,052	N/A	1920	14,557	N/A
1900	4,602	N/A	1921	18,296	N/A
1901	3,879	N/A	1922	18,076	N/A
1902	5,387	N/A	1923	24,280	N/A
1903	9,316	N/A	1924	36,693	N/A
1904	8,773	N/A	1925	34,885	N/A
1905	12,724	N/A	1926	31,454	N/A
1906	13,108	N/A	1927	31,417	15,012
1907	14,059	N/A	1928	30,464	19,946
1908	12,971	N/A	1929	31,035	25,888
1909	12,535	N/A	1930	24,864	11,387
1910	26,965	N/A	1931	27,886	11,719
1911	25,137	N/A	1932	26,490	10,775
1912	18,513	N/A	1933	25,392	10,347

1934	14,263	8,010	1956	9,006	80,891
1935	13,877	7,978	1957	5,989	63,379
1936	16,195	8,251	1958	7,875	60,600
1937	16,905	8,788	1959	8,468	56,610
1938	17,341	9,278	1960	7,240	52,796
1939	14,700	9,590	1961	8,181	52,383
1940	12,254	8,594	1962	8,025	54,164
1941	7,336	6,531	1963	7,763	69,392
1942	5,542	6,904	1964	9,167	73,042
1943	5,702	11,947	1965	10,572	95,263
1944	8,821	32,270	1966	9,680	123,683
1945	13,611	69,490	1967	9,728	142,343
1946	17,328	101,945	1968	9,590	179,952
1947	23,434	195,880	1969	11,030	240,958
1948	25,276	197,184	1970	17,469	303,348
1949	23,874	276,297	1971	18,294	370,074
1950	10,199	572,477	1972	16,883	450,927
1951	17,328	673,169	1973	17,346	568,005
1952	23,125	703,778	1974	19,413	718,740
1953	23,482	885,391	1975	24,432	655,814
1954	30,264	1,074,277	1976	38,471*	955,374
1955	17,695	232,769	1977	31,263	867,015

1978	29,277	975,515	2000	188,497	1,675,876
1979	26,825	966,137	2001	189,026	1,349,371
1980	18,013	719,211	2002	165,168	1,012,116
1981	17,379	823,875	2003	211,098	945,294
1982	15,216	912,572	2004	240,665	1,166,576
1983	19,211	931,600	2005	246,431	1,096,920
1984	18,696	909,833	2006	280,974	1,043,381
1985	23,105	1,041,296	2007	319,382	891,390
1986	24,592	1,586,320	2008	358,886	811,236
1987	24,336	1,091,203	2009	395,165	N/A
1988	25,829	911,790	2010	387,242	N/A
1989	34,427	830,890	2011	396,906	N/A
1990	30,039	1,022,533	2012	409,849	N/A
1991	33,189	1,061,105	2013	368,644	N/A
1992	43,671	1,105,829	2014	414,481	162,814
1993	42,542	1,243,410	2015	235,413	N/A
1994	45,674	1,029,107	2016	240,255	N/A
1995	50,924	1,313,764	2017	226,119	N/A
1996	69,680	1,573,428	2018	256,086	N/A
1997	114,432	1,440,684	Sources: 1982-2008: Moloney, Deirdre M. National Insecurities: Immigrants and U.S. Deportation Policy since 1882. Pg. 265 2009-2018: "Immigration Enforcement Actions." Department of Homeland Security, 29 Apr. 2019		
1998	174,813	1,570,127			
1999	183,114	1,574,863			

Neoliberal Globalization & Border Restriction *Freeing trade, restricting movement*

Currently, we are in another era of border hardening. Ironically, this is an era commonly defined by globalization and the supposed decreasing relevance of the nation-state in international affairs. However, the relationship is more complex than that and speaks to broader contradictions of the state-capitalist system that dominates our world today. I will address these contradictions more thoroughly later on but first what exactly is happening?

Starting in 1993, with Operation Blockade, ordered unilaterally by Sylvester Reyes, a field commander in El Paso, and stationing hundreds of border patrol agents at regular intervals along the border to attempt to fend off undocumented border crossers, a series of restrictive measures were enacted along the southern border.¹³⁰ In 1994 broader policy followed the lead set by Reyes in El Paso. On September 17, Attorney General Janet Reno announced Operation Gatekeeper, aimed at closing the border near San Diego, California. While the initiative focused on building barriers only on one section of the wall, it was soon followed by similar initiatives around Tuscon, Arizona as Operation Safeguard also in 1994 (Expanded in 1999 and 2003),¹³¹ Operation Rio Grande around McAllen, Texas in 1997,¹³² and the Arizona Border Patrol initiative in 2004.¹³³ These initiatives were a part of a broader shift in policy for border patrol, which are known collectively as Prevention through Deterrence, and outlined in the 1994 National Border Strategic Plan (updated in

¹³⁰ Nevins, Joseph. Operation Gatekeeper and beyond: the War on "Illegals" and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary. Pg. 111

¹³¹ Ibid. 131. Pg. 156.

¹³² Spener, David. "5, Smuggling Migrants through South Texas: Challenges Posed by Operation Rio Grande."

¹³³ Haddal, Chad C. Border Security: The Role of the U.S. Border Patrol, report,

2004 and 2012).¹³⁴ The goal of these policies is to make border crossing more difficult, focusing resources, manpower, and barriers, on sites of easier crossing, especially around populated areas. The result has largely been to push undocumented crossings into deserts and more dangerous terrain and is responsible for thousands of deaths, doubling the yearly death totals¹³⁵

In 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act expanded the definition of an aggravated felony and mandated the expedited deportation of undocumented people who were convicted of one.¹³⁶ It also combined what had previously been separated as “deportation proceedings” and “exclusion proceedings” into “removal proceedings” which were all to be handled by immigration courts. These courts have a much lower standard of defendants’ rights than other US courts.¹³⁷ The Act also gave the Attorney General authority to build barriers along the border, as well as additional fencing for already existing sections, and to partner with local law enforcement to enforce immigration laws.

After September 11th came a rise of militarism and a reorganization of the security state. Border enforcement was intricately involved in this process. Although it has not been the only motivator for restrictive border policy, expansions of and justifications for immigration enforcement have recently relied to a large degree on a supposed relationship to terrorism. In 2003, Immigration and Customs Enforcement was founded as a result of

¹³⁴ “Border Patrol Strategic Plan 1994 and Beyond: National Strategy.” Homeland Security Digital Library, Pg. 6

¹³⁵ Ibid. 131. Pg. 173

¹³⁶ Ibid. 131. Pg. 176.

¹³⁷ Chacon, Jennifer M. "A Diversion of Attention: Immigration Courts and the Adjudication of Fourth and Fifth Amendment Rights."

the Homeland Security act of 2002.¹³⁸ It quickly became the largest investigative branch of the Department of Homeland Security¹³⁹ and the second largest contributor to the Joint Terrorism Task Force for which ICE has been tasked with conducting “homeland security” investigations as well as with raids and targeted deportations. This focus on terrorism comes despite accusing only 0.0015% of those in immigration courts of crimes related to terrorism.¹⁴⁰

In 2003, ICE had 8 fugitive operations teams oriented towards catching undocumented people convicted of crimes, which has increased to at least 129 such squads by 2017.¹⁴¹ By 2012, these teams had caught 37,000 people the vast majority of whom had never committed a violent crime.¹⁴² 2003 also saw the introduction of IDNET, which became US-VISIT the following year, a biometric tracking system for immigrants that took fingerprints (two fingers from 2004-2009 and 10 fingers since 2009) as well as a digital portrait of those entering the United States.¹⁴³

Operation Streamline instituted a “zero tolerance” policy for undocumented immigration in which the first entry is a misdemeanor and any subsequent entry is a felony in 2005.¹⁴⁴ Operation Streamline also expedited the trial processes in immigration courts, with dozens of people tried at once. This effort was first implemented in the Del Rio Border sector (Texas) in December 2005, and expanded to Yuma, Arizona in December 2006,

¹³⁸ Mittelstadt, Michelle, et. Al. Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11. Pg. 2

¹³⁹ Ibid. 139. Pg. 3

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 131. Pg. 198

¹⁴¹ Vitale, Alex. “9. Border Policing.” The End of Policing, Pd. 184

¹⁴² Ibid. 142. Pg. 185

¹⁴³ “NEW BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES SECURITY AND FACILITATES U.S. ENTRY PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS.” Department of Homeland Security,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 142. Pg. 181

Loredo, Texas November 2007, Tucson, Arizona in January 2008, and the Rio Grande Valley, Texas in June 2008, and by 2010 such programs were active along the entirety of the southern border except in California. Criminal prosecutions of first-time undocumented crossers rose from 4,000 in 2003 to 16,500 in 2005 and, by 2010, over 44,000 people were charged before reaching a peak of 97,000 in 2013.¹⁴⁵

In a largely bipartisan effort, the Secure Fence Act of 2006 approved 700 miles of fencing along the border.¹⁴⁶ As part of this act, the Secure Border Initiative Network (SBINet)¹⁴⁷ was intended to monitor the entire border with secondary fencing as well as cameras and sensors. While this effort eventually failed due to cost overruns and difficulties,¹⁴⁸ the border has remained a site of surveillance and monitoring, compounding the impact of Prevention through Deterrence. 2006 also saw the implementation of Worksite Enforcement Units.¹⁴⁹ While these units are, at least on paper, tasked with enforcing against the exploitation of undocumented workers, they have largely focused on deporting those workers and, in its first three years of existence, only 13 out of 100,000 prosecutions were of employers,¹⁵⁰ emphasizing the continued role of border enforcement in enforcing the exploitability of the undocumented worker.

In December 2006, ICE arrested over 1,300 workers at Swift & Company meatpacking plants, most of whom later faced deportation as part of Operation Wagon

¹⁴⁵Cillizza, Chris. "The Remarkable History of the Family Separation Crisis."

¹⁴⁶ Linskey, Annie. "In 2006, Democrats Were Saying 'Build That Fence!'"

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 131. Pg. 226

¹⁴⁸ Bump, Philip. "The Last Time the United States Tried to Build a Virtual Border Wall, It Wasn't Exactly a Big Success."

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 142. Pg. 185

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 142. Pg. 185

Train.¹⁵¹ The largest workplace immigration raid in US history,¹⁵² this set a precedent in immigration enforcement that has seen an increase in workplace raids, which has continued to the present. Despite the obvious relationship to labor struggles (including bosses even calling ICE on injured workers)¹⁵³ and the fact that undocumented people are almost universally workers by necessity, and make up as much as 50% of agricultural workers (reflecting the continued racialization of the industry),¹⁵⁴ the mainstream labor movement has still largely excluded undocumented workers. While, even in the AFL-CIO, policy has generally shifted away from explicit exclusion (pushed by immigrant workers in the service sector),¹⁵⁵ there has still been a failure to organize these workers due to a variety of challenges¹⁵⁶ and current AFL-CIO head Trumka has shown a willingness to work with the Trump administration on several occasions.¹⁵⁷

However, undocumented immigrants have demonstrated and engaged in struggle in this period none-the-less. There have been those who have pushed specific legislative policy but there have also been important mass manifestations.¹⁵⁸ With varying demands, some of the first such public manifestations of undocumented people in the US, were the 2006 Great American Boycott on Mayday¹⁵⁹ and the 2017 Day without Immigrants.¹⁶⁰ Undocumented people, of course, also resist in ways that might be less explicitly political

¹⁵¹ "Swift Raids." The New York Times

¹⁵² Ibid. 152

¹⁵³ Dooling, Shannon. "An ICE Arrest After A Workers' Comp Meeting Has Lawyers Questioning If It Was Retaliation."

¹⁵⁴ "Farm Labor." USDA ERS - Farm Labor, United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service,

¹⁵⁵ Gonyea, Don. "How The Labor Movement Did A 180 On Immigration."

¹⁵⁶ Ervin, Lorenzo Kom'boa. "Challenges: Organizing Undocumented Workers."

¹⁵⁷ Blest, Paul. "Richard Trumka Is Playing a Very Dumb Game With Trump."

¹⁵⁸ Varsanyi, Monica W. "The Paradox of Contemporary Immigrant Political Mobilization: Organized Labor, Undocumented Migrants, and Electoral Participation in Los Angeles."

¹⁵⁹ Narro, Victor, et al. "The 2006 Immigrant Uprising: Origins and Future."

¹⁶⁰ Yan, Holly, and David Williams. "'Day Without Immigrants' Shuts down Businesses."

but have political implications just the same. Even the act of seeking invisibility vis-a-vis the state, at least in certain instances, has many political implications. Undocumented people are leading their own struggles. It is important that the labor movement stand in solidarity with them.

However, recent years have seen a returned interest among reactionaries towards the politics of immigration and the border. As noted previously, there is a long history of vigilante violence in support of the border and against immigrants.¹⁶¹ As a congressional research service report from 2006 states, “Civilian patrols along the international border have existed in a wide variety of forms for at least 150 years. Over the past 15 years, civilian border patrol groups appear to have proliferated along the U.S.-Mexico border.”¹⁶² Perhaps the most well-known manifestation of these militias in recent years is the Minuteman Project formed in 2004,¹⁶³ but with the breaking up of that group, and related to prevention through deterrence they have increasingly fractured into a variety of differing groups.

