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SPECIAL ISSUE ON BRITISH LABOUR AND MIGRATION TO EUROPE DURING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Introduction to the Special Issue

Fabrice Bensimon*

Sorbonne Université
*Corresponding author. Email: fabrice.bensimon@sorbonne-universite.fr

Abstract

In the period 1815–1870, several thousand British workers and engineers went to the continent for work purposes, playing a decisive part in European industrialisation. Workers emigrated because they could market their skills at good value; or because their British employers sought to make the most of their technical lead by setting businesses up abroad, and by producing on the continent, they could avoid protective tariffs.

Which social and cultural factors enabled British capital to flow to continental and indeed global enterprise, British skills to shape labour processes overseas, and British male and female labourers to seek and find overseas employment? This introduction to the Special Issue raises a series of questions on these flows. It asks what numbers went to the continent, in comparison with the large flows to the US and the British World. It addresses the legislative and economic aspects of these labour migrations and tries to relate these to the discussion on the supposed 'high-wage economy' of the British industrial revolution. It also focuses on the practicalities of migration. Last, it is also interested in the cultural, religious and associational life of the British migrants, as well as in the relations with the local populations.

1. Introduction

In the period 1815–1870, several thousand British workers and engineers went to the continent for work purposes, playing a decisive part in European industrialisation. They came from across Britain, especially industrial areas like South Wales, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, and Dundee. They worked in linen, cotton, lacemaking, in wool-combing, the iron industry, machine-building, steamship manufacture and in railway building. In these sectors, Britain had a technical advantage. This flow was not new: engineers and artisans had travelled to the continent throughout the eighteenth century, a period for which J. R. Harris has traced the many textile workers and mechanics who emigrated to France.[1] The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars reduced the flows but did not totally end them as, among others, the case of William Cockerill (1759–1832) testifies: a Lancashire mechanic, he went to Saint Petersburg in 1794, then to Sweden, before settling in Verviers by 1799 and then Seraing, near Liège, in French Belgium. There, he set up an expanding enterprise making textile machinery, which later became an industrial empire. Cockerill returned to Britain on several occasions during the

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Napoleonic wars, and his sons came out to Belgium to help him with the business during this period.

After 1815, flows increased. Workers emigrated because they could market their skills at good value; or because their British employers sought to make the most of their technical lead by setting businesses up abroad; or because by producing on the continent, they could avoid protective tariffs. Most workers went to France, Belgium, and the German states, but some went to Holland, Scandinavia, Austria and the Hasburg dominions, Switzerland and as far as Russia and the Mediterranean. Like emigrants to North America, some stayed just a few years – for example, during the building of a railway – and then went elsewhere, while others settled on the continent permanently. In consequence, although European countries followed differing paths to industrialisation, British workers and engineers contributed to each of these distinctive pathways. How decisive was this contribution?

To date, only selected aspects of this flow of British emigrants have been studied. Most research has focused on economic history, starting with the major work of W. O. Henderson in the 1950s.[2] The 'diffusionist' approach was central to Henderson's argument: British engineers, businessmen and workers had played a key part in the industrialisation of Europe. Sidney Pollard subscribed to this approach, in particular for Belgium and France.[3] Some research has focused on specific technologies or trades, for example, Chris Evans and Göran Rydén on the iron industry and Rainer Fremdling specifically on the British iron puddlers, who worked in most nineteenth-century continental iron centres.[4] Economic historians have also highlighted the ways specific manufacturing techniques were circulated. We know more, however, about the economic parameters of these European developments than about the social and cultural histories of the workers themselves. And even then, old questions can be raised again, and old answers can be challenged. A significant revisionist body of work now argues that the industrial take-off was not so radical, and that British prominence was not so important by the end of the eighteenth century. It also argues that the national scale is not necessarily the right one for such an assessment, especially if one tries to focus on technological transfer and circulations 'from below': many of the exchanges, involving both European and non-European destinations, took place on a regional or local level.[5] Recent work even argues that the 'diffusion' model on a macro-economic level is not satisfactory. For instance, Liliane Pérez and Catherine Verna have argued that local characteristics always interfered with circulation processes; delays, dilutions, failures and detours make it impossible for historians to think of a homogenous model of diffusion, either from Britain to Europe, or from Europe to the world.[6]

