

H-France Review Vol. 8 (August 2008), No. 106

Nancy L. Green and François Weil, eds., *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007. x +318 pp. Notes and index. \$60.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-0-252-03161-8; \$24.00 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-0-252-07429-5.

Review by G. Daniel Cohen, Rice University.

“One country’s immigrants,” recently observed Nancy L. Green in a programmatic article, “are another’s emigrants.” Yet in her opinion, the scholarly literature on migration produced in the past three decades in the United States, France and other major countries of immigration is mostly reflexive of “where we are.” More often than not, “migration history” is tantamount to “immigration history” with at best an opening chapter on material or political conditions in the “old country.” Against this predominant focus on “entry,” she proposed to reverse the “immigration paradigm” by recasting “exit” at the core of the migratory experience.[1] In particular, Nancy L. Green enjoined historians to “confront the ways in which the states and societies of origin added and abetted or fretted about and even obstructed the emigration movement” (p. 265).

The edited volume here under review seeks to fulfill this goal: *Citizenship and Those Who Leave* surveys a wide array of national attitudes toward leave-taking since 1800. In fourteen engaging essays covering Europe, the Americas, Israel, India and China, contributors examine how states have encouraged or deterred emigration; perceived, named and administered those who left; and maintained or severed ties with nationals abroad. Whereas immigration is commonly portrayed as a “litmus test for how nations define themselves,” the authors deliberately emphasize how emigration also contributed to the definition of citizenship at home. The “mobile,” they contend, affected national self-understandings in countries of arrival but also—and this is the main theme of book—in countries of departure. As such, the volume offers a fresh “emigration perspective” to the study of population movements and nation-building in the modern era.

In this respect as in many others, the French Revolution can be seen as a foundational moment. In a contribution informed by his work on the invention of passports, John Torpey locates the origin of free departure in the Constitution of 1791. Prompted among others by the Marquis de Lafayette, the National Assembly proclaimed in September 1791 the “natural” right of French citizens “to go, to remain [and] to depart,” abolished passport controls and even eliminated penalties previously imposed on noble émigrés. This liberalization proved short-lived: in order to thwart counter-revolutionary threats, a new passport law passed in early 1792 reinstated controls on entry and exit for the rest of the revolutionary period. The subsequent Napoleonic Code did not fully return to the liberalism of the “bourgeois revolution;” under Article 17, French emigrants lost their citizenship if they did not intend to return home, a provision only revoked by under the Third Republic by the nationality law of 1889. Nonetheless, argues John Torpey, the French Constitution of 1791 enshrined for the first time “the norm of untrammelled departure”—although one may contend that within the Ottoman Empire transmigration, including the free movement of minorities, was already unhampered without need for declarative staging.[2]

The abolition of serfdom in Central and Eastern Europe and of plantation slavery in the United States further normalized free departure and gave birth to new limitations. Peasants and slaves previously immobilized on the land were now gradually afforded the possibility to move. For Torpey, the rise of

free labor markets on both side of the Atlantic Ocean ultimately “undermined restrictions on out-migration,” whether to a nearby city or to a foreign country. And indeed, the emancipation of serfs and slaves in the German States, Russia and the United States coincided with a partial but significant liberalization of the right to leave.

Yet problematic in this argument is the conflation of internal migration and emigration. Is rural exodus, partially enabled by the lifting of domestic passport controls, the equivalent of emigration and expatriation? In many ways it is; throughout the nineteenth century, exiting the European countryside and even more so the American South certainly implied for uprooted labor migrants and freedpeople alike the abandonment of a distinct territorial and cultural base. But did states perceive and regulate “those who left” the land or the plantation in the same manner as “those who left”—or sought to leave—the country? The case studies examined by John Torpey suggest in fact that they did not. The Prussian state started to liberalize internal migration as early as 1817 but free exit from the German states was frowned upon and bureaucratically hampered until the first comprehensive emigration law passed by the Reich in 1897, with the peopling of colonies in mind. In Czarist Russia, the emancipation decree of 1861 eased some restrictions on domestic movement but had scant effect on the right of exit: the mass emigration of Jews and Poles from the Russian Empire around the turn-of-the-century amounted to flight (encouraged as such by the authorities) more than to free departure. And after the Civil War, emigration from the United States remained, has it had always been, a marginal policy concern whereas the free circulation of former slaves elicited serious worries among southern elites seeking to reinstate antebellum limitations on black mobility.