These patrols relate to the broader militia movement that began in the 1990s in the United States, which while often nominally anti-government are also generally nationalist and patriotic, and are often made up, in whole or in part, by veterans.¹⁶⁴ The border focused groups originated in the mid 2000s as a response to Bush’s proposal for immigration reform including increased border restrictions but also with a path to

¹⁶¹ Davis, Mike. “Part I ‘What Is a Vigilante Man?’ White Violence in California History.” No One Is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border

¹⁶² United States, Congress, Congressional Research Service, et al. “Civilian Patrols Along the Border: Legal and Policy Issues.”

¹⁶³ Chavez, Leo R. "Spectacle in the desert: The Minuteman Project on the US-Mexico border."

¹⁶⁴ Gayner, Tim. “Desert Hawks.”

citizenship¹⁶⁵ but militia groups, in general and specifically on the border, grew dramatically as a reactionary response to the election of the first black president.¹⁶⁶ Despite Obama's record number of deportations, many of them believed he had plans to open the border.¹⁶⁷ These patrols often have collaborative elements with law enforcement, including a recent example of one of the United Constitutional Patriots holding immigrants at gunpoint with the permission of border patrol. Although, this is a particularly startling example, and their leader has since been arrested by the FBI,¹⁶⁸ the relationship between official and vigilante border enforcement mirrors earlier stages in US imperialism where white vigilantes were able to advance the reactionary expansion of empire from outside the of law and are granted impunity for doing so.

There have been certain efforts to loosen restrictions on certain immigrations. These include the Deferred Action for Childhood arrivals in 2012, which provided the opportunity for immigrants who had come as children to apply for two year deferrals of deportation as well as gain access to a work permit,¹⁶⁹ in 2013 the failed bipartisan project of "comprehensive immigration reform" that included a path to citizenship for undocumented people and more visa options for low skilled workers, but also including a focus on including immigrants with a background in STEM fields and on expanding the employment verification registry's information on immigration status,¹⁷⁰ and the 2014 deferral of action that expanded DACA protections as well as offering deferrals to

¹⁶⁵ Devereaux, Ryan. "The Bloody History of Border Militias Runs Deep - and Law Enforcement Is Part of It."

¹⁶⁶ Bauer, Shane. "I Went Undercover with a Militia on the US-Mexico Border. Here's What I Saw."

¹⁶⁷ These groups are often very conspiracy oriented and many believe in elaborate conspiracies involving specifically Jewish billionaires as supposed architects of a global communism that is simultaneously running but also threatening western civilization. Ibid. 165

¹⁶⁸ Politi, Daniel. "FBI Arrests Head of Armed Militia Group That Was Detaining Migrants at Border."

¹⁶⁹ Gonzales, Roberto G., et al. "Becoming DACAmented."

¹⁷⁰ Gilbert, Lauren. "Obama's Ruby Slippers: Enforcement Discretion in the Absence of Immigration Reform."

undocumented parents of citizens and people who have lawfully resided in the US for five years.¹⁷¹

Nonetheless, despite these exceptions, the restriction of the border and expansion of border policing has largely been a continuous project across administrations, generally with bipartisan support. In fact, despite all these above-mentioned efforts coming during the Obama administration, the number of deportations under Obama was higher than at any previous point in US history with at least 2.5 million deportations from 2009-2017.¹⁷² This marked a fairly steady increase from the 870,000 deported under Clinton, and 2 million deported under G.W. Bush.¹⁷³ Obama, in deporting more people than all previous post-war presidents combined,¹⁷⁴ set a rate that so far Trump has been unable to keep up with,¹⁷⁵ although this is also in part because of a decrease in immigration, due at least in part to anti-immigrant sentiment and policy. Apprehensions have also increased,¹⁷⁶ so this might change. The Trump administration has, however, focused on more spectacular displays of cruelty such as the travel ban from seven Muslim minority countries,¹⁷⁷ expanding¹⁷⁸ family separation and child detentions,¹⁷⁹ and the storing of detained immigrants in concentration camps¹⁸⁰ and behind chain links under the highway.¹⁸¹

¹⁷¹ “2014 Executive Actions on Immigration.”

¹⁷² Roe, Stephanie. *Deportation Under Obama and Trump: A Contrasting Examination of Immigration Legislation and Their Real and Perceived Impact Under Different Administrations.*

¹⁷³ Bump, Philip. “Ted Cruz Gets It Very Wrong on Recent Presidents' Deportation Numbers.”

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 142. Pg 186

¹⁷⁵ Lemon, Jason. “Deportations under Trump Still Lag Far behind Those Carried out by the Obama Administration.”

¹⁷⁶ Bialik, Kristen. “Border Apprehensions Increased in 2018 – Especially for Migrant Families.”

¹⁷⁷ Thurish, Glenn. “Trump's New Travel Ban Blocks Migrants from Six Nations, Sparing Iraq.”

¹⁷⁸ Rodriguez, Cassaundra. “Experiencing ‘Illegality’ as a Family? Immigration Enforcement, Social Policies, and Discourses Targeting Mexican Mixed-Status Families.”

¹⁷⁹ Wood, Laura C N. “Impact of Punitive Immigration Policies, Parent-Child Separation and Child Detention on the Mental Health and Development of Children.”

¹⁸⁰ Herskovitz, Jon. “Tent City for Migrant Children Puts Texas Border Town in Limelight.”

¹⁸¹ Romero, Simon. “Migrants Are Detained Under a Bridge in El Paso. What Happened?”

Likewise, without a rupture, the infrastructure of border enforcement has been compounding. This term is intended in both the obvious sense that border barriers built by previous administrations are extended by the next but also in the realm of technology, with new technology, like drones, supplanting and filling the gaps in existing technology.¹⁸² It is clear that, barring a revolutionary rupture, the enforcement of the border is set to continue for the foreseeable future, the question between competing factions of the capitalist state is to what degree. Importantly though the more brutal enforcement of the Trump administration has brought attention to and resistance against systems that were all too often ignored under previous administrations.

On México's Southern Border *As the US southern border*

Since the 1990s-2000s, migration from Mexico has begun to slow down, with some migrants of Mexican citizenship really being of people deported the US returning to their homes. Migration from Mexico never stopped, but with many also returning the other way or being deported, it has leveled out even reaching net negative.¹⁸³ On the other hand, migration from other Latin American countries, particularly from the Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador from which immigration has risen 25% collectively.¹⁸⁴

These migrants represent 6 and 8 percent of all people born in Guatemala and Honduras, respectively, and 20 percent of all Salvadorans. These migrants, in turn, remitted over \$17 billion in 2017. Remittances accounted

¹⁸² <https://dronecenter.bard.edu/customs-and-border-protection-drones/>

¹⁸³ Gonzalez-Barrera, Ana. "More Mexicans Leaving Than Coming to the U.S."

¹⁸⁴ Cohn, D'Vera, et al. "Immigration From Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador Up."

for 18 percent of the national GDP in Honduras, 17 percent in El Salvador, and 11 percent in Guatemala in 2016; the world average is 0.8 percent.¹⁸⁵ A variety of forces propel migration including poverty, state and cartel¹⁸⁶ violence, ecological crises and dislocation, and sexual and gendered discrimination or abuse.

Each country has its own history of colonialism as well as more recent US intervention in support of capitalist exploitation and they all function as capitalist states today. Fitting within the periphery, with Mexico a semi-periphery,¹⁸⁷ and the US serving as a core, migration here, if by land,¹⁸⁸ must pass through Mexico in order to get to the US. While the US is generally the ultimate goal, the Mexican economy's position, along with the dispossession of the Mexican peasantry discussed above also facilitates the use of exploited migrant labor within Mexico.¹⁸⁹ As such México's geographic position between an imperial giant to its north and the periphery to its south plays an interesting role in the global economy and also, increasingly, in border enforcement.

Officials in the Obama administration recognized the shift in migration as early as 2011, and by 2014 had negotiated a deal with the Mexican government in which the latter would more strictly enforce immigration across its southern border. The intention was to prevent migrants from ever even reaching the United States and, in exchange, the US gave the Mexican state \$86 million for training and the purchase of new equipment.¹⁹⁰ "Here migration control is now done through layers of checkpoints, on the main roads and lesser

¹⁸⁵ Sousa, Liliana Do Couto, et al. "Remittances and Labor Supply in the Northern Triangle." Pg. 2

¹⁸⁶ In all the combinations that arrangement can take.

¹⁸⁷ Wallerstine Wallerstein, Immanuel (1974+1997). *Semi-Peripheral Countries and The Contemporary World Crisis*.

¹⁸⁸ A class distinction in migration

¹⁸⁹ Martin, Philip, and J. Edward Taylor. "Ripe with change: Evolving farm labor markets in the United States, Mexico, and Central America."

¹⁹⁰ Nolen, Stephenie. "The Costly Border Plan Mexico Won't Discuss."

ones, some fixed, some mobile, some set up right outside the migrant shelters.”¹⁹¹ Beyond this, it also includes an even further step down the global supply chains as “Mexico and Guatemala are working on joint strategies to dismantle criminal groups operating in the border region and the creation of a shared database that will allow both countries to access biometric and migration data for those crossing the border.”¹⁹² The result was an immediate increase of detentions of migrants in Mexico.¹⁹³ The checkpoints also had a similar effect to that of Prevention through Deterrence in that migratory routes became more dispersed, rendering migrants increasingly vulnerable to state and cartel violence.¹⁹⁴

Migrants have responded to these increased threats by forming caravans, with the understanding that there is more safety in numbers. The caravans include informal networks but also more openly political manifestations like the migrant caravans organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras,¹⁹⁵ an immigration solidarity organization. The organizers of these caravans call for open borders and the migrants of the 2018 caravan themselves declared, “Somos trabajadores internacionales”¹⁹⁶ (we are the international workers), as they gathered at the border.

The policing in México, ultimately, marks a massive expansion of US border policing in function but it is carried out by proxy through the Mexican state. It increases the dangers of migration for those seeking to pass through México and helps structure several degrees of differentiation in the continental labor market, particularly in agriculture. It places further restrictions on those further from the core, both racially and spatially and has

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 191

¹⁹² Wilson, Christopher, and Pedro Valenzuela. "Mexico's Southern border strategy: Programa frontera Sur."

¹⁹³ Nieto, Enrique Peña. "Programa Frontera Sur: The Mexican Government's Faulty Immigration Policy."

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. 191

¹⁹⁵ "Pueblos Sin Fronteras." International Migrant Rights Collective

¹⁹⁶ "Migrant to Trump: We're Workers, Not Criminals - CNN Video."

broader implications in the global political-economic system that are discussed in the next chapter.

Fuck Borders

Free movement, towards working-class self-emancipation

In the last chapter I presented a history of border enforcement in the US. As stated in the introduction, a more complete understanding of the function of border enforcement in the contemporary moment would require similar analyses for other enforced borders around the world. However, it is still possible to draw lessons from this example. In this section, I will briefly discuss the global expansion of borders in order to ground the US case within the global system before discussing the border's relationship to workers and labor, the nation and whiteness, Gender, imperialism, and climate change.

Global Movement: Refugees & Migrants

For unconditional free movement for working people

As noted earlier, humans have moved around for thousands of years and migrated to nearly every habitable region on earth, but why do people migrate today? Migration as a mass phenomenon is typically discussed in two distinct categories; refugees and economic (or just) migrants. They each carry their own self-contained debates. For the former, are these people truly refugees? What is our obligation to provide them aid? Etc. For the latter, do they help or hurt the economy? What is their impact on the "native" working class? Etc. Refugees are defined as a vulnerable people needing protection from the state, however only under the condition that their own state is unable to provide this to them, and that their claim is recognized as legitimate by another state.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the most relevant international body for determining the legitimacy of refugee claims, although individual

nations may not recognize every claim that the UNHCR does, or may recognize the claims of groups that are not recognized by the UN (generally for groups with an ethnic, racial, cultural, or religious tie to the dominant group of said nation). Article 1(A)(2) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (amended in 1967) defines a refugee as someone who

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term "the country of his nationality" shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national."¹

This definition is limited in many ways of course. Perhaps, most obviously, it excludes people forced to move but who have not crossed a national border. These people are "internally displaced persons," who, unlike refugees, do not have protected status under international law and are assumed to be under the protection of their "own" governments, even if it was the actions of their own government that internally displaced them. However, beyond this openly stated, but ultimately arbitrary, distinction rooted in nationalism, the political framework of the definition is also worthy of critique.

¹ United Nations. "The 1951 Refugee Convention."