Which social and cultural factors enabled British capital to flow to continental and indeed global enterprise, British skills to shape labour processes overseas and British male and female labourers to seek and find overseas employment? More broadly, how did these phenomena play out on the continent and in the 'British World' in this period? This introduction aims to present the general parameters of these flows, some of which are analysed in the articles of the dossier: Fabrice Bensimon on the emigration of British lacemakers to the continent; Marjory Harper on skilled labour emigration to the British World; and Jarmo Peltola on the British part in Finnish industrialisation. One of the questions is

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how, for British emigrants, Europe compared with other destinations like the Empire or the US, but also with domestic destinations.[7] And where exactly did the artisans go to on the continent? A more difficult question is how to address and quantify the economic dimension, at a time when states were only just starting to count foreigners. Last, a series of questions regarding the practicalities of migration, the British migrants' relations to and integration with local populations, as well as their cultural, religious and associational activities – their schools, religious practices, associations, newspapers, games and leisure – also needs to be addressed.

2. European and long-distance emigration

Research on the history of emigrants has expanded over the past 30 years. There is now a substantial body of research on the aspirations, belief systems and daily lives of the nineteenth-century British emigrants from at least two perspectives. One is that of settler societies: a large historical literature is available on British *immigration* to the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, and a more global history of the 'Anglo World' is also being written.[8] Historians have an increasingly sophisticated understanding of labour in the anglophone world. The other, more recent, body of research, is that of British *emigration* itself, as the late Eric Richards, Stephen Constantine or Marjory Harper have done, including in the piece in this issue.[9] This work offers a different perspective, and although it is confronted with the scarcity and scattering of sources, it is often brilliant.[10] It includes works on the transfer and influence of British technology: the global diaspora of British engineering to the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and parts of South America, India, the Middle and the Far East and Africa has received significant historical attention.[11] There is also now a significant bibliography on the diffusion of technology to the European empires and on the part played by industrial technologies in imperialism, especially in the British case.[12]

But here again, Europe and the transnational technical exchanges between Britain and the continent are usually excluded from the picture. This is partly because most of the research on British emigration has been conducted by English-speaking historians from the settler colonies and the United States. This emphasis on long-distance migration has also been shaped by archival considerations: passenger lists, traditionally an important source for historians of migration, were only kept for long-haul voyages to destinations outside of Europe. In Europe, the British seldom remained as specific English-speaking communities: either they returned to Britain for good; or they integrated, married local people, spoke the languages of their incoming countries, and the memory of their origins has faded, beyond family history or local history. As a result, less has been written and researched on emigration to the continent. Only recently have many of the long-standing ties of England/Britain with the continent been reconsidered, for example, in Renaud Morieux's work on the English Channel in the eighteenth century: he argues that the Channel should be seen as a link rather than as a divide. Although most works emphasise the 'Second Hundred Years' War' (1689–1815) and the numerous conflicts between both countries, Franco-British peaceful intercourse was common between seamen, fishermen, migrants, travellers, and other actors of this 'diplomacy from below'.[13]

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No comprehensive figures for nineteenth-century British labour migration to continental Europe have been compiled. We know that in terms of numbers, it was not one of the major flows, in comparison with the ten million Britons who reputedly emigrated overseas between 1816 and 1914, to whom six million Irish can be added.[14] However, flows between Britain and the continent were not insignificant. For instance, in the sample studied by Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull, 12.3 per cent of the 146 British emigrant families in the period 1750–1839 went to western Europe, and also 6.8 per cent of the 459 families in 1840–1879. It is likely that emigration to the continent had much in common with domestic migration.[15] Many connections were kept with the home region, where people could easily return depending on trade cycles, illness, marriage, etc. Migration was often seen as temporary and it could be itinerant, for example, in the case of the railway construction workers. However, many of the emigrants stayed permanently. One of the purposes of this collection of articles is to integrate an analysis of the continental dimensions of Britain's globalising workforce into the historiography.

