

end to discrimination and persecution, so that Russians and Jews could unite in building a better future together.

Reality proved to be less simple. Russian Jews, who had been denied for so long access to Russian life and culture, had created a modern secular literature and culture of their own in Yiddish. More than 90 per cent of the Jewish population of the Russian empire only spoke Yiddish and had no or little command of Russian, Polish, or other languages of the empire. Socialist propaganda among the Jewish workers was only possible in Yiddish. Even when the Jewish religion slowly lost its hold on the workers, they remained firmly bound in an Jewish society with a defined national consciousness.

Minczeles describes with great insight and detail this development up till 1897. But he overlooks (and this is a missed chance), the question of why the Jewish workers turned away from the religion which had bound them together for so long. In other works on the history of the Bund this question has been already broached and partly answered: when during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I (1825–1855) every year the Jews were required to deliver a number of their young boys for military service of twenty-five years in the army, the Jewish establishment sacrificed the orphans and the children of the poor, and even used armed kidnapers to fulfil the yearly quota. This was the origin of the ever-growing rift between the upper and lower classes in the Jewish communities.

At the end of the book there are short biographies of the most important founders and leaders of the first hour, illustrations, and a detailed bibliography.

Rena Fuks-Mansfeld

BERLIN, IRA. *The Making of African America. The Four Great Migrations*. Viking, New York 2010. 304 pp. \$27.95; doi:10.1017/S0020859011000289

The “great migration” of African Americans has traditionally been viewed by historians as the era of the movement of black people out of the South – beginning with World War I and ending in the late 1960s. Some six million African Americans made this journey to “the promised land” of the North and out to the West Coast. Ira Berlin, however, challenges us to rethink the history of black America by considering that “the entire African American experience can best be read as a series of great migrations or *passages*, during which immigrants – at first forced and then free – transformed an alien place into a home, becoming deeply rooted in a land that once was foreign, unwanted, and even despised” (p. 9).

Berlin’s new publication is a comprehensive synthesis of 400 years of these 4 great migrations, drawing on hundreds of the most important histories of these events, as well as key primary sources. The text is quite brief – only 250 pages – but the concepts and connections which the author introduces provide a foundation for rethinking migration history beyond just that of the Africans who arrived in what is today the United States. His approach is thematic, emphasizing the significance of narrative rather than theory. However, this methodology can certainly contribute to more complex theoretical developments by historians.

In the first chapter, Berlin focuses on notions of “movement” and “place” in African-American history. The “movement” is characterized by the migrations, or “passages”, while “place” is the anchor for the time and location between these migrations. By linking “passage”, “movement”, and “migration”, Berlin can draw the historical connection between the slave trade’s “Middle Passage” and the late twentieth century “African

migration to America". Africans, whether slaves, Southern sharecroppers, urban Northerners, or Africans freely migrating to the United States, are seen as having agency even in the worst circumstances. The "Middle Passage" is no longer portrayed solely in terms of its total brutality, but also as a transformation forced on Africans who managed to adapt and survive their enslavement, and which led them to create their own world and institutions, however limited, within bondage in a new country.

The book then continues with a chapter on each of the four great migrations. The comparisons made between African and European migrations (coerced versus free, for example) can then be developed and applied to each migration in each successive period. There is an essential link in historical consciousness felt by each black generation that follows each migration. It is the "collective weight of multiple migrations" that leads to the "periodic reconstruction of black society" (p. 47). The horrors of the original passage from Africa to the Americas makes the "weight" of this "great migration" particularly strong in later generations.

"The Transatlantic Passage" (chapter 2) relates the movement from Africa to the American colonies. Berlin focuses on the contrast between African traditions and European domination that aims to destroy those traditions to assert control of the slave system. Africans were highly diverse, with many languages and cultures. Slavery was part of their world, but African slavery was not chattel slavery like the European system. It offered the possibility of captives being incorporated into family and community. In contrast, Portuguese and Spanish traders (who were the first slavers) took African slaves as chattels to be used in the production of sugar and other commodities in the plantation economy of the New World. The transport of slaves across the Atlantic and their use by the English in their American colonies destroyed the languages of the Africans and tore them from their families. It forcibly reshaped the enslaved Africans' world, compelling them to assume a new identity that over the following centuries transformed them into African Americans. Part of this transformation was a result of the majority of Africans under American slavery having no knowledge of Africa by the mid-eighteenth century. They could not return, and for the most part their heritage was forcibly lost, which forged an alternative identity but one not necessarily without African links. This identity took new forms when they embraced of the idea of freedom proclaimed by the American Revolution, followed by the French Revolution, and carried even further by the Haitian Revolution of black slaves against their French colonial masters. The emergence of the African Christian church further "affirmed the invention of a new nationality" (p. 94). This pattern of creating new identities and a new nationality was repeated in each "great migration".

The "Middle Passage" has traditionally been viewed as the terrible journey endured by Africans in slave ships going from Africa to the New World. Berlin, however, identifies the enforced movement of slaves from the Atlantic coast to the South's south-west interior as "the second Middle Passage". Spanning roughly 1800 to 1860, this second great migration that encompassed over 1 million slaves of African descent "dwarfed the transatlantic slave trade" (p. 100). It was driven by the new economic imperative of cotton and the expansion of the international sugar market. This second Middle Passage also made it possible for some African slaves to escape to freedom, creating an entirely new journey that did not exist in the first Middle Passage. The well-established position that the slave economy was not dying but prospering on the eve of the Civil War is further confirmed by the fact that one-quarter of a million slaves left the eastern seaboard for the interior between 1860 and the beginning of the Civil War as a result of the lucrative internal slave trade.