First it grants protection to persecuted groups but not exploited ones. These could arguably fit under the same definition, as there is generally a degree of persecution in the exercise of exploitative relationships, but in practice they do not. Class is not assumed to be a valid social group, at least in the sense of recognizing workers or the poor as a subject population, despite active political repression of labor movements in virtually every nation by the state, capitalists or their hired guns. Those fleeing poverty are deemed economic migrants and do not receive nor generally seek protective status (knowing it will not be granted). This distinction places a humanitarian emphasis on political problems and threats over economic ones, separating them from one another in a way that is itself not politically neutral, and normalizes the capitalist system in the process.

Second, the state's role as a protector is taken for granted. It assumes inherently that all people must be under the protection of a nation-state. Furthermore, your nationality determines which state must be your protector unless you have the compelling reason for it not to be (or the resources to be able to move to another more freely). Thus, the state's role as an agent of class domination and elite rule is obscured and, instead, it is framed as a benevolent force, inherently necessary for the protection of persons. This marks a continuation of the benevolent ruler/pastoral logic of the feudal states discussed in the first chapter into their modern descendants and similarly implies inversely that states can exclude those deemed a threat to it.

Third, the definition leaves out not just those impoverished by the economic system but also those who are displaced by it, either directly by development projects or by ecological crises. Climate change, which is currently not included as a legitimate category in the classification of refugees, will play an increasing impact on migration in the next

century and render this distinction even more arbitrary. Although there have been efforts to incorporate climate refugees under the category of refugees, these have largely been dismissed by the agencies responsible due to, in their words, a lack of “hard evidence of the extent or fundamental causes of their problems,” even with an acknowledgment that “in a multi-dimensional world, in which people’s decisions to migrate (or stay) are influenced by a huge range of factors, an adequate definition does not seem very likely.”² I would generally agree with the latter assessment but disagree with using it to narrow the definition of refugee rather than to interrogate the use of the category.

Ultimately is the deepest issue with this definition is this failure to recognize and meaningfully account for the multiplicity of reasons for which one might be forced to choose to relocate. While addressing elements of the failures of political inclusion of the nation state structure, it fundamentally assumes that if one state cannot guarantee your safety another can and therefore not moving beyond these failures, only providing a mechanism of managing them within the existing structure. Furthermore, it does not account for other structural forces that might be just as forcibly dislocating but do not manifest in exclusively political structures.

Generally, those who move but fall outside the structural definition of a refugee are deemed migrants or immigrants, a label that lumps millionaires in with displaced peasants, although if the immigrant is well off and originating in a western nation they are often deemed “ex-pats” instead. Distinctions can be drawn in which the working-class immigrants are labeled labor or economic migrants. These categories do have much explanatory power as demands for labor, particularly from non-unionized, precarious,

² Black, Richard. “Working Paper No. 34: Environmental Refugees: Myth or Reality?” Pg. 14

alienated, isolated, and therefore highly exploitable workers on the part of the bosses and states, as well as the desire for a higher rate of wages than those available in one's own country on the part of the workers, do shape migration patterns. The pattern usually flows from the periphery to the core and may include travel through semi-peripheral or buffer states during the migration. The higher rate of wages often allows for workers to send back remittances to family or friends back home which make up an increasing percentage of world GDP.³ In such a way emigration even undocumented, can be a viable way to support one's family our community.

However, the framing of economic or labor migrants potentially depoliticizes the capitalist economic system and assumes the voluntary nature of its institutions ascribed to it by its supporters as a given. The assumption ignores the importance of class war in shaping immigration patterns. In her section on labor migration (chapter 5) in *International Migration and Social theory* Karen O'Reilly, describes the conditions in 1990s Mexico as being defined by

a program of structural readjustment, involving the implementation of neoliberal ideals, that has led to more precarious working conditions for Mexicans, undermined job security and wages, and diluted union power. Between 1990 and 1998 the minimum wage fell by two thirds, and during the 1990s two thirds of the workforce suffered a decrease in wages⁴

These were the conditions that propelled an increase in migration to the US starting in the 1990s. While it certainly could be said to be economic can it really be viewed as entirely voluntary?

³ "Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP)." The World Bank

⁴ O'Reilly, Karen. *International Migration and Social Theory*. Pg. 92.

In general, the distinction between refugees and migrants fits the dichotomy in the discourse surrounding immigration between two of the major centers of receiving immigrants, the United States and Europe, despite it long being acknowledged that this distinction is arbitrary.⁵ It is no doubt true that immigrants to the United States are a fundamentally necessary labor force in the American economy, serving in many of the primary industries such as growing, preparing, and distributing food. Also, in the case of Mexico, seasonal or temporary labor migration into the United States has been a regular occurrence for at least a century and a half. However, rendering this apolitical can suggest the class dynamics inherent in this process are natural or unproblematic, not embodying their own forms of conflict and subjugation. Considering the dynamic in which American subsidized and massive monocultural corn enterprises undercut the Mexican peasantry's ability to sustain themselves, coupled with neoliberal structural adjustment (a plan designed and facilitated by one of the most advanced sections of the capitalist class in understanding their own class interests) the idea that this migration is not the result of politically motivated crises becomes highly suspect.

In Europe despite a long history of labor migration to, within, and from Europe and even while many refugees in Europe also do work (being included by states such as Germany for the very purpose of supplanting an aging labor supply),⁶ the discourse in the contemporary moment focuses on refugees, the legitimacy of their claims, and their relation to welfare states. In such a framing their economic role in society is obscured

⁵ Faist, Thomas. The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces. No. 304.8 F3. 2000.

⁶ Hockenos, Paul. "Germany's Secret Labor Experiment."

almost completely, except in the debate over whether they constitute a drain on the state's resources.

The differences in the discourses are also be illustrated in the appeals made by those seeking to advance political solidarity with those who have moved. In Europe this has generally resulted in focusing on rousing empathy and moral appeals, whereas in the US much of the pushback against immigrant exclusion has focused on the valuable contribution of immigrants particularly on economic terms,⁷ often evoking implicitly or explicitly the national myth of the American Dream.⁸ While it is undoubtedly true that essential functions of the US economy rely on immigrant labor and that undocumented people do pay taxes⁹ (a greater percentage and in absolute terms than major corporations like Amazon),¹⁰ focusing only on the instrumental value of human labor to the capitalist system is fundamentally dehumanizing and normalizing of exploitation. It also ignores that the conditions that many "labor migrants" leave from are genuinely humanitarian disasters in their own rights. This reality can be seen in the impoverishment of the Mexican laboring classes and particularly the peasantry,¹¹ as of throughout the region, but it takes on more obviously brutal impacts as well.

⁷ Kosten, Dan. "Immigrants as Economic Contributors: Immigrant Tax Contributions and Spending Power."

⁸ Clark, W. A. V. *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class.*

⁹ And that many other commonly held ideas about undocumented people are based in racialized stereotype and have nothing to do with reality see "They Take our jobs" and *20 other myths about immigrants* by Aviva Chomsky and Chapter 6 "Do immigrants hurt the economy?" or the *Politics of Immigration* by Babkina for more

¹⁰ Undocumented immigrants: Campbell, Alexia Fernández. "Trump Says Undocumented Immigrants Are an Economic Burden. They Pay Billions in Taxes."

Amazon: Pagano, Alyssa. "Amazon Will Pay \$0 in Federal Taxes This Year - Here's How the \$793 Billion Company Gets Away with It."

¹¹ I use this word with no snide connotation but as a category of rural workers. Like most anarchists historically, I see revolutionary potential in both the industrial working class and the peasantry and disagree with Marx's particular focus on the latter as the sole agent of revolutionary change in capitalist society.

Cartels, propelled by US markets and made increasingly violent in response to state policy in the war on drugs, drive a tremendous degree of violence. In Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, and Venezuela the murder rates rival war zones.¹² The Murder rate in Mexico is also rapidly increasing (up 16% in 2018 alone) and is the highest it has been since record keeping began in 1997¹³. The US plays a major role in creating these crises throughout Latin America through decades of coups, assassinations, and sponsoring right wing death squads,¹⁴ as well as through its black market for drugs and the exporting of drug war tactics that have served to increase the violence between the state and traffickers, particularly in Mexico, but throughout Latin America. State kidnapping, murder, and torture are also present in Mexico. The idea that the only thing these migrants are seeking is simply more favorable labor conditions, and not many of the same things refugees are seeking, i.e. refuge, is highly questionable.

It is important to say here that I bring up the murder rate not to frame the US as inherently safe and these countries as inherently dangerous. The US also has a relatively high murder rate in many cities,¹⁵ and a long history of violence on systemic and interpersonal levels, some of which I detailed in the previous chapter, and the US state certainly murders people¹⁶ and tortures people¹⁷. My intention by highlighting the violence many of these migrants face in the communities they come from is to demonstrate that the

¹² Luhnow, David. "Latin America Is the Murder Capital of the World."

¹³ City, Associated Press in Mexico. "Mexico: Homicides up 16% in 2018, Breaking Own Records for Violence."

¹⁴ Chomsky, Noam, and Edward S. Herman. *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*

¹⁵ Although due to the continued impacts of policies like redlining the geographic and social concentration of these in particular communities is very high

¹⁶ Literally thousands every year: Swaine, Jon, et al. "The Counted: People Killed by Police in the United States – Interactive."

¹⁷ Ackerman, Spencer. "I Was Struck with Multiple Blows!: inside the Secret Violence of Homan Square." *The Guardian*,

structural violence of enforced poverty and exploitation often also takes on the very visceral forms of violence people seem to need pointed out be able to recognize the legitimacy of refugee status.

The emphasis on humanitarian concerns, ironically, may be dehumanizing as well, diminishing those who flee to passive objects of history, in need of protection, and occasionally civilizing. At times, there is acknowledgement of the role imperialism has played in general in creating these refugees. However more commonly the discourse of protection bleeds quickly into framings where Europe and “the West” is seen as perpetually stable and the Middle East or Africa perpetually in turmoil.¹⁸ At times, the discussion of Europe’s role in the Middle East verges into its own form of orientalism in a version of a “white man’s burden,”¹⁹ where the destabilization and colonial projects are only problematized in Europe leaving the middle east to “anarchy.”²⁰ Thus, it comes to obscure the question of the validity of European presence in the Middle East in the first place, normalizing its role of as a colonial power with neo-colonial relations continuing into the present. Considering that the national boundaries that make up the present-day Middle East were arbitrarily drawn to reflect French and British imperial interests,²¹ and have contributed to a variety of subsequent conflicts,²² this leaves much to be desired to say the least.

¹⁸ Given that conflicts on the West Asian peninsula of Europe were some of the deadliest of the last century and that the relative peace existing there now is a relatively new phenomenon, largely conditioned by external exploitation this is obviously pretty short-sighted analysis.

¹⁹ Jordan, Winthrop D. *The White Man’s Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States*

²⁰ Cockburn, Patrick. “Refugee Crisis Was Caused by a Careless West That Allowed Anarchy and Fear to Take Root in the Middle East.” (Of course, anarchy here is being used as equivalent to chaos demonstrates the bourgeois orientation of this framing)

²¹ Fitzgerald, Edward Peter. “France’s Middle Eastern ambitions, the Sykes-Picot negotiations, and the oil fields of Mosul, 1915-1918.”

²² Bâli, Ash. “Sykes-Picot and ‘Artificial’ States.”

It is important not to forget the role of European powers in creating the crises, lest unnuanced concern leads to a “do something” liberal humanitarianism that, in reality, only serves to justify the continuation of these neo-colonial projects. The inherent assumption in such arguments is that the Middle Easterners are incapable of governing themselves and need European protection either as refugees or as overseers of their governments, something with rather obvious parallels across the Atlantic.²³

The distinction between migrants and refugees is not inherently all that meaningful, and so while in this text I have mostly used to the term “migrant”, this does not mean that I accept that this immigration is purely voluntary. In reality, there are a variety of push and pull factors that influence people to migrate, many of these entwined in systems of exploitation, violence, and domination over which they have little to no control. In short, people’s reasons for moving are complex, but generally, few working-class people choose to totally uproot their social roots without a compelling reason to do so. This is not to say the reasons people migrate are not important or that this is politically meaningless whether someone did, in fact, migrate simply for a higher wage or migrated because their house was destroyed in a war, rather only an effort to problematize an often false dichotomy which has ramifications for the practice and theorization of solidarity. It is also not to say that all immigration is therefore good. If anything, it points to a measure of coercion in most migration that the voluntarist framings ignore.

If possible, the causes of migration should also be addressed so that those who do not wish to are not forced to migrate. Yet, once people are in motion, the most important question is not whether their reason is adequate enough. I see more important questions

²³ i.e. the Munroe Doctrine

as are how we can ensure that when people do move, they are free to do so unhindered and unharmed, how we can welcome them into our communities and movements for liberation when they arrive, and how we can stand in solidarity with their self-organized struggles. As "true freedom is not the right but the opportunity, the strength to do what one will and freedom, in the absence of the wherewithal for exercising it, is an atrocious irony,"²⁴ fundamentally this is not simply about simply the right to move but about materially supporting that freedom.

