

***Empire, migration and identity in the British world.*** Edited by Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013. Pp. 275. GBP 75.00 paper.

How was the British empire defined by migration? This is the question at the heart of Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson's latest contribution to 'British World' scholarship, a fresh and compelling study of migration trends, imperial networks and the meaning of 'Britishness' in the nineteenth century. This is an edited collection of fascinating, wide-ranging and thought-provoking essays, which are neatly summarised and contextualised by an engaging and well-informed introduction.

This is, in my view, an important collection which re-frames migration studies by drawing on insights from the literature on 'new imperial history'. The volume jettisons older models applied to migration history – the idea of 'push and pull' factors, chain migration and return migration – which have placed too much emphasis on a polar relationship between centre and periphery and separated the study of European settlement from the study of non-European and coerced migration flows. This volume traces the cyclical and interlocked networks to which migrants contributed and on which migration depended. It contends that migration was central to the evolution of transnationalism and globalisation and probes the ways in which migration forged British identities both at 'home' and 'abroad'. The volume alters the boundaries of British World scholarship in a thematic, chronological and geographical sense. While past studies have focused on the similarities and connections between the colonies of 'white' settlement – the 'neo-Britains' of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and (sometimes) South Africa, this volume includes chapters on Bengal and Zambia.

Many of the essays in the book address understudied migrant groups whose significance has been unduly neglected; some of the contributions offer original and stimulating conclusions. Using an evocative phrase by Danièle Hervieu-Léger, Hilary Carey asserts that clergymen were agents in the 'chains of memory', whose role in maintaining cultural bonds between Britain and its colonies has been underestimated. Rachel Bright weaves together the narrative of European and non-European migration, examining how the threat of Asian immigration led to the evolution of colonial whiteness and the construction of an Asian 'other'. This notion of white Britishness was at odds with the idea of British subjecthood prevalent in the British Isles. In his contribution A. James Hammerton examines a very recent phenomenon – the migration of 'Thatcher refugees' – and considers the appropriateness of the British World framework for the study of late-twentieth-century migration. He contends that in this era identity was not underpinned by an attachment to nation or politics, but by a sense of global citizenship. The British World has been eclipsed, Hammerton claims, by a global diaspora. Some of the groups under consideration in this volume – 'home children', Welsh missionaries, women railway passengers and Zambian 'settlers' – represent only a tiny fraction of the British settler exodus, but the authors consider their wider significance, using these case studies as a lens through which to investigate important themes, such as the construction of 'whiteness', settler hegemony and the range of British identities across the empire.

Several of the contributors make an attempt to problematize the sources commonly used in migration studies. Stephen Constantine considers the value of immigrant letters asking to what extent historians have been blinded by their preoccupation with identity, for the study of which these sources actually provide little evidence. Jo Duffy uses evidence gleaned from oral interviews to

evaluate, in the context of postcolonial Zambia, the usefulness of the terms 'settler', 'official' and 'expatriate', categories commonly applied by migration scholars. This intellectual engagement with sources enhances the freshness of the volume.

A further positive feature of the book is its attempt to investigate not just the concept of cultural transfer – how migrants affected the destinations to which they travelled – but also to examine the ways in which Britain was 'made' by the phenomenon of migration. In a compelling chapter Kathrin Levitan charts the cultural history of census-taking, exploring the ways in which censuses led to developments in eugenics and the forging in Britain of a sense of identity defined in racial terms. Censuses led to racial categorisation and generated fears that the colonised Irish might come to dominate the metropole. Eleanor Passmore and Andrew S. Thompson consider the legacy of imperial migration and the meaning of Britishness in the present day, locating the origins of Britain's policy of multiculturalism in the era of post-1945 decolonisation.

This volume is not without weaknesses. It would have benefitted from closer copy-editing (there is, for example, a stray comma in line 19 of p. 100 and a missing apostrophe in line 7 of p. 251). The book is also largely made up of conference papers presented six years ago in 2007. The delay between presentation and publication has rendered the volume less fresh than it might have been since many of the ideas sketched out in these papers have since been developed in detailed monographs. Hilary Carey's book on clerical migrants, *God's Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Kathrin Levitan's *A Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning the Multitude in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) both appeared two years ago in 2011. Nevertheless, the book is more than the sum of its parts. As a whole it gives an overview of new directions in migration studies and imperial history. It is a rich, rewarding and refreshing read which attempts to stimulate new discussion by summarising recent developments and pointing to new and potentially fruitful avenues of research.

VALERIE WALLACE

Victoria University of Wellington