3. Continental destinations

When they went to Europe, where did the British workers go? In the decades that followed the end of the Napoleonic wars, **France** was their major destination. Several factors contributed to this trend. The size of the population, its markets and its closeness to Britain, the fact that France lagged behind British industry in several sectors, and the anglomania of some in the French elite, especially under the Restoration and the July Monarchy (1815–1848) created abundant opportunities in France for British investors, engineers and workers. The main sectors where British workers went were machine building, textile, iron and the railways. From 1815 onwards, British engineers and mechanics could easily make and sell machines that were unheard of in France, for example, in textile, iron, steam navigation. In the linen industry, the British played a critical part in Brittany, Normandy, Picardy and northern France, where flax had long been a local crop and a cottage industry. The machine-made lace industry was pioneered by British artisans from Nottinghamshire from the late 1810s (see Bensimon's article on this). And when France developed its cotton industry, British workers played a large part. Welsh puddlers and rollers went to work in several French ironworks. And from the 1840s, when France started setting up a railway network, the British already had a decade of experience. The first line between Paris and the sea, Paris-Rouen-Le Havre, was built by Britons between 1841 and 1847. It was a technical achievement, with many bridges, long tunnels and stunning viaducts. Its financial capital was Scottish and French; it was built under the supervision of a British engineer, Joseph Locke, whose British contractors, William Mackenzie and Thomas Brassey, became two of the most successful railway entrepreneurs. The trains and locomotives were built by British manufacturers in Rouen and even railway stations were designed by a British architect. Mackenzie and Brassey also hired several thousand workers in Britain, most of whom were navvies, typically with more limited skills than the traditional figure of the emigrant engineer.[16] Last, although the main emigrant flows of Cornish miners were to the Americas and South Africa, some went to France, for example, to Pontgibaud in the Massif Central where 50 went to dig iron ore from the 1850s.[17]

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Belgium was the other country where the British influx was critical.[18] Belgian early industrialisation cannot be understood without the contribution of British workers. After his beginnings in textile machinery, Cockerill went into steam machines, iron, and coalmining. By 1830, his vertically integrated firm employed 2,500 workers in the Seraing ironworks and by 1835 the firm controlled 60 separate establishments in Belgium, as well as some in the Netherlands. Likewise, William's son John Cockerill (1790–1840), played a decisive part in building the first railways in Belgium, but also Austria and the Ottoman Empire, using machinery purchased from the British engineers Robert and George Stephenson. In Gougnies, near Charleroi, engineer and iron master Thomas Bonehill (1796–1858) also played a key part in the development of engineering and the iron industry. Long after they had left Britain, both the Cockerills and Bonehill relied upon the skills of British mechanics they continued to hire.

The British probably played a lesser part in **German** industrialisation, but early German railways also relied upon British locomotives, some of which were initially driven by British mechanics. Rainer Fremdling has shown that in several German states, textile machine-makers, mechanics and machine-builders, shipbuilders, mining engineers and ironworkers were also hired.[19]

On **Scandinavia**, Kristine Bruland's work on the Norwegian textile industry from 1843 to 1870 shows that although the numbers of migrant workers were small, the amount of technical data that flowed across the North Sea was very substantial.[20] Peltola has worked on the influence of foreign – mainly British – experts on the industrialisation of Finland, especially Tampere, its main textile centre, the 'Manchester of Finland', and his article develops this subject.[21] The Finnish case is directly connected to Cockerill: in the early 1830s, John Barker, who had worked at Cockerill's, moved to Sweden – where the British played a crucial part in early mechanisation. In 1836, he reached Finland where he built up Finlayson cotton mill, which later became the largest factory in Scandinavia.

The part played by the British in the industrialisation of the **Habsburg Empire** should also be considered. For example, in Letovice (Lettowitz), the modern-day Czech Republic, a lacemaking company was created in 1832, in the buildings of an old manufacture; British machines were imported, and the company soon benefited from imperial protection, resulting in a long-term enterprise.[22] After 1843 with the aid of British entrepreneurs in **Russia**, Russian cotton production began to expand rapidly. Most factories were filled with British-made equipment, much of it bought through the import agency of a German immigrant named Knoop, who had been a clerk in a Manchester cotton firm before going to Russia. Knoop faithfully placed all the orders that came to him with English firms and he was happy to tell any Russian entrepreneur who wanted alterations to the usual equipment: 'That is not your affair; in England they know better than you.'[23] Later on, the Welsh ironmaster John Hughes (1814–1889) played a key part in the industrialisation of the Donbass region, where he arrived in 1870 with one hundred skilled ironworkers and miners from South Wales and set up an industrial complex that was producing three quarters of Russia's iron ore when Hughes died. The town was named Yuzovka (Hughesovka, renamed Stalino in 1924 and Donetsk in 1961); the Welsh only went home after the Russian revolution.

