

Ellis Island and the other immigration received stations which welcomed European immigrants served as gateways into America, with relatively few – about 2–3 per cent – sent back for some reason or another. This continued even after restriction *vis-à-vis* the lucky few who fell under the countries' quotas and got visas. They too received a welcome. Even those being sent back enjoyed relatively comfortable accommodations and respectful treatment, actually demonstrated in the photographs included here. Angel Island, the Chinese point of entry, functioned as a quasi-prison, and it operated on the fundamental assumption that no Chinese person who entered it should be allowed into the United States. Pegler-Gordon likewise fails to put the 1910s and 1920s, when policies towards European immigration began to shift, in global terms. When the United States in the era of World War I began to insist that potential immigrants from Europe needed to provide photographs embossed on their passports, it followed a pattern being set throughout Europe and the western world. Similarly in that period governments around the world adopted serious immigration restriction, making the United States little different from Canada, Argentina, Australia, Brazil. France did so a bit later in the 1930s, while Britain had passed its Aliens Act at the beginning of the century. As such it becomes difficult to accept the contention of this book that the exclusion of the Chinese provided the background for the eventual restrictions placed on European immigration and that photography played a key role in shaping that profound change.

Ironically, given Pegler-Gordon's justified emphasis on photography as having a role in and of itself in causing change, we learn nearly nothing in this book about the history or technology of photography. Did the movement to exclude the Chinese which swept through California, and then the United States as a whole, leading to the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Geary Act, several other pieces of legislation, as well as a slew of judicial decisions that coincide with major changes in photography? Pegler-Gordon states emphatically that when Congress initiated its mandate that Chinese women and men, whether seeking admission to the United States or already living there, needed to be photographed, they entered into the same category of prisoners, the only other large scale group of Americans subjected to forced photography. She would have been well served to also think of the case of Civil War soldiers who also, according to some scholars, all had their pictures taken. How does that case of mass photographing change the valence to Pegler-Gordon's book?

Finally, *In Sight of America* loses much by its highly repetitive prose, often presented in the passive voice. It makes claims as to immigrant reaction without having access to any primary source in the immigrants' own language, or better, languages, with at times reference to others' translations, never a substitute for the historian's own engagement with the source material. Gordon-Pegler spends excessive amounts of time pointing out the sins of previous scholars, who she claims did not give photography its due as more than a tool, as an active agent itself in the restrictive process.

Despite these concerns Anna Pegler-Gordon has in fact enriched the field of immigration history with this book, by pointing out and demonstrating the transformative role of visual, particularly photographic, culture, but she need not have spent so much energy deprecating others for not having made the same, important, analytic link between immigration and photography.

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Nando Sigona and Nidhi Trehan (eds), **ROMANI POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE. POVERTY, ETHNIC MOBILIZATION AND THE NEOLIBERAL ORDER**, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009, xxii+309 pp., £55.00 (cloth).

Nando Sigona and Nidhi Trehan's edited volume is a multidisciplinary collection of thirteen essays focusing on different aspects of Romani social and political life in contemporary Europe. The main *fil rouge* of the study is the question of whether the enlarged European

space is capable of providing EU and national institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with structural conditions, i.e. social, economic and political, that would take into account needs of its Romani citizens, enabling the latter to influence the current situation. In fact, the standpoint of the work is an analysis of contemporary neoliberal policies and discourses, which are mirrored in the fact that 'Romani communities comprise a "Third World" in Europe today and that a majority of Roma living in Central Eastern Europe believe their living conditions were better in the past' (p. 4). Accordingly, one of the editors' main goals is to 'provide a critical overview on the emergence and consolidation of a pan-European space for Romani political participation and mobilization in the contest of broader socio-economic and political trends in Europe' (p. 293).

After the editors' introduction and the foreword by Etienne Balibar, who articulates his reading of the work in the threefold problematic issue of exclusion, racialization and *de facto* statelessness of Roma, the study is divided into two main parts. The first part explores the Romani political space in Europe and the second part focuses on national and local political contexts. The first three essays of the first part examine the prevalence of a neoliberal (in Nidhi Trehan's contribution), mostly ethnicized (in Will Guy's), and de-personified (according to Katrin Simhandl) understanding of Romani social life at the basis of European-level policies and mainstream discourses addressing Roma. In the following chapter Jud Nirenberg outlines the history of Romani political life, stressing the twofold disjuncture between the European Union (EU) and Council of Europe (CoE) on the one hand and Romani political bodies on the other, and between 'mainstream' and 'grassroots' Romani leaders. By analysing the case of forced sterilization of Romani women, Angéla Kóczé discusses the gender unbalance of power within Romani political culture.

Of particular relevance in the first part is a conversation between Romani Hungarian MEP Viktória Mohácsi and Nidhi Trehan, which is a first-hand critical view by the MEP on the standpoints of EU policies concerning Romani Europeans. According to Mohácsi, prior to having funds and programmes targeted to social inclusion, 'the most important thing is to have a directive which can be forced upon [which is legally binding for] Member States' (p. 127). Indeed, an in-depth view by Romani activists, politicians and scholars on pan-European issues beyond the East–West divide, covering both supranational and national political contexts, appears as one of the major contributions of this book, which remarkably positions itself at the intersections between the study of ethnopolitics and social exclusion.