Global Border Regimes

Dividing the global market, Managing undesirable populations

It is not only the US border which has been hardening in recent years. In the imperial core,²⁵ borders subject migrants to a variety of abuses and facilitates a division of labor, and social standing reproducing exploitation and subjugation. Fortress Europe is

²⁴ Malatesta, Errico. "6 Program And Organization Of The International Working Men's Association ."

²⁵ Here I am using a framing borrowed from Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory. This revolves around understanding the contemporary world as a World economy, which by its very nature includes multiple different centers, cultures, and civilizational histories but involves an interconnected relationship of production and trade. In the contemporary world system these centers, referred to here as the core or cores are more affluent and focus on higher skilled production and capital-intensive industry, whereas the periphery is relatively less developed and dominated by labor intensive and extractive industry. Because of this unequal distribution in the social value of the commodities produced the balance of trade maintains a relationship privileging the core over the periphery. Wallerstein's analysis also includes semi-peripheral countries which may have elements of both forms of production and are transitioning from the latter to the former. These have a complicated relationship to the global system often taking on elements of either cores or peripheries depending on the position of the relative position of the other nations they are relating to (Importing more from the core and exporting more to the periphery for example). However, capitalism includes a variety of labor divisions and so also exploits labor in the core, simply in more profitable industries (a concentration maintained by dominance in productivity, trade and finance). There are often similar cores, peripheries, and semi-peripheries within nations, helping explain internal geographic power and wealth stratifications as well.

aptly named considering the web of threats,²⁶ barriers,²⁷ and policing,²⁸ which migrants who seek to enter, or move within, Europe without official approval face. Australia has become notorious for its brutal and torturous treatment of refugees detained on Nauru Island²⁹ (A somewhat interesting development considering the settler colonial state's own history as a penal colony). The Israeli network of walls and fencing separating Palestinians from occupied territory and each other is continually growing.³⁰ Criminalization of refugees has also been exported to semi-peripheral "buffer states" such as Mexico, discussed in the previous chapter, but also including Turkey,³¹ Morocco, and Tunisia³² for Europe and Malaysia for Australia,³³ in an attempt to hold off migrants before they even reach the borders of the of the core nations.

Other borders wrap around the most vulnerable or war-torn territories, sometimes euphemistically referred to as failed states (particularly those with Muslim inhabitants). Those states seen as enough of a threat to justify being walled off by their neighbors include Iraq,³⁴ Yemen,³⁵ Syria,³⁶ and Myanmar.³⁷ All of these cases strongly relate to the global "war on terror" and its militarized enforcement against Muslim communities around

²⁶ Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Keeping an Eye on the Global Traffic in Human Organs."

²⁷ See Saddiki, Said. "3. The Fences of Ceuta and Melilla." *World of Walls: The Structure, Roles and Effectiveness of Separation Barriers and Kallius, Annastiina, et al. "Immobilizing Mobility: Border Ethnography, Illiberal Democracy, and the Politics of the 'Refugee Crisis' in Hungary."*

²⁸ Johnson, Jamie. "Inside Calais Camp Raided by Armed Police: Migrants Say Crackdown Is Forcing Them across the Channel."

²⁹ Sant, Shannon Van. "Lawsuits Say Australia Subjects Asylum-Seekers To Torture And Crimes Against Humanity."

³⁰ Busbridge, Rachel. "Performing Colonial Sovereignty and the Israeli 'Separation' Wall."

³¹ Deutsche Welle. "The EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement: A Review."

³² Haas, Hein De. "The Myth of Invasion: the Inconvenient Realities of African Migration to Europe."

³³ McGahan, Kevin. *Managing migration: the politics of immigration enforcement and border controls in Malaysia.*

³⁴ Spencer, Richard. "Revealed: Saudi Arabia's 'Great Wall' to Keep out Isil."

³⁵ Whitaker, Brian. "Saudi Security Barrier Stirs Anger in Yemen."

³⁶ Bulos, Nabih. "Turkey to Build 500-Mile Wall on Syria Border after Isil Suruc Bombing."

³⁷ Kalita, Prabin. "Army Takes over Guarding of Indo-Myanmar Border | India News - Times of India."

the world, as do the borders between Russia and Georgia, and India and Pakistan, although competing national movements also play an important factor in those.³⁸ Along with the rhetoric of defense from terror, which has been important for justifying the expansion of border policing in the imperial core, and the use of technologies associated with the war on terror in border enforcement, these exemplify the continuing interrelationship between imperialism and border enforcement.

Several enforced borders are between competing national claims, often relating to divisions of territory prescribed by colonial territories or ongoing imperial endeavors. The India-Pakistan border would fall into this category, as would India-Bangladesh border,³⁹ Armenian-Azerbaijani border,⁴⁰ the border that divides the island of Cyprus,⁴¹ and, the last major hold over of divisions made by cold war geopolitics, the Korean border (although this has taken on a stronger core periphery dynamic as North Korea has faced isolation and South Korea has grown rapidly in recent years).⁴² In a system dominated by the specific political system of the modern nation-state, which was established by European colonial powers and based in a territorial sovereignty, usually over an ethnically defined nationhood, and which has not always mapped onto existing patterns of human distribution, it should be no surprise that such contentious borders have emerged as perennial sticking points in contemporary society.

³⁸ See Cheterian, Vicken. "The August 2008 War in Georgia: from Ethnic Conflict to Border Wars." And Jones, Reece. "Geopolitical Boundary Narratives, the Global War on Terror and Border Fencing in India."

³⁹ Ramachandran, Sujata. "Of Boundaries and Border Crossings."

⁴⁰ Hunter, Shireen. "Borders, Conflict, and Security in the Caucasus: The Legacy of the Past."

⁴¹ Panayiotou, Andreas. "Border Dialectics: Cypriot Social and Historical Movements in a World Systemic Context."

⁴² Lankov, Andrei. "Bitter Taste of Paradise: North Korean Refugees in South Korea."

The US border very clearly fits in the category of borders around the imperial core, but it should not be seen as fully disconnected from the others. Besides the fact that US military policy has contributed, at the very least, to the social crises and wars in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and their resultant refugee crises, technologies and tactics of border enforcement from the imperial core are exported along with other policing strategies⁴³ and so US border enforcement helps shape global border enforcement, as US policing helps shape global policing. In addition, the core depends upon the production of raw commodities in the periphery, as well as on the internal exploitation made possible by the illegality of immigration from the periphery so it is important not to forget the global and systemic nature of the border as an institution. The US-México border fits in a specific position within the global capitalist system and interrelations of nation-states thus serves specific functions relating to labor and race because of it. I will attempt to analyze that position and those functions in the sections that follow.

Border as Defining the Nation & Relation to Whiteness

"A Country without borders is not a country at all"

- Donald Trump⁴⁴

"The nation is not the cause, but the result, of the state. It is the state which creates the nation, not the nation the state."

-Rudolph Rocker⁴⁵

⁴³ Nadelmann, Ethan Avram. Cops across Borders: the Internationalization of U.S. Criminal Law Enforcement.

⁴⁴ "Trump: 'A Country without Borders Is Not a Country at All.'" CNN, Cable News Network

⁴⁵ Rocker, Rudolf. Nationalism and Culture. Chapter 12

Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis" saw in the frontier the defining element of the American project, "The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization."⁴⁶ By Americanization, he meant that Europeans were transformed into American subjects for the first time via their engagement with the frontier, losing certain European norms in adopting indigenous practices needed to survive, while also killing them. He saw in its advance "the frontier [as] the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization."⁴⁷ The fact of indigenous murder is not particularly obscured in his analysis, except by the euphemistic phrases "Indian Wars,"⁴⁸ and "Indian Policy" which are seen as an essential part of this process. The violence serves to define and unite the new nation as, "The Indian was a common danger, demanding united action,"⁴⁹ as well as expanding the states physical and territorial reach. Turner saw the frontier as "promot[ing] the formation of a composite nationality for the American people"⁵⁰ because "In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics."⁵¹ Although he does not explicitly name it as such, this composite national identity is the white race.

Turner emphasizes "the importance of the frontier... as a military training school, keeping alive the power of resistance to aggression, and developing the stalwart and rugged qualities of the frontiersman."⁵² The rather obvious inversion of who was in fact the

⁴⁶ Turner, Jackson. "The Frontier in American History by Frederick Jackson Turner." Line 4

⁴⁷ Ibid. 46. Line 3

⁴⁸ Read indigenous ethnic cleansing and genocide

⁴⁹ Ibid. 46. Line 15

⁵⁰ Ibid. 46. Line 23

⁵¹ Ibid. 46. Line 23

⁵² Ibid. 46. Line 15

aggressor, the settler colonists and not the indigenous people, is telling of the colonial mentality behind this writing. Importantly, the role of violence against the other is encoded fundamentally into life on the frontier. This violence is at the heart of shaping American society and the birth of the white race, the center of national identity in the United States, against which standard inclusion and exclusion are to be measured. Turner saw the frontier as so essential to the American project that in his analysis even slavery was incidental too it.⁵³

Turners view captured the American imagination, dominating academic analysis and popular myth, “Turner’s frontier thesis, with its emphasis on cheap western land and abundant economic opportunity, captured the popular imagination more than any other sweeping explanation for how the American national character was formed.”⁵⁴ This myth tied in nicely with the view of American society as a progressive institution, taming supposedly savage lands, and rendering them “civilized” through market exploitation and settlement. It also celebrated the individual heroism of frontiersmen, providing a quintessential reactionary archetype with which to identify with. The myth has also continued well into the present, as Greg Grandin, ties the perceived betrayal in Bush’s effort to grant a pathway to citizenship for certain undocumented workers and the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan, to a conception of the failure to expand the frontier, resulting in reactionary backlash and the rise of the border militia movement.⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid. 46. Line 24

⁵⁴ Ford, Lacy K. “Frontier Democracy: The Turner Thesis Revisited.”

⁵⁵ Grandin, Greg. The End of the Myth: from the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America

Even Marx and Engels, though writing well before the publication of his thesis, can in certain respects be seen to take much of a similar position. Engels wrote (edited by Marx) in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of February 1849

Will Bakunin accuse the Americans of a "war of conquest",⁵⁶ which, although it deals with a severe blow to his theory based on "justice and humanity", was nevertheless waged wholly and solely in the interest of civilization? Or is it perhaps unfortunate that splendid California has been taken away from the lazy Mexicans, who could not do anything with it? That the energetic Yankees by rapid exploitation of the California gold mines will increase the means of circulation, in a few years will concentrate a dense population and extensive trade at the most suitable places on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, create large cities, open up communications by steamship, construct a railway from New York to San Francisco, for the first time really open the Pacific Ocean to civilization, and for the third time in history give the world trade a new direction? The "independence" of a few Spanish Californians and Texans may suffer because of it, in some places "justice" and other moral principles may be violated; but what does that matter to such facts of world-historic significance?⁵⁷

While there is an important difference in that Marx and Engels viewed this development as progressive because it would bring the territory closer to socialist revolution and not for its role in creating the American nation and expanding bourgeois democracy, the similarity lies in the view of the expansion of the US frontier as a civilizing project and a historically progressive development.

The reference to "lazy Mexicans" may especially jump out and does embody similar logics of historical progress through stages of development since the Mexican was deemed lazy due to the predominantly agricultural economy compared to US industry. But, what is most troubling about this quotation is the total invisibilization of the indigenous people, whose genocide in California was already three years underway at the point of publication.

⁵⁶ The actually correct position in my opinion.

⁵⁷ Engels, Frederick. "Democratic Pan-Slavism." Marxist Internet Archive, *Neue Rheinsiche Zeitung* No. 231-232 February 1849,

While I emphasize this contradiction in Marxist thought,⁵⁸ it is worth noting that Marx did begin to move beyond the idea that capitalism was a necessary stage of development without which socialism would not be possible towards the end of his life, after studying the Haudenosaunee, the Russian Mir, and witnessing communal relations in Algeria.⁵⁹

Towards the end of Turner's life as the frontier receded from political relevance, he assumed it would result in a strengthening of socialist movements. But, as Theodore Allen points out, while the frontier may have been a "social-safety-valve" for the preservation of bourgeois society, by diffusing class struggle through the lateral mobility of working-class white people, it was not the only such social-safety-valve. As Allen Wrote:

"The white laboring people's prospect of lateral mobility to 'free land', however unrealizable it was in actuality, did serve in diverting them from struggles with the bourgeoisie. But that was merely one aspect of the great safety valve, the system of racial privileges conferred on laboring-class European-Americans, rural and urban, poor and exploited though they themselves were. That has been the main historical guarantee of the rule of the "Titans," damping down anti-capitalist pressures by making "race, and not class, the distinction in social life."⁶⁰

Likewise, while anti-indigenous violence was an important factor in the creation of white identity, Allen traces this creation to an earlier moment and more fundamentally to the institution of slavery, therefore, it is important to recognize that while the frontier is of great importance to the shaping of the common white American understanding of themselves and their relationship to this continent it is not the only, nor necessarily the central, organizing principle for white supremacy and is not the only way whiteness presents itself.