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In the **Mediterranean,** although **Spain and Italy** were mostly rural and unindustrialised in the first part of the nineteenth century, railways were built by British engineers in both countries.[24] In French Provence, on the eve of 1848, there were at least 15 British engineers and dozens of workers in iron and machinery; they played a key part in the industrialisation of Marseilles and the Bouches-du-Rhône.[25] Some English mechanics also went to work in the arsenal of Cartagena in Spain, and probably elsewhere.[26]

All in all, with diverse impact and according to varying chronology, British workers as well as British businessmen, capital and technology, were present in most, if not all, European countries in the early stages of their industrialisation.

4. Legislative, economic and quantitative aspects

Why and how was labour migration debated and settled? Addressing quantitative and legislative issues helps to establish the broad economic and political framework within which migrant workers' social and cultural lives were enacted. Why did British artisans go to foreign countries whose languages they could not speak, and with which Britain had sometimes long been at war, as was the case with France? And why would skilled and unskilled workers want to leave Britain, which until 1870, was the most industrialised and most dynamic economy in Europe and indeed in the world? In 1824, a parliamentary debate led to the lifting of the British ban on the emigration of artisans: the ban had not prevented artisans from emigrating, and by posing a threat to those who wanted to return, it could be counter-productive. In 1843, in the context of the rise of free-trading policies, and following another parliamentary enquiry, the ban on the export of machinery was also lifted. Obviously British machine-manufacturers had not waited until then: by the middle of the century, British machines were sold all across Europe – Elizabeth Gaskell mentioned 'the great firms of engineers, who send from out their towns of workshops engines and machinery to the dominions of the Czar and the Sultan'.[27] But the repeal of the ban led to a rise in the exports of machinery. And as Bruland has shown, while the British market became saturated, exports became even more important so that by the 1860s, they could account for half of the sales of British manufacturers. The exports of machinery implied that engineers went to set them up; they also meant that the buyers – be they British or Continental – had to find a skilled workforce to operate them. Before local, cheaper workers could be trained, a British workforce was imported.

This connects with another discussion on the Industrial Revolution, on the 'high-wage economy': Robert Allen has argued that it was the high cost of labour in relation to capital that fuelled technological innovation.[28] Relying on the case of hand-spinning, Jane Humphries and Benjamin Schneider have criticised this and replied that a widespread low-wage, low-productivity employment was at the core of the factory system.[29] Indeed, migrants provide interesting case studies for wage comparison: did flows across the Channel sustain either approach? In several cases, for example, lacemakers, the wages of migrants overseas, though they fared better than the wages of the local workforce, turned out not to compare favourably with those of workers in Britain. Often, lacemakers were not hired: they were migrant artisans who tried to circumvent the high French tariffs that protected

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the French market, the largest in Europe. In other sectors, individuals also moved to the continent, but based on word of mouth information (see below).

We have seen that quantifying flows is difficult. It is easier to find snapshots. J. R. Harris estimated that in the eighteenth century about 1,000 Britons went to France for work purposes.[30] In the nineteenth century, flows were much larger, and making an exact count is impossible, as only fragmentary information exists. In 1824, figures were debated in Parliament and ranged from 1,300 to 16,000.[31] Mackenzie and Brassey recruited 2,000 to 5,000 workers for the building of railways in Normandy in the 1840s, and there were 20,357 British – many of them middle class – in France in 1851, when foreigners were first counted in the census.[32] In Saint-Pierre-lès-Calais, a manufacturing town made of lacemakers and which had no population of middle-class leisured Britons, there were 1,597 British in 1861. Similar examples could be mentioned. The total of British workers who went to the continent between 1815 and 1870 cannot have been below 10,000; and at a given time, it probably never exceeded this total. But because of the varied nature of these flows (temporary or permanent; settled or itinerant) and the absence of systematic state counts, it is not possible to assess numbers accurately.