Social control, in short, is not emigration policy; the containment of internal population movements—most forcefully enforced, as Torpey points out, in the Soviet Union and communist China—may have paralleled restrictions on emigration out of the country but was motivated by different purposes. Efforts by the Soviet regime to stabilize the peasantry on the land through internal passport controls (1932), or the similar policy of “household registration” implemented by China in 1955 aimed at closing off better-stocked cities from dozens of millions of hungry outsiders. But the systematic denationalization of White Russians in 1921, not mentioned in the essay, uniquely punished émigrés through statelessness and excised “leave-takers” from the Soviet nation in a fashion reminiscent of the banishment and dispossession of noble émigrés during the French Revolution.

Similarly, the limits on free departure placed upon Soviet-bloc and Chinese citizens after 1945 reflected peculiar Communist anxieties over the establishment of large “counter-revolutionary” nests abroad—or in the case of Soviet Jews, specifically pertained to Cold War geopolitical calculations. If Torpey’s essay persuasively argues that the high pace of internal and external migration in the nineteenth century both solidified the notion of unhindered movement—which explains why restrictions on free departure have later been denounced as violations of human rights—it does not sufficiently isolate emigration from internal leave. The post-1800 “exit revolution” (analyzed by Aristide Zolberg in a richly documented essay), facilitated among others by the gradual easing of constraints on the departure of European “surplus populations,” predominantly meant leaving the national space. Attitudes toward emigrants, as several other contributions demonstrate, were therefore shaped by specific national considerations: conscription, demography, colonization and “national vitality” strongly impinged, among other factors, on the politics of exit in countries of departure.

Yet even resolutely immigrationist countries such as France have not remained insensitive to the costs and benefits of emigration. As François Weil reminds us, between the 1820s and the 1920s “hundreds of thousands of men and women elected to leave their home and emigrate to Argentina, the United States, or Canada,” certainly not a high figure compared to the large number of immigrants received by France during the same period, but significant enough to make emigration a matter of public debate and administrative regulation (as well as justify further historical research on this topic) (p. 115). From the July Monarchy to the end of the Second Empire, experts and state officials grappled with the meaning of

“exit” and fashioned later French attitudes and policies toward departure.

The terms of this “animated and undecided” debate are not for the most part indicative of French exceptionalism. As in other nineteenth century European countries, opponents of emigration “saw like the state;” they viewed the departure of citizens as a threat to demography and military might (interestingly the very two reasons later advanced under the Third Republic by the supporters of mass immigration). So did the proponents of free exit: emigration, they argued, was a sign of national health—“like stagnant waters, stagnant populations rot,” wrote one of them in 1862—and overall beneficial to the French economy thanks to increased port traffic. Absent from the French rhetoric on emigration, however, was the proposal, commonly advanced in Great Britain and toward the end of the nineteenth century in Germany and Italy, to use departure in order to “shovel out paupers.”

Indeed, the essays by David Feldman, M. Page Baldwin, Andreas Fahrmeier and Caroline Douki clearly stress the entanglement of discourses on emigration and poverty in these three countries. In his contribution, François Weil aptly describes how the French administration reacted to emigration but does not address this puzzling specificity: in France, the perennial “social question” elicited dreams of containment, revolution or middle course republicanism but was never deemed solvable by the removal of the *classes dangereuses* (expelled liberals, revolutionaries or Communards aside) from the territory of the nation. Can the relative marginality of “exit” in nineteenth century France be explained not only by the meager French participation in the “great Atlantic migration” but also by the unique French trajectory, influenced by endemic fears of depopulation, of the concept of “surplus population”?

François Weil also eludes the role played by empire in French perceptions of emigration. Arguably, since his investigation ends around 1870, it is because until then a large contingent of Italian, Spanish or Maltese middlemen had carried out the human colonization of Algeria on behalf of France. Furthermore, French imperialism distinguished itself from its British, Dutch or German counterparts by never seriously intending to people *la plus grande France* with large numbers of French citizens, even though numerous advocates urged such emigration. In this regard, nineteenth century attitudes toward “exit” offer an alternative explanation for the cultural underpinnings of French colonialism; as much as the “civilizing mission” reflected a deeply ingrained Republican impulse, it was also branded as such because fear of depopulation—as opposed again to British, Dutch or German fears of overpopulation—has always deflated official French enthusiasm for emigration overseas and in the colonies.