The second part is comprised of six chapters, each of them focusing on one national context. Iulius Rostas discusses at length the relative lack of an effective political culture amongst the various Romani political bodies in Romania; Martin Marusak and Leo Singer analyse the ways in which Slovakian Roma mobilized against a neoliberal reform of the welfare state. Kosovan activists Avdula (Dai) Mustafa and Gazmen Saljevic discuss with Nando Sigona the predicaments that the newly emerged human rights discourse poses on Romani activism in Kosovo, pointing at the failures of the international governance. Miguel Laparra and Almudena Macias consider the negative implications of the lack of relationships between *Gitanos* and Romani migrants from Romania on the strengthening of a pan-European Romani voice; Jo Richardson and Andrew Ryder shed light on public hostility and media derogatory campaign on Roma in contemporary Britain and assess the effectiveness of New Labour's policies on sites provision for Gypsies and Travellers. Finally, Nando Sigona comparatively examines public discourses and political practices involving Roma in four Italian cities upon recent local elections, discussing the emergence of local-level Romani political leaders.

An original element of this study is that it provides an overview of Romani political life contextualized in the wider framework of the imposition of a post-1989 hegemonic neoliberal order. A perhaps even more original ingredient is that it poses us Europeans crucial questions of exclusion and belonging in ways that are at the same time *close* to Romani political realities and *distant* from paternalism and victimization *vis-à-vis* Roma, therefore soliciting answers which would stem from Romani political subjectivities, with their limits and potentials. Notwithstanding such an intent, the book does not include advice to policy-makers and NGO activists. Providing advice would have appeared well coupled with the

accent on the vividly felt need to 'set a dialogue between (predominantly silent) Romani interlocutors today and their other European counterparts' (p. 294).

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Iyiola Solanke, **MAKING ANTI-RACIAL DISCRIMINATION LAW: A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF SOCIAL ACTION AND ANTI-RACIAL DISCRIMINATION LAW**, London and New York: Routledge, 2009, xxxii+224 pp., £70.00 (cloth).

The first British race relations acts were enacted in the 1960s, while similar legal provisions for racial discrimination in Germany only evolved into a comprehensive framework in 2006, as a result of European Union (EU) legislation. What determined the different timing and nature of the state response to racism and discrimination in these two countries? Iyiola Solanke's answer focuses on three repertoires of 'social action' – confrontation with anti-social extreme right-wing movements, research and investigation, and lobbying.

At a time when studies on European antidiscrimination law and policy are burgeoning, the author adopts a sociological-legal perspective – rather innovative within European scholarship – to review the history of race relations in Britain and Germany through the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The book is organized following the typologies of 'racial violence' and social action proposed by the author. Chapter 1 introduces the origins of the presence of communities of colour and the first measures regulating their insertion in the respective European colonial powers. The following chapters present the rise of anti-social movements and the uneven evolution of civil antidiscrimination law and criminal antiracist and anti-hatred provisions in Britain and Germany. Chapter 2 proposes a conceptualization of racial violence which justifies the criminal and civil law focus of the study. In particular, the author dismisses the usual distinction between legislation on racial hatred, on the one side, and direct and indirect discrimination, on the other side, adopting P.J. Williams's argument that such a differentiation endures a 'fatal rationalisation suggesting that a prejudiced society is preferable to a violent society' (Williams 1991, p. 61). Thus, Solanke introduces a matrix of racial violence where private and institutional racial violence is deployed in overt and covert forms. State responses to these forms of racial violence are summarized in chapters 3 and 4, which demonstrate that confrontation with anti-social movements set the agenda for measures against racial violence in Britain and at the EU level.

The second part of the book illustrates how investigation and lobbying helped to define the contents of legal reforms in the British and European cases, but failed to do so in Germany. In chapter 5 the author contends that research and, in particular, the collection of ethnic data may be critical to the appraisal, understanding and proper redress of racial violence. This is only possible where public authorities apprehend demographic change responsibly, in particular by privileging a multiculturalist rather than an assimilationist policy approach and increasing the feeling of belonging of minority communities. Also, in the case of lobbying, the author illustrates how policy content was successfully influenced by reform activists operating in a British arena characterized by a 'pluralist structure of political opportunities', rather than in the German corporatist system. The last two chapters address two more exogenous factors – the influence of the media and supranational institutions – on the definition of racial antidiscrimination law.

Making Anti-racial Discrimination Law is based on an extremely rich variety of sources – particularly for the British case – from archival materials to interviews and innumerable references to literature. It has, furthermore, the important merit of being one of the few comparative inquiries into race relations involving Germany. The sociological-legal approach allows the author to broaden the understanding of social action and take into account factors