5. Practicalities of migration

How did British workers travel to the continent? Some craftsmen travelled alone or with a mate, relying on word of mouth information. There are several cases of well-documented individual trajectories exemplifying this pathway. Leather-dresser Colin worked in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, in the late 1810s after deserting from the Royal Navy in La Rochelle.[33] Mechanic Timothy Claxton spent 1820–1823 working for the czar in gas-works in St Petersburg.[34] Printer Charles Manby Smith spent four years in Paris in the 1820s, mostly printing books in English that were smuggled into the British market.[35] Henry Hetherington, the future editor of *Poor Man's Guardian*, also a printer, went to Ghent for work after a period of unemployment, and later claimed his radicalism came from conversations with a Belgian printer.[36] Goldsmith William Duthie left a narrative of his tramping over three-and-a-half years in Austria, France and Germany.[37] And many more individual routes could be mentioned. More frequently, workers went overseas when they were hired by employers, or by agents, to man particular factories or construction sites and to operate machinery. Instances of this pathway include the migration of workers for the firm Manby and Wilson in Charenton, for the Cockerills in Belgium, and for Mackenzie and Brassey in several European countries.[38] Some groups of artisans and individual craftsmen went through chain migration, relying on communal support and good lines of information: Nottinghamshire lacemakers to northern France illustrate this pathway, as do Scottish granite-tradesmen who crossed the Atlantic to New England.

Maybe we should also investigate whether these flows were intended to be temporary or permanent, stable, or itinerant (as in the case of railway construction). It would also be interesting to know about stage of life cycle when migration occurred: were most migrants young? Colin Pooley argues that in the case of emigration

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overseas as in that of domestic internal migration, what is seen as 'labour migration' may have been prompted by questions of marriage, family or housing.[39]

Did men and women migrate in different ways? Although studies on the interaction between gender and migration have gained ground, women very much remain the hidden figures of these flows. While most emigrant workers were single men (for example, railway navvies, puddlers, engineers), many emigrated with their families (for example, most textile workers). Some of the wives were part of the invisible but critical workforce, for example, among the lacemakers: husbands operated the machines, but all the finishing work was usually carried out by women who were not listed as lace workers in the census records. French manufacturer Narcisse Faucheur, who set up a semi-mechanical lace shop near Lille, only employing eight workers, carefully 'arranged for an English woman from Nottingham who was very skilled in embroidery work to teach' his workers in Saint-Armand.[40] Some single women also emigrated on their own. Thus, Dundee linen workers often emigrated at a very young age to work in French linen factories, labouring under the supervision of male foremen and masters, some of whom were British.[41]

6. Relations with the local populations

The issue of interaction with the local populations encompasses a variety of different and changing situations. It is often made more obscure by the national stereotypes conveyed not only by the press, but also by major political and literary figures of the period, from the commentators Carlyle and Bagehot to the novelists Thackeray and Dickens.[42] We know the integration of the British workers could be impeded by language barriers, religious differences, national prejudices and, above all, economic competition. When they were recruited at high cost, British skilled workers were often asked to educate the local workforce, which they sometimes resisted doing.

However, workers entered into diverse relations with the local populations: they made friends, and some married and had children with local women or men. In 1848, the demonstrations and riots that occurred in northern France and Normandy against British workers seem to contradict the relatively successful integration of most of them into local communities. These flashpoints must be understood in a context of economic crisis and revolutions in which various national groups were targeted and the rhetoric of national belonging was deployed in the struggle for limited employment.[43] By assessing commentary on British integration in print culture, social practices such as friendship and marriage, and specific incidents in which the fragility of integration was exposed, we can try to illuminate key aspects of the daily lives of British migrant workers in the European and 'British World' contexts.