⁵⁸ Again, subtly pointing to the difference between orthodox Marxism and anarchism on this question

⁵⁹ Rosemont, Franklin. Karl Marx & the Iroquois.

⁶⁰ Allen, Theodore. Invention of the White Race. Vol II. Pg. 258

Whiteness, in its tremendous ability to discover new forms of class collaborationism, simply rearticulates itself to the changed conditions. In certain examples, such as Kennedy's "New Frontier" justification for the war in Vietnam,⁶¹ these new forms relied on adaptations of Turner's hypothesis, but, again, it should not be seen as limited to this by any means. White flight and the growth of consumer society (an ecological disaster in its own right,⁶² Despite being at least in part motivated by a white pastoralism seeking a return to the environment) offer other important examples of more recent social-safety-valves, and more importantly for this work so, too, does the boundary established by the furthest expansion of the frontier, the border.

The exclusion of immigrants from the settler colony has always been a racial process. Throughout US history this has been made evident in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the National quotas on immigration in 1924 which restricted immigration from Eastern Europe and functionally banned it for most of the rest of the world, Operation Wetback in 1952, the ruling in *Brignoni-Ponce* in 1973, which accepted race as a relevant factor for forced stops and ID by border patrol,⁶³ SB 1070 in Arizona in 2010,⁶⁴ and the Travel ban of 2017. However, it is worth noting again here this has not been exclusively a centralized or state led project. This has a function within global capitalism of producing an exploitable labor force. By racializing industries such as agricultural and domestic labor, primarily Black and Latinx mostly immigrant workers are excluded from protections and their exploitation is legitimated. Racialization is used as a tool of class domination in

⁶¹ White, Mark J., ed. *Kennedy: The New Frontier Revisited*. Springer, 1998.

⁶² Johnson, Michael P. "Environmental Impacts of Urban Sprawl: A Survey of the Literature and Proposed Research Agenda."

⁶³ Johnson, Kevin R. "How Racial Profiling in America Became the Law of the Land: *United States v. Brignoni-Ponce* and *Whren v. United States* and the Need for Truly Rebellious Lawyering."

⁶⁴ Nill, Andrea Christina. "Latinos and S.B. 1070: Demonization, Dehumanization, and Disenfranchisement."

facilitating exploitation, but the exploitation also serves as an element of racialization, stigmatizing and isolating racialized workers in particular industries as unlike the rest of the class and undeserving of the same protections or solidarity.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the racial exclusion of immigrants has also taken the form of murderous vigilantism historically and contemporarily. Whiteness is shaped by state policy, but it is also formed by those willing to deputize themselves in its name to enact violence on those they would seek to exclude from its benefits. Border patrol, in both legal and extra-legal varieties has offered an opportunity for relative advancement for certain sectors of the working class by propelling others below them. This has been true from the early days when it was largely a decentralized endeavor, with its mandate broad enough that priorities were shaped by the initiative of its officers,⁶⁵ and the process continues to this day with the border militias, often with friendly relationships to the state guards, who have tasked themselves with enforcing the border. These groups are universally nationalist and frequently motivated by conspiracy theories and post-9/11 militarism, and varying degrees of open and covert white supremacy.

The enforcement of the border also potentially demonstrates the expansionary element of whiteness, at least for those willing to enforce the violence that sustains it. When whiteness has faced threats, real or perceived, to the social bonds it helps maintain or to its own perpetuation and reproduction through the state and society, it usually responds through increased violence as well as an expansion of whiteness to some, previously on the periphery, of or even excluded from whiteness, who are willing to

⁶⁵ Hernandez Laura, *Migra*. Pg. 34

practice that violence, exemplified by the Irish.⁶⁶ As many have noted the US is likely soon to no longer have a white majority population. This marks a threat in the eyes of white supremacists exemplified by their claims of white genocide, a claim which does not involve actual murder of any sort simply the existence and reproduction of immigrants and people of color in supposedly white nations.⁶⁷

This nexus opens the question of how reactionaries will respond to threats to the established order in the contemporary moment. As social crises, endemic in the system, and made increasingly desperate by climate change, unfold, whiteness will likely have to adapt again. Elements of this adaptation might already be evident in the fact that by 2016 the majority of border patrol agents were Latinx.⁶⁸ Similar navigations of whiteness can also be seen in the inclusion of Latino, Asian, and even a few black members into the “western chauvinist” Proud Boys fascist organization, seemingly united primarily by patriarchy.⁶⁹ As the Trump campaign propelled the border wall into a reactionary rallying cry, the enforcement of the border seems potentially poised to serve as a vector into whiteness for those willing or able to participate.

One indication that this may be a fool’s errand for those seeking inclusion into whiteness, though, is the continued deportation of undocumented people who have served in the US military. A lesson can be drawn here from anti-assimilationist queer anarchist theory that liberation does not come from inclusion into oppressive systems in general, and the US war machine in particular.⁷⁰ Such approaches have a tendency to backfire. This is

⁶⁶ Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*.

⁶⁷ Perry, Barbara. ““White Genocide”: White Supremacists and the Politics of Reproduction.” *Home-Grown Hate*.

⁶⁸ Mejia, Brittany. “Many Latinos Answer Call of the Border Patrol in the Age of Trump.”

⁶⁹ Love, David. “Who Are the Proud Boys, and Why Are Nonwhite Men Joining White Supremacist Groups?”

⁷⁰ Conrad, Ryan. “Don’t Ask To Fight in Their Wars.” *Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion*

not to advocate separatism from US society as a solution for immigrants to the US as that would not make much sense. Rather, “If anti-assimilation is to be of any value, it needs to be founded on the idea that we want to destroy the current order and help build a better world.”⁷¹ As such, this formation recalls the old IWW slogan that “an injury to one is an injury to all” and offers, not escape from involvement in oppressive systems on an individual basis, but a commitment to liberation of all those on the receiving end of them.

Border enforcement has already reemphasized the importance of citizenship. Once exclusive to white people in the United States,⁷² citizenship has increasingly been contrasted to illegality as a racialized classification. As Trump has demonstrated a willingness to revoke the protected status of those whose migrations had already been somewhat legitimated by the state, it also demonstrates the potential for illegality to continue to be expanded as the crises deepen. Considering enforcement of the border is already tied to the broader carceral state,⁷³ which is foundationally racist⁷⁴ and criminalizes⁷⁵ and incarcerates more people than any other nation in the world, this has very dangerous implications and should be resisted through the lens of abolition.

Abolitionism has a long history in the US as a way of theorizing and advancing struggles against institutions of white supremacy. This is a living history as prisoners went on strike in 2018 with the demand for the abolition of prison slavery.⁷⁶ Theorists such as

⁷¹ Operista, Gayge. “Radical Queers and Class Struggle: A Match to Be Made.” *Queering Anarchism: Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire*

⁷² Tehranian, John. “Performing Whiteness: Naturalization Litigation and the Construction of Racial Identity in America.”

⁷³ Vitale, Alex S. *The End of Policing*

⁷⁴ Williams, Kristian. *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America*

⁷⁵ Where criminality is seen not as originating in the act of the prosecuted but in their policing and prosecution for it.

⁷⁶ “National Prison Strike.” Sawari

Angela Davis⁷⁷ and organizations such as Critical resistance,⁷⁸ INCITE,⁷⁹ and the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement⁸⁰ call for abolition of prison in general, a position shared by Emma Goldman in 1917.⁸¹ There is much overlap between the prison system and border enforcement and as Harsha Walia writes in *Undoing Border Imperialism* “though informed by different logics the incarceration of all these ‘undesirables’ is interrelated. Migrant detention centers, prisons, secret torture facilities, juvenile detention centers, and interrogation facilities are all part of the governing prison-industrial-complex”⁸² before citing Angela Davis’s explanation of the concept. She also includes the abolition of the security apparatus as part of the cartography of No One Is Illegal, the migrant solidarity organization she participates in⁸³ demonstrating that organizations seeking to organize in solidarity with immigrants have found this framing useful for their praxis. The rise of Abolish ICE as a slogan, associated with occupations of ICE facilities in many cities in the summer of 2018,⁸⁴ was so prominent that even electoral officials began endorsing it (without really meaning it).⁸⁵ The relative popularity of the idea, especially for those actively resisting detentions, is a testament to the purchase of the concept of abolition as a motivator of social struggles.

The abolitionist analysis of the border connected to a similar analysis of the carceral and security states at large is a useful framing to guide solidarity and movement practice.

⁷⁷ Davis, Angela Y. Are Prisons Obsolete?

⁷⁸ “Critical Resistance.” Critical Resistance, criticalresistance.org/.

⁷⁹ “INCITE!” *INCITE!*, incite-national.org/.

⁸⁰ “Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement.” *Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement*, www.revolutionaryabolition.org/.

⁸¹ “4. Prisons: A Social Crime and Failure.” *Anarchism and Other Essays*, by Emma Goldman

⁸² Walia, Harsha, and Andrea Smith. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Pg. 59

⁸³ *Ibid.* 82. Pg. 117-124

⁸⁴ Levin, Sam. “Occupy Ice: Protest Camps Expand across US amid Calls to Shutter Agency.”

⁸⁵ Jay, Soctt. “Abolishing ICE by Funding It.”

Reforms pushed by solidarity movements should be shaped by how they challenge the systems of surveillance, policing, and exclusion, not on how they include the most desirable of the excluded such as in “compressive immigration reform” efforts. As Angela Davis points out,

The history of the very institution of the prison is a reform. Foucault points this out. Reform doesn't come after the advent of the prison; it accompanies the birth of prison. So prison reform has always only created better prisons. In the process of creating better prisons, more people are brought under the surveillance of the correctional and law enforcement networks⁸⁶

A similar pattern has held true for immigration reforms, which may grant amnesty to some but come with increased enforcement for others and surveillance in general.

Greek anarchists have adapted a common slogan to read “All Cops Are Borders.”

While potentially provocative, it does do well to emphasize that, to an undocumented person, the state fundamentally operates as a hostile entity at all times as well as the deep interconnection between policing more broadly and the enforcement of the border.

Importantly like the abolition of slavery which was a history of self-emancipation⁸⁷ an abolitionist approach to border policing must center the self-activity and organization of those deemed illegal. It is not within the scope of this project to research this activity in depth. However, there are two manifestations of it that I believe have broader implications for a liberatory politics and are worth mentioning here. These are international networks of mutual aid and solidarity, often but not exclusively rooted in family networks, with obvious implications for international solidarity as well as for the ways territorial sovereignty fails to represent existing human communities, as well as the active seeking of

⁸⁶ Davis, Angela, and Frank Barat. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Pg. 22

⁸⁷ Dubois, William Edward B. *Black Reconstruction*.

invisibility vis-à-vis the state, which runs counter to much of contemporary activist culture but offers potential lessons in situations of repression and more generally in a society of massive state violence and criminalization.

If the anarchist critique of the state of nationalism as quoted from Rocker at the beginning of this section is to be taken seriously, that the nation is not a natural but a manufactured phenomenon, and the case of the white-race in the US does seem to provide much evidence for this claim.⁸⁸ Trump's assurance that there can be no country without the border should be taken very seriously. The border represents a crucial and ongoing aspect in the formation of national identity and whiteness. To undermine it offers the potential to develop new categories of political and social solidarity that are not allied to an imperial nation or a racist project.

On Neoliberalism, the Nation-State, & the Border
Addressing a common framing through the lens of the border

In *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, Wendy Brown suggests we are living in a post-Westphalian era. She is clear that “to speak of a post-Westphalian order is not to imply an era in which nation-state sovereignty is either finished or irrelevant. Rather, the prefix “post” signifies a formation that is *temporarily after but not over* that to which it is affixed.”⁸⁹ Here, Westphalian is a past that “relentlessly conditions even dominates a present that nevertheless breaks in some way with past.”⁹⁰ She points to the forces borders

⁸⁸ Fields, Karen E., and Barbara J. Fields. *Racecraft: the Soul of Inequality in American Life*

⁸⁹ Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Pg. 21

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 89.

respond to, i.e. transnational migratory networks, international drug and terrorist organizations, rather than state forces as evidence of this break.⁹¹ She claims borders represent the waning of sovereignty in the face of such international networks and social forces.

Brown attributes several categories to sovereignty, seemingly taken from Carl Schmidt,⁹² namely, supremacy, decisionism, absoluteness/completeness, nontransferability, and specific jurisdiction,⁹³ and posits that while these may have always been somewhat of a fiction, they were a powerful one that has been receding since 1960. Considering that this time period includes the struggles for and achievement of independence by many former colonies, resulting in the full globalization of the Westphalian nation-state, it is interesting⁹⁴ to view this era as breaking with the form, rather than the supremacy of Westphalian governance. As Fanon wrote, "Nationalism, that magnificent song that made the people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters, and dies away on the day independence is proclaimed."⁹⁵ That is the day those who struggled for freedom come to administer another state in global capitalism. If anything in those very decades it became, for the first time, a fully globalized system of governance, demonstrating a high degree of isomorphism,⁹⁶ only compounded by the fall of the Soviet Union and the supposed "end of history" to be found in its marriage to market capitalism.