It is not only true of the mid-to-late nineteenth century period investigated by François Weil. At the end of the Second World War, Winston Churchill continued to urge “healthy Britons” to emigrate in droves to the Commonwealth whereas Charles de Gaulle—a political leader sensitive to depopulation if there was one—limited his imperial ambitions to political association with the colonies while prodding the French at home to rapidly produce “deux millions de beaux bébés qui manquent à la France.” Here too, the French case retains therefore some level of exceptionality; as opposed to other European imperial nations, French attitudes toward emigration—positive and negative alike—were less directly fashioned by colonial considerations. The liberal nationality law of 1889 (mostly known for its consequential generalization of *jus soli* more than for its provisions regarding emigration) primarily sought to assert, begrudgingly perhaps in the context of heightened Franco-German antagonism, the right of French citizens to freely leave the country without losing their citizenship: current “*Français de l'étranger*,” such as this reviewer, regularly treated by their respective consulates to *petits fours* and abundant champagne owe much to the efforts deployed then by the French Republic to keep emigrants within the nation.

Other European countries followed suit, albeit in distinct ways. Variable doses of *jus sanguinis* introduced in nationality laws passed in Italy (1912), Germany (1913) or Poland (1920) strongly bound overseas citizens to the homeland and ensured that their children remained, through blood and kinship ties as well as the prohibition of dual citizenship, foreign nationals abroad. Yet in their joint essay,

Donna R. Gabbacia, Dirk Hoerder and Adam Walaszek provocatively argue that these three new countries—simultaneously experiencing belated nation-building and mass exit—never fully imagined themselves as “nations of emigrants.” Nationalist elites, they contend, constructed diasporas as cultural, biological and even racial extensions of the nation. Thus Italians, Germans and Poles overseas remained organically tied to the imagined national community; they had, metaphorically speaking, never left. This argument interestingly mirrors the much-debated invisibility of immigration in modern French history.

The traditional reluctance of Republican France to call itself a “nation of immigrants” (until at least the 1980s) is indeed surprisingly comparable to the long-lasting resistance opposed in Italy, Germany or Poland to the label “nation of emigrants.” Although important flows of immigrants or emigrants have profoundly affected nation-building in these respective countries, neither “immigration”(as in the United States) nor “emigration”(as in Ireland or Lebanon, two paradigmatic lands of exit regrettably not included in the book) ever captured the essence of the nation. This (continental) European blindness to the sociological reality of entry and exit should not however be overstated. French parliamentary debates leading to the 1889 nationality law, recently studied by Patrick Weil, reveal that the numerous supporters of fast-track naturalization for foreigners forcefully acknowledged the historical vocation of France to receive immigrants, even if they also pinned their hopes on “assimilation” to rapidly erase nefarious traces of cultural difference.[3] And in Germany, the Delbruck law of 1913, often erroneously described as the epitome of *volkish* citizenship sharply contrasting with the alleged ethnic-blind liberalism of French-American *jus soli*, constituted primarily a pragmatic response to mass emigration. If southern and Central European jurists and policy-makers reverted to the technique of *jus sanguinis* in order to maintain ties with expatriates abroad, it is because, at a basic level, their countries had become “nation of emigrants.” Last but not least, “those who left” may have had the last word on this matter: as the three authors indicate in their conclusion, “emigration discourses from below (...) not only paralleled but rejected nationalist ‘discourses from above’” (p. 82).

The “politics of emigration” in liberal countries, similarly cautions Andreas Fahrmeier, may always be “doomed to fail because they are too easy to evade” (p. 189). This stimulating edited collection of essays—including the contributions on non-European countries not addressed in this review—nonetheless reveals the deep impact left on the state by those who have opted to leave. The role played by poor-relief measures on behalf of Dutch and Italian emigrants (respectively explored by Corrie van Eijl, Leo Lucassen and Caroline Douki) is another example of the fruitful incorporation of “exit” in the study of domestic policies: the advent of modern managerial and welfare states, in this instance, was partly elicited by emigration (an innovative argument begging further investigation on the historical influence of “immigration” on the French *état providence*). “Citizenship and Those Who Leave” should therefore not only be read and taught in the field of migration studies; it is also highly relevant to the exploration of modern national histories. Emigrants may leave but as the book demonstrates, the administrative and discursive regulation of “exit” often continues to govern the lives of those who stay.

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NOTES

[1] Nancy L. Green, "The Politics of Exit: Reversing the Immigration Paradigm," *The Journal of Modern History* 77 (2005): 263-289.

[2] Bruce McGowan, "Population and Migration," in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume Two 1600-1914 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 646-658.

[3] Patrick Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un français? Histoire de la nationalité française depuis la Révolution* (Paris: Grasset, 2002).

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ISSN 1553-9172