7. Cultural, religious and associational life

When they lived abroad in groups, British workers often tried to reproduce some aspects of their national culture. For example, they set up Protestant places of worship and schools. In towns or areas where they were numerous, some British migrants created English-language newspapers that addressed local communities. Examples include the *Paris Sun-Beam* (1836–1837), the *Norman Times* (1844) and the *Railway Advocate and Continental Express* (1844) in Rouen, or the

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Calais Messenger (from 1826). The migrants introduced games and leisure and were largely responsible for the spread of English sports to the continent, particularly football and rugby from the 1870s. Many British workers also created a variety of associations: friendly societies, masonic lodges, and trade unions. Sources such as employers' correspondence point to the hard-hitting attitudes of these workers when negotiating their wages, and this ability to negotiate conditions could be studied in connection with early trade union activity. Chartism, the mass working-class movement for universal suffrage, has often been studied from a British viewpoint, and rightly so. But it also had branches in France, with at least 105 subscribers to the Land Plan Co-op company, and its newspapers were circulated to the various locations of British emigration.[44] Assessing how far British migrants sought to retain their national culture in France and further into continental Europe – and how these efforts changed over time and over geographical space – may enrich our understanding of the world of labour in nineteenth-century Europe.

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8. The contributions to this issue

Three case studies are addressed here. Tackling the little-known case of Finnish industrialisation, Peltola focuses on Tampere, the 'Finnish Manchester'. He argues that the British played a crucial part in the birth of the Finnish cotton industry between 1820 and 1870. Mechanic James Finlayson had left Scotland for Saint Petersburg and eventually established a cotton factory in Tampere under Russian protection in what was then an autonomous duchy of the Empire. As we have seen, John Barker was British but had worked for Cockerill in Belgium, had set up a workshop in Sweden and eventually built textile machines in Tampere. As Peltola shows, the production processes they set up were improved by incoming spinners and weaving masters from Lancashire.

Bensimon deals with one sector, machine-made lace, and one flow, that between the East Midlands and northern France, arguing that while the British created the French industry, many went back and forth between both regions. While this flow was larger than in the case of Tampere, some patterns can be compared, for example, the itinerant nature of some migrations and the importance of preserving connections with the departing area for spare parts, information and sometimes family matters. This case also highlights the accidental nature of many flows, with the leaving of hundreds of British lacemakers from Calais to Australia in 1848.

Last, Harper broadens the horizons studied here, focusing on skilled migrants to the British World. She appraises the existing literature and is then interested in several groups: Scottish handloom weavers who went to Canada after the Napoleonic wars; Scottish and Welsh coal miners who emigrated to the Allegheny mountains in the US in the 1860s; Aberdeen granite tradesmen who went to New England in the late nineteenth century. In all three cases, trade unions played a part. Harper shows that most of these migrants went overseas in the hope of bettering their condition, rather than as a consequence of banishment, though many were disappointed in their aim.

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By integrating an analysis of the continental dimensions of Britain's globalising workforce into the historiography, this collection of articles aims to assess more

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accurately the nineteenth-century roots of present-day European difference and cohesion. Further questions can be raised. One is that of periodisation: is 1870 a relevant termination date, that is, did it mark the end of this diaspora of engineering to the Continent? We have seen that in the Russian and Finnish cases – and maybe in the Mediterranean one – 1870 does not quite work as an end date. Recognising this timeframe also means assessing the reasons for the decline in the part played by the British – the training of a local workforce, the raising of domestic capital, etc.

Another further point is that of the connections between labour migration to Europe and those to the rest of the world. When the star of British engineering was starting to decline in France, Belgium, or Germany (and the US), it was starting to rise in the rest of the world. Some moved from one destination to another. Some European practicalities and patterns were repeated in more remote destinations. Mackenzie and Brassey had not yet ended building railways on the continent when they began building others in Canada and other parts of the world. The number of British professional engineers grew from about 1,000 in 1850 to some 40,000 in 1914, and it was common for them to spend at least part of their careers abroad.[45] This diffusion of British technology was instrumental in the expansion of the formal and informal Empires, and railway building loomed large in this expansion. In Canada, Central and South America, the Middle East, central and southern Africa, Australia, and most of Asia – including non-colonial countries such as Japan – the period 1850–1914 was the heyday of British engineering and its worldwide diaspora. To some extent, the patterns of the circulation of knowledge and technological transfer that took place then had been experienced in the early stages of European industrialisation.