⁹¹ Ibid. 89.

⁹² Ibid. 89. Pg. 53 Schmidt was a Nazi jurist and while some on the left have used his writing to critique liberal democracy in interesting ways I do always ponder why people more quickly turn to Schmidt rather than say Pannekoek or Rudolph Rocker for understanding the state from the left

⁹³ Ibid. 89. Pg. 22

⁹⁴ From an anarchist perspective maybe overly optimistic

⁹⁵ Fanon, Frantz, et al. *The Wretched of the Earth* Pg. 203

⁹⁶ Meyer, John W., et al. "World society and the nation-state."

However, putting this important disagreement aside for a moment, Brown writes, “Counterintuitively, perhaps, it is the weakening of state sovereignty, and more precisely, the detachment of sovereignty from the nation-state, that is generating the frenzy of nation-state wall building today.”⁹⁷ As such, she takes the position that the border is a reaction to a desire for a return to a past sovereignty that may have always been imaginary but is certainly now impossible to maintain. This may be a useful analytical approach for understanding the desires motivating reactionary pushes for increased border protection. However, it leaves much to be desired in explaining the structural role borders play in global capitalism and in the analysis of the relationship between neoliberalism and the exercise of state power.

Brown writes that “Nation-State sovereignty has been undercut by neoliberal rationality”⁹⁸ as well as by global institutions like the WTO and IMF. Her analysis here of the neoliberal era as one of receding ability for states to exercise power takes its proponents far too much at their word. Here, Brown, seems willing to accept the framing of capitalism and the state as opposing forces rather than mutually co-constitutive. Neoliberalism, put simply, has not been a retraction of the state, if anything in material terms it has expanded it.⁹⁹ Likewise, since its political conception in the implementation of Pinochet, neoliberalism has never been shy in its alliances with dictatorship and state violence at the behest of capital.

The rule of capital always constitutes a class dictatorship in production but neoliberalism has from its conception also utilized state dictatorship This was not the first

⁹⁷ Ibid. 89. Pg. 24

⁹⁸ Ibid. 89. Pg. 22

⁹⁹ Graeber, David. Utopia of Rules.

time capitalism had allied with dictatorship Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, South Korea's Park Chung-hee, the German and Italian fascist governments, Estado Novo in Portugal, Franco's Spain and numerous other right wing dictators embraced forms of capitalism before Pinochet. Where Pinochet's rule truly differed from these other regimes is that in his iteration of capitalism companies was far less corporatist because of the massive presence of US, allowing for a strong authoritarian police state to coexist with economic liberalization, globalization, and privatization. In this conception of political authoritarianism and economic liberalism in the merger of dictatorial state power and relatively open markets Pinochet has provided a model, which, as argued by Ian Bruff in "The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism,"¹⁰⁰ is increasingly becoming dominant in the period after the most recent global financial crisis. We see the specter of Pinochet¹⁰¹ in many prominent politicians today including the likes of Modi in India, Putin in Russia, Erdogan in Turkey, Bolsonaro in Brasil, and Trump in the US.

To view this era as one of ascendancy of capital as opposed to the state, rather than integrated with it, mistakes the initiator of neoliberalism, the global ascendancy and integration of capitalism, for its central tenet, which in reality is austerity and class war by the bourgeoisie. As such it misdiagnoses a reorientation away from certain forms of power, embodied in the class truce of the welfare state and regulation, towards the more brutal policing of social life, as a retreat from the nation. This reorientation cannot be simply seen as decreasing sovereignty, if anything, it should be recognized as the exercise of the most

¹⁰⁰ Bruff, Ian. "The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism."

¹⁰¹ Rainey-Slavick, Cole. "Authoritarian Neoliberalism: The Specter of Pinochet."

Schmidtian sovereign power over the daily lives of subjects, or perhaps as a form of biopolitics.

Further, Brown argues, “capital is both master and coin of the realm, except there is no realm, no global polity, governance, or society, and neither are there boundaries of territory that delimit capital’s domain.”¹⁰² Her assessment fails on several points. There is a realm; it is the whole earth, now totalized for capitalist production. There is a polity, though managed and subdivided many times over, of participants in this mode of production. There is certainly governance, the nation-state being the basic building block for the organization and perpetuation of this system. Certainly, there also certainly is an increasingly global society and culture. While capital might not be limited by any boundary that is because it has become fully globalized. There no longer exists an outside to the market, so boundaries now serve to manage population and order exchange rather than a boundary between capitalism and something else.

The fundamental problem with Brown’s analysis seems to be an over emphasis on the importance of decisionism in the economic arena as constituting sovereignty. This framing seems to accept the state as a site of class struggle with its exercise of sovereignty being the power to make decisions impacting the balance of class forces. However, as Antonie Pannekoek wrote, “State-power is not just a neutral object of the class-struggle, but a weapon and fortress of the bourgeoisie, its strongest prop, without which it could never hold its ground. The struggle of the proletariat is therefore first of all a struggle against state-power.”¹⁰³ Recognizing this, the neoliberal project becomes clearer. In no way

¹⁰² Ibid. 89. Pg. 66

¹⁰³ Pannekoek, Antonie. “Imperialism and the Tasks of the Proletariat”

is the state even retreating from the economy, it is simply returning to a more open display of class domination, the sovereignty of capital exercised on the proletariat. While the neoliberal state may be less involved in regulating the specifics of production or in providing services to the population, it has nonetheless exercised a high degree of authority over the life of its subjects and those it refuses to recognize as such. That refusal, as identified in the border, offers a perfect example about the way state decisions over the bodies of human beings can serve to render them highly vulnerable to exploitation, and therefore, more profitable for capital.

To recognize neoliberalism as an internationally facilitated state-based project of assault on the working class and the racialized other rather than as a capitalist assault on the state has numerous ramifications. However, as it this question relates to the border, it is important to recognize that the working class cannot turn to their respective states for protection. The threat is not an external other, it is capitalism local and global. Brown is correct in suggesting that the major issues we face today are international, if not global, ones. In order to meet them, the working class must organize its own power internationally to challenge global capitalism and the respective state structures.

Having suggested Fanon's depiction of the limits of national liberation remain relevant, I furthermore suggest that in remedy to the challenges evoked by these limits in the neoliberal era, under universal administration of capital, we return to his suggestion of how to move beyond this: organization and political education that emphasizes to the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too¹⁰⁴, that there is

¹⁰⁴ While I am not the first to comment on an overlap between Fanon's thinking here and anarchism, (See Knight, "Anti-Colonial Anarchism, Or Anarchistic Anti-Colonialism: The Similarities in the Revolutionary

no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people. In order to put all this into practice, in order really to incarnate the people, we repeat that there must be decentralization in the extreme.¹⁰⁵

If I am wrong and nation-state sovereignty is in fact retreating, let it retreat. It was always limited in its utility for, if not actively hostile towards, liberation anyway. In its place let the working class build its own decentralized structures of international or inter communal¹⁰⁶ cooperation and self-governance.

The Border & Labor

"The working people¹⁰⁷ have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got."

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels¹⁰⁸

The US, as a settler colonial state, which has, after brief attempts by early colonial officials to use indigenous people as slaves were deemed failures, largely sought to eliminate the indigenous population, from personhood and from territory,¹⁰⁹ has always relied upon imported labor. At first, this took the form of enslaved Africans and indentured Europeans, with the institution of whiteness soon invented to prevent the latter from joining the

Theories of Frantz Fanon and Mikhail Bakunin.”), I think it bears this quote bears the strongest resemblance to Malatesta rather than Bakunin in his assertion that “we anarchists do not want to emancipate the people; we want the people to emancipate themselves. We do not believe in the good that comes from above and imposed by force; we want the new way of life to emerge from the body of the people and correspond to the state of their development and advance as they advance.” Malatesta, Errico. “Anarchism and Organization.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 95. Pg. 197-198

¹⁰⁶ Newton, Huey. “Huey Newton Introduces Revolutionary Intercommunalism, Boston College, November 18 1970.”

¹⁰⁷ As far as I know in the original German “Die Arbeiter” it is less explicitly gendered than the original English “the working men” so I have translated it that way.

¹⁰⁸ Marx, Karl, et al. The Communist Manifesto. Chapter II, Proletarians and Communists

¹⁰⁹ Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*.

former in rebellions.¹¹⁰ After the abolition of the slave trade and the eventual abolition of slavery, Black workers continued to provide essential labor but there was a continued need for new labor.

The supply of this labor largely came from Europe, especially after immigration from Asia was restricted. At first, many of these immigrant workers only had a tentative grasp on whiteness and with them came waves of radicalism, as communist and anarchist workers from Europe fomented class struggle in the US. However, many others participated in excluding the next wave of refugees, especially those further from whiteness and, in so doing, established their position within white America and the unique position in the class struggle that offered.

As Allen¹¹¹ and others¹¹² point out the benefits of whiteness are real and material. However, they do not provide liberation as they do not end the exploitation of the white worker but only cushion it somewhat with the increased exploitations of more marginalized sections of the class such as the Black or undocumented worker. Elements of the labor movement have resisted the tendency to place alliance to whiteness over class-solidarity, but far too often unions historically and contemporarily serve to represent the interests of only a certain section of the working class, and even then, not on their own terms.

By pushing down sections of the working class who are in a more marginalized position, class treasons such as whiteness help a worker or section of workers improve their status, if even only socially, without the risks involved with class struggle. In fact, it is

¹¹⁰ Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race*. Vol. 1 & 2

¹¹¹ Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race*. Vol. 1 & 2

¹¹² See Ignatiev, Noel. "Whiteness and Class Struggle." Or Olson, Joel. *The Abolition of White Democracy*.

not simply an absence of class struggle, but a betrayal of it, enforcing the exploitation of other workers for one's own gain (and the gain of capital). Allegiance whiteness is functionally scabbing on a mass scale.

Understanding the relationship of the border to labor requires such an understanding of the relationship of whiteness to class collaboration. The border offers various opportunities to engage in class collaboration, from working class people directly joining border enforcement (something which may come to redraw the boundaries of whiteness in the US), to vigilante violence against non-white or undocumented workers, to unions excluding undocumented workers, even treating them as inherently equivalent to scabs.¹¹³ The last is particularly ironic considering that the exclusion of undocumented workers from the broader labor movement facilitates their use as scabs by the bosses. Why respect a picket line of a union that has excluded you and only sees your exploitation as a threat to their position, rather than an injury to all? All these acts, though, ultimately represent support for the exploitation of immigrant labor that the border helps facilitate.

The US Bureau of Immigration, pushed for by sections of the labor movement, was originally placed within the Department of Labor seen as directly overseeing the labor supply. This was class collaboration between certain working-class organizations and the state to manage their position within class society, rather than moving towards abolishing it. As Grégoire Chamayou writes in "Manhunts"¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Wilson, Jake B. "The racialized picket line: white workers and racism in the Southern California supermarket strike."

¹¹⁴ In regard to French violence against African and Italian workers

“the root of this violence [against “workers of the lowest category”¹¹⁵] was to be sought less in national hatred than in competition for jobs between two labor groups of different national origins. Xenophobic hunts arise from the competition for wages. Their logic involves interpredation: the exploited against the exploited, the poor against the poor, workers against workers.”¹¹⁶

Ultimately, this only serves to reproduce and expand the exploitation of all workers, by driving down the wage floor. Workers advance through solidarity not national supremacy.

Before moving on, it is worth asking for whom does border enforcement meaningfully exist? It is certainly not for the wealthy who can buy legal immigration in the form of an EB 5 visa by investing \$1 million or \$500,000 to a Targeted Employment Area in the US. This is a massive sum and totally out of reach for the average person to say nothing of those most propelled to migrate by their position in global capitalism. Border practices differ significantly for different class and national citizenships, with passports from certain nations, generally those in the core, allowing far higher degrees of visa free travel than others.¹¹⁷ This class based difference in practice, along with the racialization of industries discussed previously, connects to what Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson call the “Multiplication of labor,” of which borders are a method. They see borders as a practice of Foucauldian governmentality¹¹⁸ producing the “intensification, diversification, and heterogenization”¹¹⁹ of labor as well as “one of the principle means by which capital exercises control over labor.”¹²⁰ What is produced is a differentiation of labor across and

¹¹⁵ Chamayou, Grégoire. *Manhunts: a Philosophical History*. Pg. 110

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 115. Pg. 111

¹¹⁷ Laesser, Christian. “Travel Visa Inequality.”

¹¹⁸ Mezzadra, Sandro, and Brett Neilson. *Border as Method, or, The Multiplication of Labor*. Pg. 175-183

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 118. Pg. 92

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 118. Pg. 100

within territory as a form of bio politics, these differentiations help facilitate capitalist exploitation and structure class society.

