

## Book Reviews

***The Migration Apparatus: Security, Labour, and Policymaking in the European Union*, by Gregory Feldman. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2012. 221pp. \$22.95 paperback, ISBN: 978080476107**

In December 2010 the chartered flight KER 767-31 departed from Dublin Airport bound for Lagos, Nigeria. Onboard were thirty five 'failed' asylum seekers and their dependants, members of the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) and a medical team. The aircraft experienced technical difficulties during a stopover in Athens and was forced to return to Ireland. Controversy erupted soon after the flight landed. Several asylum seekers alleged that they received inadequate food and were not permitted to use the toilet facilities while waiting in Athens. Local and national newspapers ran the story, offering the public a brief glimpse into a partially occluded world. Commentators on internet blog-sites formed up along the usual battlelines: those advocating for a more humane and rights-based asylum system faced a barrage of criticism from those who demanded that a hard line be maintained.

The return of KER 767-31 is, however, also illustrative of a more complex set of processes. In addition to the thirty five Irish deportees, the chartered flight contained another sixty 'failed' asylum seekers from across Europe. They were issued with deportation orders by nation-states and placed on a private aircraft facilitated by Frontex, the European border control agency. Migration management is no longer about states and their (non-)citizens, as these deportation flights show so clearly. NGO and activist groups across Europe are now tracking the inexorable rise of Frontex, especially in Member States within the Schengen Area (Ireland is not yet a Schengen member). Frontex now has a budget of well over €80 million per annum and has played a leading role in the 'management' of the Turkey-Greek border, deploying military Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs), electronic identity verification systems, land and sea surveillance measures, and even accidentally violating Turkish airspace in 2009. In 2011, Frontex launched Joint Operation Hermes in Lampedusa, Italy. Lampedusa is the site of five-star resorts and because of its proximity to North Africa it is also a place where the bodies of 'failed' migrants occasionally wash onto the shore.

During the last decade, an important literature has emerged in the critical social sciences on the semi-private and multi-layered world of EU migration management. Few scholars, however, have made serious efforts to enter into the world of migrants, policy-makers and technocrats with the aim of disclosing

the highly mediated connections between them. Many have noted the rise of the European migration management apparatus, but the apparatus *qua* apparatus has thus far received insufficient attention. Gregory Feldman's *The Migration Apparatus: Security, Labour, and Policymaking in the European Union* speaks directly to these important issues.

Following Hannah Arendt's provocation that modern mass society is held together by indirect and non-local human relations, Feldman seeks to understand how the common language of migration management and various forms of expertise have emerged out of the vast and decentralized world of EU policymaking. The book is ethnographically rich, but its true value, like Arendt's work, is to be found in its provocations. The book is about the migration management apparatus, and it is a serious effort to ethnographically evaluate an apparatus with conceptual tools derived from Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow. Feldman understands the apparatus as a grouping of heterogeneous elements deployed to specific targets in a given socio-historical moment. Thus, he brings together a book composed of essays on heterogeneous elements of the apparatus that work to control and manage at the level of life itself. But each chapter shows a consistent approach. He is concerned to describe the often-temporary, project-based technocratic workers, the constant drive towards 'standards' and EU-wide harmonization, and the linguistic 'shifters' that allow policy to cross diverse social domains. Feldman is especially perceptive when he documents the use of high-minded phrases that lend the apparatus its socio-cultural values and virtues – 'humanitarian approaches to border control' (p. 16) are announced while investment in unmanned aerial vehicles (surveillance drones) gathers pace.

Chapter 2, 'Right versus Right', for example, offers one of the most refreshing discussions of the politics of migration that I have read during the past decade. Feldman dispenses with tired discussions of liberal versus right-wing politics and instead focuses on the shared territory of right-wing and neoliberal policy agendas. And rather than framing right-wing racialization as the hidden logic behind the mask of neo-liberal policy makers, he shows the deep surface of neoliberal management, technocratic administration and humanitarian governing via the apparatus. To illustrate, take the following statement made to Feldman by a high-level policy maker at an international conference:

You don't get radical, Marxist academics here. You don't get cultural studies. You don't get post-modernists here. ... We tend to talk a policy and academic language. Migrant stories need to be inserted into the conference. We don't get the

far right either. What point would it serve if we want to talk about migration? (p. 38)

Feldman is quick to point to the absence of actual migrants at such events. However, he notes the presence of their disembodied 'stories' and data doubles in a stream of events that bring people together to partake in the apparatus, all while enjoying a hand-made chocolates and *Kir Royale*-soaked version of the good life unavailable to those facing 'humanitarian approaches to border control'. Neoliberal policy makers are not, of course, opposed to neo-nationalists or the far-right per se, rather they occupy a high ground of practical aims intoned in a suitably humanitarian language.