The interstate slave trade destabilized families through separation, but in this “passage” African slaves at least now had a common language that served as a basis of solidarity. Family had become the center of African-American internal life under slavery. It was strengthened under difficult conditions by extending the family to include those not having immediate biological connections. African slaves accepted Christianity on their own terms, with their own churches. Enforced separation under white dominance paradoxically became a source of black independence. The massive displacement caused by the second great migration did not mean the African Americans had no sense of place. They became attached to their local home once again, even if it was a slave plantation, and in the aftermath of slavery African Americans continued to identify with the “place” where their family and community had been shaped.

The third “passage” – known as “The Great Migration” – became the first voluntary separation from “place”. “Passages to the North” (chapter 4) relates how, between 1900 and 1970, some 6 million African Americans left the South for the North initially and later also for the West Coast. The nation’s most rural people had become the nation’s most urban. In 1900, 93 per cent of African Americans lived in the South. By 1970 their numbers had dropped to 53 per cent. This third great migration, too, dwarfed its predecessors. Part of this movement came in response to white terror and discrimination in the South, but also, as before, a shifting economy that pushed labor from one place into another. This time the shift was partly due the mechanization of cotton picking that led to the rapid decline of labor intensive sharecropping. The Southern decline in demand for black labor coincided with job openings available in Northern industrial production created by whites leaving for the battlefields of World War I and then World War II. This new urban shift also led to a vibrant black urban culture, with its centers in New York City’s Harlem and Chicago’s Bronzeville, where there were black businesses, black newspapers, and music originating from African Americans – jazz.

However, just as the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s was opening up opportunities for blacks in the economy, deindustrialization was on the horizon. The third great migration ended when the economic decline of the inner cities set in. These places had become ghettos where urban decay led to the rise of a black “underclass”.

The most innovative proposition in this book is Berlin’s conception of the fourth great migration – the immigration of some half a million people of African descent, from Africa and the Caribbean, to the United States in the wake of the passage of the Immigration and Nationalization Act of 1965. This free African migration to the United States is the theme of chapter 5: “Global Passages”. By 2000, this new immigration was responsible for one-quarter of the growth in the population of African Americans. It turned African-American society from being the least affected by immigration to one of the most affected. Even more surprising is Berlin’s observation that “by the beginning of the twenty-first century more Africans had arrived than during the centuries of the slave trade” (p. 6).

This fourth great migration was even more connected to the Africans’ previous “place” because of the availability of the internet, cell phones, and jet travel. Being linked to Africa from America had now become a reality – at least for African immigrants if not for African Americans. Tension existed, however, between the new African communities and the older African-American community that in the distant past had been connected to slavery. African immigrants saw racism as a problem to be overcome, while most African Americans saw it more as a systemic problem. The protest culture of civil rights was viewed by many Africans as a culture of complaint, while many African Americans felt that the African newcomers were intruders, revealing an anti-immigrant attitude among a

people who previously had been least affected internally by immigration. At the same time, many white Americans made no such distinctions, looking only at skin color.

Berlin concludes with a summary epilogue focused on President Obama. As the descendant of a Kenyan father, Obama is portrayed as symbolic of the change created by the last great migration. He believes Obama “embodies the collective experience of those who have journeyed, found new places, and constantly remade themselves”. This “suggests the utility of the new narrative” (p. 240). Berlin’s imaginative and integrated approach certainly opens a way to explore deeper theoretical issues related to linking forced and voluntary migrations over long periods of history.

David Palmer

AHUJA, RAVI. *Pathways of Empire. Circulation, ‘Public Works’ and Social Space in Colonial Orissa (c.1780–1914)*. [New Perspectives in South Asian History, vol. 25.] Orient BlackSwan, Hyderabad 2009. xiv, 362 pp. Maps. [Incl. map.] Rs: 695.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859011000290

Ravi Ahuja’s *Pathways of Empire* is a social history of roads, canal waterways, and railways in colonial Orissa between 1780 and 1914. The author focuses on the built environment of transportation modes and the circulation regime of goods and people in Orissa in the immediate pre-colonial period and the colonial period up to the outbreak of World War I.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part the author establishes the relevance of theories of space by Henri Lefebvre and others and the potential of methods of historical geography for analysing networks of transport as spatial forms. Ahuja redefines the notion of “infrastructure” and opens up new heuristic possibilities for historical investigation. There is a lesson here of the scope of infrastructure for those who write the history of large technological projects. Current writings, Ahuja tells us, do not question concepts like “public works” or “infrastructure”, as if “roads and railways are open to the ‘general public’ or, more precisely, cater to the needs of a wide range of social actors” (p. 3). In contrast, in the author’s analysis, “the starting point [...] is the recognition that roads, railways and other forms of infrastructure should be perceived, not as isolated and neutral technical ‘facts’, but as materializations of social relations in space” (p. 9). The issue of colonial public works has been analysed before. But Ahuja’s questioning of the assumed public nature of infrastructure represents critical social history at its best. He puts the issue of access and use of networks of transport at the core of analysis and interrogates the assumptions of improvement made around them, questioning the policies of the colonial state and the progressivist assertions of nationalists.

The author, though, fails to consider the technological dimension of large infrastructural systems. The preference of state officials for navigable canals over railways or between different railways lines are left unanalysed as “geographical patterns”, or ascribed to the “balance of government decisions” (p. 223). Similarly, “the railway debates of the 1890s” seem to occur in the context of policy formulations alone. Thus, colonial policy emerges as the only determinant of choices made between different modes of transportation in the current analysis. Roads, waterways, and railways as large technological systems bore distinct characteristics. Colonial officials evaluated and acted upon the possibilities opened up by those traits as well as were constrained by the foreclosing of other options on techno-social grounds. This sub-text of technological history is missing in the account.