Undocumented workers are rendered unprotected from labor laws by their immigration status and generally ignored if not treated as a threat by the mainstream labor movement. They are so exploitable precisely because of their undocumented status. That status allows their employers to more easily reap profits off the backs of these workers, as well as subject them to conditions and forms of labor that other workers would reject out of hand¹²¹. Elements of paternalism, and control over workers lives exist in agriculture and domestic labor to a degree they do not in other industries because these are dominated by undocumented workers who are ineligible for welfare provisions. These forms of paternalism serve to further isolate these workers and render them dependent upon their exploiter, making any resistance to that exploitation even more dangerous.

Deportation hangs over the head of the worker while the boss who employs them faces little if any danger to themselves for doing so. Deportation can be used as an explicit tool of class struggle, in deporting those who strike or try to organize, but also simply as a weapon of class domination such as to deport a worker injured on the job.¹²² Exempted from the rights of citizens such as the vote, undocumented people have little recourse to the state to alleviate their exploitation or to broadly represent their interests and instead its functionaries offer the threat of deportation. The willingness of certain working-class white people to deputize themselves, and act as agents of, white supremacy only increases

¹²¹ Arellano, Gustavo. "When The U.S. Government Tried To Replace Migrant Farmworkers With High Schoolers."

¹²² Dooling, Shannon. "An ICE Arrest After A Workers' Comp Meeting Has Lawyers Questioning If It Was Retaliation."

that threat. This exploitability created by illegality expands the surplus value which the capitalist class can exploit from these workers and in turn the rest of the class as well.

The integration of the economies of North America under the NAFTA did not mean an end to the racialized distinctions between working classes and sections of the working classes between and within the signing nations. In its relationship to impoverishing and dispossessing the Mexican peasantry, only to restrict their movement, it could even be argued it has helped strengthen them. At the same time, capital to more freely takes advantage of exploited surplus value wherever it can find it.

Open borders for trade have meant that companies will have access to wealthy markets regardless of where they produce and so there is incentive to produce where labor is cheapest and least protected. The practice is evident in what is often referred to as "outsourcing."¹²³ It has even included the establishment of factories directly along the border on the Mexican side so as to have immediate access to US markets while relying on the labor of the Mexican working class and paying a lower rate of prevailing wages than those in the US.¹²⁴ By centering production where labor is most vulnerable to exploitation and preventing the free movement of workers, the exploitation of the working class is clearly reproduced, both directly through the increases in surplus value extracted from the

¹²³ The relocation of sites of labor to places where there are fewer labor protections and lower prevailing wages. In the early states this was largely discussed in terms of industry but it now comes to include service workers as well, particularly in call centers. By finding more highly exploitable labor capital is able to increase profits, although arguably not in the long run due to the impact on its consumer base, see Marx's Immiseration thesis (Chapter 25, Capital Vol. I) ,or because of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (Chapter 13, Capital vol. III)

¹²⁴ Workers in these factories recently went on strike and won pay increases but the differential in labor costs remains Campbell, Alexia Fernández. "Thousands of Workers at US Factories in Mexico Are Striking for Higher Wages."

peripheral workers and within the imperial core by pushing those who live in former industrial centers into more precarious forms of work such as the gig economy.

While often placed as contradictory, globalization of the economy and increased border restrictions on vulnerable sections of the working class are mutually reinforcing to help facilitate capitalist exploitation of the working class. Noam Chomsky has even questioned whether the origin of the current period of border tightening in the US lies in a preemptive response to NAFTA.¹²⁵ In response it could be argued that the US should return to something like the Bracero Program in order to regulate undocumented workers. However, under this program these workers were still barred from striking and paid a lower rate of wages than other workers in the industry and so it simply accomplished the organization of this exploitation by legal rather than criminal means.¹²⁶

Unfortunately, some sections of the left have failed to recognize the role of borders in enforcing and reproducing the capitalist social order at all. For example, this can be seen in Angela Nagle's "Left Case Against Open Borders."¹²⁷ In her piece, she never presents a picture of how the actual functioning of border policing she wishes to see would be structured or even discusses the fact that that borders are fundamentally issues of policing at all. This reactionary case had appeal on the right, with Nagel going on Tucker Carlson to present these ideas.¹²⁸ Carlson has been pushing a similar reactionary line that immigration is a threat to the working class (defined erroneously in his conception as white and male) and has been more than willing to incorporate leftist language to advance

¹²⁵ Chomsky, Noam. "The Unipolar Moment and the Obama Era."

¹²⁶ Ibid. 88. Pg. 191-192

¹²⁷ Nagel, Angela. "The Left Case against Open Borders."

¹²⁸ Blest, Paul. "Please Stop Going on Tucker Carlson."

socially, and ultimately also economically reactionary sentiments such as opposition to immigration.

While both Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn¹²⁹ have at times expressed sympathy with migrants and refugees, both of them support border enforcement with Bernie even calling open borders a Koch Brothers proposal,¹³⁰ ignoring the difference in permeability for capital and the working class. Bernie also expressed that if borders were open many poor people from around the world would come to the US and that this was not something we could handle at this point, “Can’t do it.”¹³¹ The sentiment refuses even the possibility of a socialist movement that is internationalist in its efforts to address poverty. It also leaves the roots of this poverty unquestioned. If answered, these questions might be traced back to imperialist exploitation. It betrays a contradiction at the heart of social democracy, that ultimately the improved conditions in social democratic states were conditioned on the exploitation of other nations. A reinvigorated welfare state will still continue to exclude those excluded by that state and it is important to recognize the material limits of solidarity where they continue to exist among sections of the left. Or in the words of Eugene Debs,

The plea that certain races are to be excluded because of tactical expediency would be entirely consistent in a bourgeois convention of self-seekers, but should have no place in a proletariat gathering under the auspices of an international movement that is calling on the oppressed and exploited workers of all the world to unite for their emancipation....

Away with the “tactics” which require the exclusion of the oppressed and suffering slaves who seek these shores with the hope of bettering their wretched condition and are driven back under the cruel lash of expediency by those who call themselves Socialists in the name of a movement whose

¹²⁹ Corbyn, Jeremy. “Corbyn Tweets.”

¹³⁰ Klein, Ezra. “Bernie Sanders: The Vox Conversation.”

¹³¹ Morin, Rebecca. “Bernie Sanders Says He Does Not Support Open Borders.”

proud boast it is that it stands uncompromisingly for the oppressed and down-trodden of all the earth.¹³²

Rather than accepting and legitimating arbitrary divisions within the working class, which facilitate exploitation, the workers movement must be international and challenge the exploitation of all workers. Undocumented workers do not take jobs or drive down wages, this is diffusing blame for the decreasing quality of life for most working people away from the bosses and neoliberal class warfare that have produced it and onto those most exploited by them. It is the state and the capitalist class that facilitates immiseration, not fellow workers. The workers support free movement and an end to criminalization of undocumented people, while also challenging the forces that made migration necessary in the first place. Pathways to citizenship and legal residence are worth supporting, As Hersha Walia and other organizers explain in *Undoing Border Imperialism*.¹³³ It is also important to challenge the idea of immigration as an inherent threat or crisis, to be solved through assimilation or exclusion. By recognizing the potential of migration, and the international networks it necessitates, to again help facilitate international organization and coordination of liberatory movements, which could be the bearers of new worlds, we can perhaps even see some hope in it. If there can be said to be a crisis of immigration, it should be seen in the wars and imperial exploitation that drive it and in the enforcement of its restriction. However, "Only when the workers in every country shall come to understand clearly that their interests are everywhere the same, and out of this understanding learn to act together, will the effective basis be laid for the international liberation of the working

¹³² Written to George Brewer during the Socialist Party convention in 1910 to oppose an anti-immigrant position by the Committee on Immigration (Debs, Eugene. "A Letter on Immigration to George Brewer in Girard, KS from Eugene V. Debs in Terre Haute, IN [circa May 19, 1910].")

¹³³ Ibid. 82. Pg. XVII

class.”¹³⁴ Immigration has facilitated efforts at building international solidarity historically. It need not be seen as a threat to the working class; it could again be an aid to building international popular power.

Gendered Borders *For a feminism without borders*

Despite the fact that the first border restrictions in the US centered on Asian sex workers and was predicated on the idea that these women were a threat to the social fabric of the United States, particularly the white family¹³⁵ and that this back ground continues to shape policy¹³⁶ and as Katherine M Donato and Grabaccia analyze in *Gender and International Migration*,¹³⁷ women have been migrating along with men for centuries, the relationships between border enforcement and gender is often under analyzed.

The early laws targeting sex workers did not exclusively target those actually engaged in sex work but also immigrant women who had sex or children outside of marriage.

Concerns about the sexual morality of female immigrants intersected with concerns over their economic roles in the new industrial economy, as well as with prevailing middle-class views of immigrant women and their children as dependent on male breadwinners to whom they were married. When immigrant women did not conform to such American social norms, they became highly vulnerable to exclusion and deportation proceedings.¹³⁸ The laws even included women who might have been married by common law rather than civil law. While these polices may have resulted in few deportations, they did restrict

¹³⁴ Rucker, Rudolf. Anarcho-Syndicalism. Pg. 71

¹³⁵ Dadhania, Pooja R. "Deporting Undesirable Women." Pg. 57

¹³⁶ Ibid. 135. Pg. 74

¹³⁷ Donato, Katharine M., and Donna Gabaccia. Gender and International Migration from the Slavery Era to the Global Age.

¹³⁸ Moloney, Deirdre M. National Insecurities: Immigrants and U.S. Deportation Policy since 1882. Pg. 49

opportunities for women's immigration and helped shape and enforce social and familial norms seen as beneficial to the US state.¹³⁹ Also, importantly, these policies were more strictly enforced against women from outside of Europe, demonstrating an interrelationship between racial and gendered exclusion. This racialization can also be seen in the difference in policing of sex workers in the United States between the northeast versus the southwest. In the southwest, Mexican clients, seen as a racialized other, were prosecuted whereas in the northeast, immigrant sex workers were criminalized as a threat to the social fabric.¹⁴⁰

Gendered oppression and racialization leads to exploitation for immigrant women. In *Feminism Without Borders*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty suggests that a common exploitation via "women's work," emphasizes a mutual interest in ending oppression, among third world women.¹⁴¹ The majority of the 2 million domestic workers in the United States are Black and immigrant women, many of them undocumented.¹⁴² and like agricultural workers (and there are at least 700,000 women agricultural workers as well)¹⁴³ they have been exempted from labor protections. Selma James identifies the struggle over pay for unwaged reproductive and domestic work as a site where "the lines between the revolutionary Black and the revolutionary feminist movements begin to

¹³⁹ Ibid. 138.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 138. Pg. 69-70

¹⁴¹ Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Pg. 167-168

¹⁴² Crumpton, Taylor. "Domestic Workers Demand Your Respect."

¹⁴³ Ncl. "We Must Not Leave Farmworker Women out of the Harassment Discussion."

blur.”¹⁴⁴ Carmen Teeple Hopkins’s brings this connection further by tying social reproduction theory into the waged housework of immigrant women.¹⁴⁵

These workers, as the name of their industry would suggest, often work in the home of their employer, occasionally also living there as well. The power imbalance of this inherently isolated and highly atomized work environment puts the domestic worker in a very vulnerable position open to abuse by their employers. If the worker is undocumented calling the police on an employer who sexually or otherwise harasses them could result in deportation. While viewing the police as protectors of women is obviously questionable this clearly puts domestic workers at a structural disadvantage. A similar power imbalance exists of agricultural workers who live in facilities owned by the boss, with the isolation compounded by the rural farm settings of the industry. Gendered violence against women workers in these industries has a structural and practical legacy tracing back to slavery.¹⁴⁶

Border policing itself enacts gendered violence. The entire system of incarceration and detention is one that facilitates abuse and turns a blind eye towards preventing it.¹⁴⁷ Abuse serves, in function, and is often openly discussed, as part of the punishment of prison.¹⁴⁸ This is no less true for immigrant detainees and has been outlined as a problem for decades.¹⁴⁹ Gendered violence against migrants also includes violence against queer people such as the housing of trans migrants in facilities that do not match their gender or

¹⁴⁴ James, Selma. "Sex, race and working-class power."

¹⁴⁵ Teeple Hopkins, Carmen. "7. Mostly Work, Little Play: Social Reproduction, Migration, and Paid Domestic Work in Montreal."

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 137. Pg. 68

¹⁴⁷ Giller, Olga. "Patriarchy on Lockdown: Deliberate Indifference and Male Prison Rape."

¹⁴⁸ Robertson, James E. "Cruel and Unusual Punishment in United States Prisons: Sexual Harassment among Male Inmates."

¹⁴⁹ *Refuge. Here. Stop Prisoner Rape. A First Look at Sexual Abuse in Immigration Detention.* Stop Prisoner Rape

solitary confinement,¹⁵⁰ a common experience for trans people in the prison system in general. Homophobic abuse by guards, likewise a common occurrence in the prison system at large, has also been reported.¹⁵¹ As many queer migrants, are actively seeking asylum¹⁵² from such abuse, this is doubly troubling and demonstrates a clear limit to the claims of protected status under a carceral state.