Chapter 3, 'Making things Simple', continues to show the redundancy of traditional left/right political distinctions beginning with a discussion of the normalization of the 'good migrant'. Feldman shows how the EU's area of 'Justice, Freedom and Security' assembles policy and politics to provide the conditions for the possibility of a certain type of migrant subjectivity. He is also concerned to describe the harmonization of migration terms and the power-knowledge that subsists in information systems such as the Frontex co-sponsored i-MAP, a real-time representation of mostly 'illegal' migration routes from Africa to Europe. I have been arguing that the greatest value of Gregory Feldman's *The Migration Apparatus* is in its provocations and conceptual tools. His discussion of i-MAP illustrates this perfectly. He calls attention to the high-minded aspirations, the technocratic work involved, and the commonsense ways in which the apparatus expands and takes on a solid form. Feldman shows the way to an important project on migration mapping at EU level.

Chapters 4 and 5, which are on 'Border Control' and 'Biometrics' respectively, are insightful, but a gap opens in the analysis that deserves attention. Feldman notes the quasi-military style of border control operations in 'Fortress Europe' but says little about some of the key players, major international arms/technology companies who sell directly into the global border control 'market'. So too with the chapter on biometrics – the roles of corporations such as SAGEM and Gemalto in the revolution in biometric security are noted (p. 124) but unexplored. This is a weakness. Gemalto, for example, provide 'solutions' in markets such as the Middle East, and there is what Foucault would describe as a boomerang effect in the recent securitization of civilian life in Europe. This, among other things, is what Jean and John Comaroff argue in *Theory from the South* (2011). One might take a local example: one Irish supermarket chain now uses palm scanners for staff time control, a technology developed for sweatshops in South Asia.

If we are to work as anthropologists and ethnographers on the most pressing of social issues, we must attend to apparatuses; we must, following Foucault, attend to tools, tactics and devices that appear

mundane but actually carry great weight. Gregory Feldman's *The Migration Apparatus: Security, Labour, and Policymaking in the European Union* challenges anthropologists to think in terms of non-local ethnographic encounters with the specific intellectuals of EU policy and security. This is an extraordinary book on tools, tactics and devices filled with conceptual tools and devices, and tactics for ethnography in the present moment.

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***Jailtacht: The Irish Language, Symbolic Power and Political Violence in Northern Ireland, 1972-2008*, by Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012. 234 pp. £19.99 paperback, ISBN: 978-0708324967**

Much of the [*Jailic*] language is of standard form, but the distinctive Irish of the north is self-confident to the extent that it now writes its own history, with the peculiar acquisition of Irish in prison as a defining moment. (pp.145-46)

It has been said that language is always political, and that this truism is demonstrated nowhere better than in the case of the Irish language. Those who have followed the slow 'progress' of the nearly two-decade long Northern Ireland peace process will be aware that the 'Irish language issue' remains one of the main sources of on-going conflict; the Unionist parties continue to resist or 'just say no' to pretty much anything that supports the Irish language, and have asserted their own support for so-called 'Ulster Scottish dialect' as an explicitly reactionary tactic in what is now referred to as the current 'culture war' that has replaced the 'real' war that preceded it. This peace-process period has seen other important developments with regard to the Irish language, including the emergence of at least one local 'dialect' termed *jailtacht*. The on-line *Urban Dictionary* includes a definition with an example:

A form of Irish used in Northern Ireland that has developed from the H-block hunger strikers, who didn't know or couldn't remember a lot of the Irish language and reinvented it to the best of their knowledge. It is now widely spoken in Northern Ireland and has been accepted as colloquial. It is a play on the word "Gaeltacht", which is used to describe predominantly Irish-speaking regions in Ireland. "*Madadh rua*" is the *Jailtacht* Irish term for fox, as opposed to "*madra*