The nature of these migration flows is multifaceted. In some ways, these migrant workers resembled the smaller numbers of eighteenth-century tramping artisans; in other respects, they belonged to the large-scale migrations of the modern industrial era consisting of many low-skilled workers, for example, in railway building. Documenting these flows enables us to transcend conventional ideas about the interactions between the British and Europeans. It also helps us change scales, between the local and the global. Migrants experienced a world that was often different from that of tourists or books, following trajectories that took them to different urban centres outside the political and cultural capitals of Europe. They experienced interactions that were different from those of the elite, and which diverged markedly from the kinds of cross-cultural encounters depicted in travel literature or guidebooks for tourists. This Special Issue also sheds light on our current debates about migration: workers were recruited overseas not just as a means of lowering wages, but also out of a desire to harness their valuable skills and expertise. In periods of unemployment, the rhetoric of nationalism was already being used. The articles also help understand that, while its Empire was expanding, much of the social and economic history of Britain was written in constant interaction with the European continent.

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French Abstract

Introduction au numéro spécial de *Continuity & Change* 34.1

Entre 1815 et 1870, des milliers d'ouvriers et d'ingénieurs britanniques se rendirent sur le continent européen pour y travailler et jouèrent un rôle décisif dans l'industrialisation européenne. Les ouvriers émigraient parce qu'ils pouvaient négocier leurs compétences à bon prix, ou bien parce que leurs patrons britanniques cherchaient à tirer le meilleur parti de leur avance technologique en établissant des entreprises à l'étranger et, en produisant sur le continent, ils pouvaient éviter les tarifs douaniers.

Quels furent les facteurs socio-culturels qui permirent au capital britannique de s'investir dans les entreprises continentales – et même mondiales –, aux compétences britanniques de venir façonner les processus de production à l'étranger et aux travailleurs et travailleuses britanniques de chercher et de trouver du travail à l'étranger? Cette introduction au numéro spécial soulève une série de questions sur ces mouvements. On se demande combien de migrants sont allés sur le continent, par rapport aux importants flux vers les États-Unis et le monde britannique. Les aspects législatifs et économiques de ces migrations de main-d'œuvre sont abordés et l'on tente de les relier aux débats sur l'hypothèse de l'effet économique des hauts salaires sur la révolution industrielle britannique. On se concentre également sur les aspects pratiques de la migration. Enfin, la vie culturelle, religieuse et associative de ces migrants britanniques est abordée, ainsi que leurs rapports avec les populations locales.

German Abstract

Einführung zum Themenheft

Im Zeitraum 1815–1870 gingen mehrere tausend britische Arbeiter und Ingenieure zur Arbeit auf den Kontinent, wo sie eine entscheidende Rolle für die europäische Industrialisierung spielten. Arbeiter wanderten aus, weil sie ihre Fertigkeiten gut vermarkten konnten; oder auch, weil ihre britischen Arbeitgeber das Beste aus ihrer technischen Führungsposition zu machen suchten, indem sie im Ausland Unternehmen gründeten, zumal sie durch Produktion auf dem Kontinent Schutzzölle vermeiden konnten.

Welche sozialen und kulturellen Faktoren machten es möglich, dass britisches Kapital in kontinentale oder globale Unternehmen floss, dass britische Fertigkeiten die Arbeitsprozesse im Ausland prägten, und dass britische Arbeiter beiderlei Geschlechts im Ausland Beschäftigung suchten und fanden?

In diesem Sinne wirft die Einführung zum vorliegenden Themenheft eine Reihe von Fragen auf. Sie fragt danach, wie viele Menschen auf den Kontinent gingen, im Vergleich zu den großen Strömen in die Vereinigten Staaten und in die britische Welt. Sie behandelt die gesetzlichen und ökonomischen Aspekte dieser Arbeitsmigrationen und versucht, diese mit der Diskussion über die vermeintliche ‚Hochlohnökonomie' der britischen industriellen Revolution zu verknüpfen. Sie thematisiert ferner die praktischen Abläufe der Migration. Schließlich nimmt sie auch die kulturellen, religiösen und gemeinschaftlichen Belange der britischen Migranten und ihre Beziehungen mit den Bevölkerungen vor Ort in den Blick.

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