While less common in the US, in Europe, especially Germany, after New Year's Eve in Cologne 2015, there has been a wave of reactionary rhetoric against refugees under the guise of protecting women, obviously invoking classic racist fantasies of the racialized other as a threat to the purity of the white woman. There is little basis to the claim. Unfortunately, as is persistently true across patriarchal societies, the biggest threat to a woman in Germany is not a refugee but her own partner.¹⁵³ Feminism is not inherent to the imperial core and patriarchy is not a trait only endemic to the periphery. If anything, imperialism has helped shape these global divisions and hierarchies of gender and sexuality.¹⁵⁴

The debate here connects to longer trends in the use of feminism in the post-9/11 such as those Identified by Christine Delphy in *Separate and Dominate*.¹⁵⁵ The claims of feminism, if not all feminists themselves, has been subverted to advance racialized exclusion, where the rights of women are pitted against the rights of the other. However,

¹⁵⁰ Washington, John. "Here Is Just Some of the Hateful Abuse Immigrants Face in Detention Centers."

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 149.

¹⁵² Shadel, Jon. "Inside America's Mass Detention of Queer Asylum Seekers."

¹⁵³ Kurasinska, Lidia. "Men in Europe Must Stop Blaming Migrants for 'Importing' Gender Violence."

¹⁵⁴ Lugones, Maria. "The Coloniality of Gender."

¹⁵⁵ Delphy, Christine. *Separate and Dominate*. (Although she writes specifically in the context of banning the use of the headscarf by Muslim women in France, there are broader implications of her work, and there are obvious parallels to the pro-ban French feminists and Laura Bush's proposal that the war in Afghanistan would help liberate women there.)

she asks “Did we have to choose between two sets of victims? Between anti-racist struggle and the anti-sexist struggle? And if that is the case then *is it the way the questions were asked, the way the problem was stated, which led to this dilemma?*”¹⁵⁶ She explains racialized men are not unique purveyors of violence¹⁵⁷ and “the women of a racialized group are just as much victims of racism as the men are.”¹⁵⁸ She identifies the danger of looking at a nexus of oppression as central and the others as secondary, writing “It’s not so much that we need to decentre our perspective in order to define patriarchal oppression as much as we need to *reject the very idea that there is a center.*”¹⁵⁹ This is not a call to refuse to recognize the specificity of position within systems of hierarchy but to move beyond an analysis that sees racism as a problem of blackness or patriarchy as a problem of women for instance. We all exist within these social systems, relating to and maintaining them. Only a universal emancipatory project can free us; our struggle is not separate from theirs, nor their struggle from ours.

Importantly an universal emancipatory project is not one that appeals only to the lowest common denominator but takes seriously the specific development of freedom for each because without that there can be no freedom for all. To quote from Selma James,’

Strange to think that even today, when confronted with the autonomy of the Black movement or the autonomy of the women's movement, there are those who talk about this "dividing the working class." Strange indeed when our experience has told us that in order for the working class to unite in spite of the divisions which are inherent in its very structure-factory versus plantation versus home versus schools-those at the lowest levels of the hierarchy must themselves find the key to their weakness, must themselves

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 155. Pg. 138

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 155. Pg. 150

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 155. Pg. 156

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. 155P6. 168

find the strategy which will attack that point and shatter it, must themselves find their own modes of struggle.¹⁶⁰

Climate change & the Threat of Borders

“Ecology or Catastrophe”

- **Janet Biehl**¹⁶¹

All of the problems outlined in the preceding sections will only be exacerbated by climate change. The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report of 1.5°C degrees of warming indicates a high likelihood of catastrophic impacts of climate change without major change in the next decade.¹⁶² When combining the analysis of the carbon majors report in 2017 indicating that 100 companies are responsible for 71% of global emissions,¹⁶³ and that wealthier people, even those who seek out green products, consume more resources and produce more pollution than poorer people,¹⁶⁴ so much that the richest 10 percent of people on earth produce 50% of the CO₂ emissions,¹⁶⁵ it becomes clear that despite the rhetoric of an Anthropocene, what we live in is not a crises of the human species or civilization, but of a specific form of organization and production embodied in capitalism and the state.

In chapter 21 of Book II of *Das Kapital*,¹⁶⁶ Marx explains the process of the re-investment by the capitalist of surplus value generated by workers into retaining and

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 144.

¹⁶¹ Biehl, Janet. *Ecology or Catastrophe: the Life of Murray Bookchin*.

¹⁶² “Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C Approved by Governments.”

¹⁶³ Shen, Lucinda. “These 100 Companies Are Responsible for Most of the World’s Carbon Emissions.”

¹⁶⁴ Moser, Stephanie, and Silke Kleinhüeckelkotten. “Good Intentions, but Low Impacts: Diverging Importance of Motivational and Socioeconomic Determinants Explaining Pro-Environmental Behavior, Energy Use, and Carbon Footprint.”

¹⁶⁵ “Extreme Carbon Inequality.” *Extreme Carbon Inequality* | Oxfam International

¹⁶⁶ Marx, Karl. *Capital*. Vol. 1-3

expanding productive capacity of capital. Marx makes various references of the necessity of capitalism to exist in this form throughout Book Three and most fully explains it in Book One chapter 24¹⁶⁷ “on the motivations of the individual capitalist in the market system of completion”, saying

“The development of capitalist production makes it constantly necessary to keep increasing the amount of the capital laid out in a given industrial undertaking, and competition makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to by each individual capitalist, as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly expanding his capital, in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot, except by means of progressive accumulation.”¹⁶⁸

Marx explains this growth as an upwards spiral, as opposed to a circle of simple reproduction, in which profits are simply reinvested to maintain the current rate of production. His analysis includes the propensity for crises and booms, related to the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. The perpetual necessity of growth in production and profit stands in stark contradiction with the ecological principle of sustainability, the limits of natural resources, and the regenerative capacity of ecosystems. As Bookchin wrote in *Remaking Society*, “Capitalism can no more be 'persuaded' to limit growth than a human being can be 'persuaded' to stop breathing. Attempts to 'green' capitalism, to make it 'ecological', are doomed by the very nature of the system as a system of endless growth.”¹⁶⁹ Expanded reproduction, in economic terms, is the primary driver of ecological catastrophe.

However, out of sick irony,¹⁷⁰ the most impacted by this catastrophe are not the profiteers of calamity but in the language of Fanon, the wretched of the earth. It is precisely those least responsible for the climate crises who face its worst impacts. People living in

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 166.

¹⁶⁸ pg 649 modern library 1906

¹⁶⁹ Bookchin, Murray. *Remaking Society: Pathways to a Green Future*.

¹⁷⁰ Not to imply that this is some random happen stance. This is a product of class society with the more affluent better able to protect themselves from the impacts and the poorest placed in precarious situations, more susceptible to disruption by the impacts of climate change.

slums, in low-lying zones, and in peripheral areas along deserts will be most vulnerable to dislocation by climate change. Climate refugees, for example, are not a future possibility but a current reality in Bangladesh, with erosion and sea level rise already displacing 50,000-200,000 people every year in the low lying country.¹⁷¹ Bangladesh itself has been a depository for refugees of the Rohingya genocide, pointing to the increasing reality of multiple stages of refugeedom for certain populations, not a dissimilar experience to that of Palestinian refugees now fleeing the destruction of the failed revolution and civil war in Syria. As the contradictions of capitalism mount on a global scale and crises intensify and spread, multiple stages of dislocation and migration in a lifetime only becomes more likely. Climate change is already disrupting global and local ecosystems and the potential for the creation of mass migrations of climate refugees increases along with our carbon footprint.

While it is still possible to avoid the scales of dislocation and migration that may become reality if the current system continues as it is doing, it will require a fundamental shift in our economic system. Our societies must move away from one organized around a continual accumulation of capital to have any chance of addressing the problem. While the state is often framed as the alternative to the market in addressing climate change, its fundamental interrelation with capitalism challenges this notion as does the developmentalism central to the function of much of its organization and activity.¹⁷² Scholars such as Elinor Ostrom bring forward the usefulness of commons, controlled collectively and horizontally, rather than market or state control as a method of environmental management which has the potential to ensure collective access while

¹⁷¹ Szczepanski, Marcin, et al. "Bangladesh: A Country Underwater, a Culture on the Move."

¹⁷² Robertson, Morgan. "Political ecology and the state."

preserving resources.¹⁷³ Her work lends credibility to the work of Murray Bookchin and particularly one of the central theses of Social-ecology that “dominating’ nature emerged from the domination of man by man.¹⁷⁴ As capitalism has disrupted and privatized the commons, a process which has been immiserating for those who had relied on them and now no longer have access, it rendered the commons privately exploitable, providing the raw materials for expanded reproduction. We have seen in reality not the tragedy of the commons but the tragedy of private property.

Marx analyzes enclosure of as an element of primitive accumulation prior to and facilitating the rise of capitalism,¹⁷⁵ but as pointed out by David Harvey it can be seen as a continuing process, along with primitive accumulation more broadly.¹⁷⁶ The continuation of such dispossession is evident, for example, both in the deforestation of the Amazon, which had once maintained large civilizations that increased soil quality and tree coverage,¹⁷⁷ as well as in efforts to “protect” it that exclude its indigenous inhabitants.¹⁷⁸ Protection as exclusion is a common liberal approach to environmentalism, which can be seen as an extension of an ideology that views human beings as outside of nature. The approach applies to national parks and other protected environments where those who have lived there and who played a role in shaping the existing environment are to be excluded¹⁷⁹ while extraction is concurrently permitted somewhere else. In this way, it

¹⁷³ Elinor Ostrom (2008) *The Challenge of Common-Pool Resources*, *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 169. Pg. 32. & Bookchin, Murray. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. Pg. 19

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 166 Vol. 1

¹⁷⁶ “4. Accumulation by Dispossession.” *The New Imperialism*, by David Harvey,

¹⁷⁷ Kern, Dirse Clara, et al. “Distribution of Amazonian dark earths in the Brazilian Amazon.” *Amazonian Dark Earths*. Springer, Dordrecht, 2003. 51-75.

¹⁷⁸ Turner, Terence. “Neoliberal ecopolitics and indigenous peoples: the Kayapo, the “Rainforest Harvest,” and The Body Shop.”

¹⁷⁹ Spence, Mark David. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*.

designates ecological areas into productive and aesthetic zones, one to bring profits to the bourgeoisie, the other to bring them leisure.¹⁸⁰ A similar logic can be seen in extensions of reactionary arguments against immigrants into the ecological arena.

Certain environmentalists such as Edward Abbey,¹⁸¹ have argued for stricter control of immigrants, particularly undocumented people, utilizing a framing where the resources of the nation are under an external threat that must be preserved and protected. In these arguments, there is a not so subtle Malthusianism, where ecological problems are traced not to capitalist production and growth or state developmentalism but to simply the growth in the number of people. Malthus explicitly penned his theories of population as a refutation to the arguments of early “utopian” socialists such as Godwin and Owen, and the framing of the ecological problem as one of simply numbers carries similarly anti-working-class connotations today. Put simply, it is a framing that blames the poor for their own condition, if not all of society’s problems, and in so doing obscures the nature of class society.

With a massive global inequality in access to resources, and therefore ,resource consumption and with continued population growth almost entirely occurring outside the imperial core in areas of lower resource consumption, framing immigrants from the periphery as a threat to resources is fundamentally wrong and serves to maintain the global divisions of labor and exploitation with generate the profits that actually drive ecological destruction. In a settler colony such as the US, where many of those excluded are

¹⁸⁰ Neumann, Roderick P. *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa.*

¹⁸¹ Crewdson, John M., and Edward Abbey. “Holes in the Fence.”

themselves indigenous, this framing also accepts the legitimacy of the colonial claim over resources, and the continued dispossession of indigenous people.

Ideally the worst impacts of climate change can be prevented, and mass scale human migration can be avoided.¹⁸² However, if the necessary social and ecological system change does not emerge, it is crucial that the nations most likely to withstand ecological catastrophe, facilitated by wealth accumulated through imperial plunder, accept those who have been displaced as a result of that plunder and the ecological destruction it produced. With a turn towards the commons, we could organize towards an inclusionary abundance. However, the contemporary border regime, exemplary of the hardening of divisions in class society and between nation-states, stands in direct opposition to such a system of organization. Rather than protecting us from the imaginary threat from below, borders help wed us to a structure producing catastrophe from above.

The Border is not Your Friend

There are those who will claim that the border will help protect workers, or the environment, or women, or queer people, etc. Do not believe them. They are lying or they do not know better. The border only exists as a system of violent exclusion and racist policing. It facilitates the exploitation of labor and helps divide states for development and exploitation; it separates families and subjects migrant women to violence at the hands of the state, traffickers, and employers, and it puts queer migrants in dangerous situations which have often cost their lives as well as subjecting them to a variety of abuses. The

¹⁸² I hope I am not being overly optimistic to say this

border is not your friend. It is an instrument of domination, division, exploitation, and subjugation.

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