The labour vacuum left on sugar plantations following the abolition of slavery created a dilemma for imperial European powers. A product now so craved had been left without a workforce to cultivate it. An answer was soon found in the shape of indentured labour. For over 90 years during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, over 1.3 million Indian men, women and children were recruited as indentured labourers to work on the plantations of the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Caribbean. This labour movement, global in scale, created an indentured archipelago, bringing geographically dispersed colonies into each other's orbit.

This book encourages an archipelagic reading of Indian indenture, revealing historical geographies within, and hidden connections between, the colonies of this figurative archipelago. The book reflects on the period 1871–1916 which saw the maturity and the beginnings of the end of the system. It focuses on four key aspects related to the labourer experience: space, agency, mobility and geography. Situating these within the context of two colonies of the archipelago – Mauritius, the largest, most experienced importer of labourers, and Fiji, the final colony to enter the system – the spatiality of indenture is highlighted by focusing on the personal experiences of administrative concepts that affected the everyday lives of labourers and their families. Previously unexplored facets of the Indian indenture story, including re-migration of labourers between colonies, their life geographies and the wider spheres of indenture, reveal an untold story of subaltern agency and trans-oceanic mobility across the indentured archipelago.

Reshaad Durgahee holds a PhD from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. His research focuses on the historical geography of Indian indenture in the Indo-Pacific. He also has interests in small island developing states, and international trade and investment.
GLOBAL SOUTH ASIANS

Throughout the modern era, South Asia and South Asians have been entangled with global flows of goods, people and ideas. In the context of these globalised conditions, migrants from the subcontinent of India created some of the world’s most extensive and influential transnational networks. While operating within the constraints of imperial systems, they nevertheless made distinctive and important contributions to international trade, global cultures and transnational circuits of knowledge. This series seeks to explore these phenomena, placing labourers, traders, thinkers and activists at the centre of the analysis. Beginning with volumes that seek to radically reappraise indenture, the series will continue with books on the mobility of elite actors, including intellectuals, and their contributions to the global circulation of ideas and the evolution of political practice. It will highlight the creativity and agency of diasporic South Asians and illuminate the crucial role they played in the making of global histories. As such it sets out to challenge popular misconceptions and established scholarly narratives that too often cast South Asians as passive observers.

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The Indentured Archipelago

Experiences of Indian Labour in Mauritius and Fiji, 1871–1916

Reshaad Durgahee
For my parents

The Dream Team
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Acknowledgements

This book started its life during my PhD undertaken in the School of Geography at the University of Nottingham. First and foremost, therefore, I would like to thank my doctoral supervisors, Stephen Legg and Mike Heffernan, for their time, advice, humour and encouragement not only during the PhD but also after. I could not have wished for a better duo to help guide my research.

The research for this book would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), Dudley Stamp Memorial Award and the Institute of Asia and Pacific Studies at the University of Nottingham; for this, I am grateful.

At Nottingham, I would especially like to thank Susanne Seymour, Charles Watkins, Liam Clark, Felix de Montety, Cordy Freeman, Joe Hewitt, Jake Hodder, Alice Insley, Mark Lambert, Ben Thorpe and Kate Whiston for providing their critical thought, crossword prowess and, above all, friendship during my time there.

In Mauritius, a very special merci goes to Satyendra Peertum at the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for his help and advice throughout my research. I would also like to thank the staff at the National Archives of Mauritius, particularly Mme. Ramduny and the staff at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for their assistance. In Fiji, I would like to say vinaka to the staff at the National Archives of Fiji, in particular Asena Koroi and Elenoa Delailakeba. Thanks also to Rajendra Prasad, Nadine Burnett, Chloé Martias and Claire Lee for making my time in Fiji so memorable – islanders forever.

