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The Railway People

In a world where the “globalization“ acquires an increasingly relevant importance, in a system where this word is not just an abstract concept but its strength is actually based on the practical application of its meaning, when looking deeply, often one realizes that this word is used in a partial and reductive way. In an age when products and merchandises have less borders than men, they enjoy enormous “privileges”, greater than for men, and one realizes that globalization excludes the universal principles of the common good such as justice, dignity, the right to life and health. Ignored and forgotten by a society that follows its idea of development and wellness head down, regardless to the poorer segments of population, a remarkable part of the Asian metropolis inhabitants are forced to live in the spaces that have been left free and where nobody would even dream to live in. Therefore, railway rails, escarpments, points stations, have become actual districts: cardboard or metal sheet walls, nylon cloths as a roof, this is what the luckiest call home. Often, the poor living conditions reach stunning levels: Bangkok, Jakarta, Yangon, are different scenarios of the same show of faces languages, cultures, sharing the same living conditions: the roof-less people globalization. This work of mine has the purpose to tell about the strict live of these people in common with the railway. Here, the rhythm of live is regulated by the passage of the trains and everyday living is linked of the train timetable. A punctual destiny of different destinations transits everyday through the house threshold. A cumbersome future featured by the chaotic rattling to indicate a direction, a way out that, despite the speed and the determination, means not to lead anywhere.



All stops when the train arrives. In this small “restaurant” in Bangkok squeezed between the rails, the different development speeds of the Asiatic society appears evident; the rush towards a wellness future is not for everybody.



**The Bode slum, not far from the Bangkok central railway station, is crossed by the railway.
To return home, this girl is forced to wait that the train has passed.**



The lack of alternative forces these persons to live in the spaces that have not been occupied by the rich society.
For this reason, the railway escarps are a real district with a very high inhabitant density.



Kramat Pulo, Jakarta – Indonesia. The lack of opportunities pushes many persons to abandon the countryside in favor of the city. This immigration is one of the reasons why that led to the birth of complete slum districts.



A young pregnant girl supervises her children while they are playing on the rails in Jakarta.



The train, symbol of traveling, of freedom and escape here is just an enormous and noisy thing that, shooting on the rails with its charge of dreams, leaves on the ground a trail of poorness and solitude mirrored by the eyes of this Indonesian girl.



Alcohol as a way to escape, as an attempt of evasion from a hostile and complicated reality. In this bar on the rails leading to Chiang Mai, Thailand, a group of youngsters delivers its suffering to the bottle.



Kottayam, Kerala – India. Walking along the rails, there is no risk to get lost. A different concept of the time that allows traveling by foot at the same speed of the train.



In the Burma of peacocks and dictators, a monk crosses the railway as if he was a free man, but he is not, like most of its fellow countrymen.



The “privilege” to live by the railway allows this lady in Bangkok to quickly dry her laundry thanks to the air ventilated by the train.



In the Klong Toey slum, Bangkok, the dwellings and the railway seems to be a unique entity: when the train passes by, the persons hide in their house not to be knocked down.



Living on the railway is like living at the border: the rails are walls that cut across society forcing the poorer class to live in the dark corners of these metropolis of inequality.



To collect and resell plastic bottles is often the only revenue source of the whole family. This is a work shared by many realities where the only revenue opportunity is based on the consumer society waste.



“The train, a monster bomb launched against inequality” These were the words of a famous song of an Italian ballad-singer. It seems that this omen is not applicable to the Eastern Asia lands.



Separated by glass, the fast train the still railway realities that look at each other as belonging to different worlds.



To think about the train as a metaphor of new conquests means to image the future of society. Crushed by the military opposition, the Yangon inhabitants seat down on the rails of oppression and exploitation.



Too far in terms of richness and accessibility, the “traditional” market has been replaced by a low-level form of “local economy” that developed along the rails. The reduced prices allowed to the persons living in these areas to survive despite the insufficient resources.



The lack of government policies for support and recovery, the high prices of apartments, the lack of every form of opportunity are the main reasons forcing the railway people to this poorness condition.



This man lives in a metal-sheet house by the rails in the Bobe District in Bangkok. The Asian metropolis are full of similar situations: the globalization of poorness.



On the railway connecting Jakarta to Surabaya, the arriving convoy makes its way through the people occupying the rails.



A boy of a youth community in the slum of Klong Toey, Bangkok , sings “Stand by me” playing his guitar



The travel continues also for the persons standing still: step by step, over the bridge, over the rattling of trains and existence.