During the course of the research for this book, I have had the pleasure to meet colleagues working in the field of Indian indenture and wider historical geographies of the Indo-Pacific, and so I would like to thank Richard Allen, Clare Anderson, Crispin Bates, Marina Carter, Brij Lal, Alan Lester, Andrea Major, Maria del Pilar Kaladeen, Lainy Malkani, Katy Roscoe and Khal Torabully for sharing their experiences of research in this field. Together, they have been such an immense source of inspiration. I would like to thank the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and South Asian Studies (Taylor & Francis) for their kind permission to include elements of my previous articles published by them. I have been fortunate...
to have been able to present elements of this book at various conferences including the Royal Geographical Society’s Annual Conference, the British Association for South Asian Studies Annual Conference, the American Association of Geographers’ Annual Meeting, the Insularities Connected Conference at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and the Indentured Labour Route Conference in Mauritius. Thank you to the various conference and session organisers who gave me the opportunity to share my research.

My friends have been so supportive of this endeavour, offering a distraction from research when needed! A big thank you, dank u, danke, děkuji to Jana Beer, Ben Bryce, Adriaan Dries, Honza Dvořák, Jana Dvořaková, Honza Kolafa, Lenka Kralová, Jill McGregor, Nick Melling, Evi Schneider and Vanisha Thanawala. I am also indebted to my relatives in L’Avenir, Petit Verger and Plaine des Papayes, Mauritius, for their generous hospitality during my research trip. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support: Uncle, Rhea, Rehana and Mat, and, of course, my Mum and Dad as it is my parents’ love of learning and travel and, above all, of their home island Mauritius that instilled in me a passion for the subject of this book.
Abbreviations

Sources

AREBFC  Annual Report on Emigration from the Port of Calcutta to British and Foreign Colonies
BL  British Library
BnF  Bibliothèque nationale de France
BP  Bengal Proceedings (British Library)
CO  Colonial Office
CRL  Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham
CSO  Colonial Secretary’s Office
CVA  City of Vancouver Archives
IOR  India Office Records (British Library)
IP  India Proceedings (British Library)
MGI-IIA  Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives
NA  National Archives, Kew
NBA  Noel Butlin Archives, Australian National University
NF  National Archives of Fiji
NLA  National Library of Australia
NLM  National Library of Mauritius
NM  National Archives of Mauritius
PP  Hansard UK Parliamentary Papers
RCEICCP/II  Report of the Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates Part II – Minutes of Evidence
### Abbreviations

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### People and Departments

- **AACS**: Acting Assistant Colonial Secretary
- **AAGI**: Acting Agent General of Immigration
- **ACMO**: Acting Chief Medical Officer
- **ACS**: Assistant Colonial Secretary
- **AcCS**: Acting Colonial Secretary
- **AD**: Acting Director
- **ADP**: Adolphe de Plevitz
- **AGI**: Agent General of Immigration
- **AHG**: Arthur Hamilton Gordon
- **AIG**: Acting Inspector General
- **AMI**: Acting Medical Inspector
- **AMO**: Acting Medical Officer
- **APOI**: Acting Protector of Immigrants
- **BC**: British Consul
- **CMO**: Chief Medical Officer
- **CS**: Colonial Secretary
- **CSR**: Colonial Sugar Refining Company
- **DM**: District Magistrate
- **DMO**: District Medical Officer
- **DRAC**: Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce
- **EA**: Emigration Agent
- **ED**: Emigration Department
- **EI**: Estate Inspector
- **EM**: Estate Manager
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<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>Foreign Secretary</td>
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<td>GD</td>
<td>General Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE</td>
<td>Government Entomologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Immigration Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Inspector of Immigrants</td>
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<td>IO</td>
<td>Immigration Office</td>
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<td>Ind.</td>
<td>India Office</td>
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<td>MO</td>
<td>Medical Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Protector of Emigrants</td>
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<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Provincial Inspector</td>
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<tr>
<td>POI</td>
<td>Protector of Immigrants</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>Resident Inspector</td>
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<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Sanitary Inspector</td>
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<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Stipendiary Magistrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>Secretary of State for the Colonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>Secretary of State for India</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>USS</td>
<td>Under Secretary of State</td>
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<td>VBC</td>
<td>Vice British Consul</td>
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