TARA ZAHRA, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*, New York 2016, W. W. Norton & Company, 392 pp.,

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Without any exaggeration, Tara Zahra's *Great Departure* deserves attention from both professional historians of modern Europe and general readers alike. In the midst of the recent refugee panic perceived by so many as a wholly new global phenomena, Zahra gives us a particularly useful lesson in showing how mass migration shaped the modern Euro-Atlantic world. Unlike other histories of migration focused on particular migrant groups and communities defined along national, ethnic or religious lines, Zahra employs a deliberately transnational perspective. This enables her to trace major historical dynamics as well as the underlying ideological debates that have shaped the history of East-to-West and West-to-East migration during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Zahra characterizes the history of migration as one of extremes, from the unrestricted mobility of the late nineteenth century to the virtual paralysis of the Cold War era. Yet what she identifies behind the rising and sinking migration rates is a continuous debate about the meanings of freedom, labour, mobility, and the value of an individual, in a world that was being shaped by global capitalism, colonial expansion and nation building. Zahra captures all these threads in a lively and accessible read which is illustrated by the histories of particular migrants from East Central Europe in search of better lives outside their homelands.

In the first two chapters Zahra explores the first wave of migration, in the mid to late nineteenth century, enabled by the newly granted individual right to mobility, improvements in transcontinental transportation and the emergence of the global labour market. Most importantly, Zahra underlines the state's interest in population management, originating in eighteenth century mercantilism and later Malthusian theory, as the key power/knowledge that shaped migration throughout the whole period under scrutiny. Between 1867 and 1910, around 3.5 million people left the Austro-Hungarian Empire, mainly from the provinces of Galicia and Bukovina and from southern Hungary, which amounted altogether to some 9–10 percent of the then population. Alarmed by the sinking numbers of army conscripts and the deserted countryside, the state authorities and the emerging popular nationalist movements attempted to curtail this migration by adopting legal regulations, which were introduced

on the eve of the WWI. Importantly, Zahra makes us aware that the migration debate had an ethnic/racial and gender dimension to it, which was obvious on both sides of the Atlantic. Given that the arrival of Eastern Europeans in the United States followed shortly after the mid-nineteenth-century abolition, the discussion about labour migration reverberated that over slavery. Moreover, Eastern Europeans were often deemed less "white", less civilized and less productive than the members of the "native" US society. Anxiety about the racial status of Eastern Europeans led to the regulation of migration both in the US and in Europe. Channelling migration from Europe into organized colonization of sparsely populated areas around the world, especially in South America, was seen a better option, both by the Austro-Hungarian authorities and other political groups and movements such as nationalists and Zionists. At the same time, migration policy was seen as an opportunity to get rid of "unwanted" elements and of achieving ethnic homogeneity, as in the case of pre-1918 Hungary, where the state supported the emigration of Ruthenes (Rusyns), Ukrainians and Jews, while limiting the possibilities of exit for ethnic Hungarians.

In the interwar period, the newly emerging nation states further developed this ethnic logic of migration policy, modelled on the restrictive pre-war legislation adopted by Hungary. Czechoslovakia and Poland both developed strategies to limit emigration among Czechs and Poles, even though their constitutions formally guaranteed individuals the right to exit. Moreover, the state authorities tried to lure Czech and Polish emigrants back from the West, since they considered them valuable for their nation building-projects and the inner-colonization of "unreliable" spaces at home, predominantly areas populated by ethnic minorities. The logic of ethnicity dominated these measures, however gender and age became equally important as the authorities placed the greatest restrictions on the movement of individual women and children, echoing anxiety about international human trafficking and sexual-slavery. Colonial settlements, built upon the principle of national enclaves abroad, were envisioned as preferred alternatives to uncontrolled migration. Plans for the Czech colonization of Corsica or Tahiti or the more ambitious Polish demands for "a place in the sun", articulated in the 1930s, however, were not realized, largely because ordinary Czechs and Poles preferred temporary labour migration in Germany and France to their governments' more adventurous fantasies.

Finally, the interwar period saw the emergence of international organizations, most importantly the League of Nations, concerned both with migration and minority rights. "Ethnic transfers", however euphemistic the expression may seem nowadays, became one of the legitimate solutions to the problem of ethnic minorities, as witnessed e.g. by the population swap between Turkey and Greece

in the 1920s. As Zahra makes clear, the ambiguous nature of this humanitarian policy actually prepared the terrain for the more violent policies of WWII, which is most evident from pre-war international debates about Jews in Europe. The infamous French-Polish plan to resettle the European Jewish communities on the island Madagascar, which was later revived by the Nazis, was just one of the possible "solutions" proposed by the international community before the war. There were, however, other projects, such as the relocation of Jewish settlers to the Dominican Republic under the authoritarian rule of general Trujillo. As with other similar projects, humanitarian concerns intermingled with racism and colonization.

As millions of displaced individuals and families roamed post-war Europe, migration policies and discourses retained the logic and underlying tensions of the pre-war developments, while at the same employing new concepts that suited the newly emerging Cold War situation. The distinction between a labour migrant (an economic migrant) and a "true" refugee, motivated by the fear of, or by the actual experience of persecution, based on political opinion, ethnic identity or religious commitment was the most important novelty. Devised by the IRO (International Refugee Organizations) and implemented into the international legislation by the 1951 Geneva Convention, this distinction became a crucial tool for limiting migration from ECE countries. Despite the cold war rhetoric celebrating heroic Eastern Europeans crossing the Iron Curtain into the "free" world, the actual policies in the US placed severe limits on immigration. Desired ethnic groups (such as members of the Baltic nations) and professions (e.g. miners) were allowed in, while the majority remained at the gate. Thus, according to Zahra, the enclosure within the Iron Curtain was not just an imposition of Soviet restrictions on the satellite states, but a product of collaboration between both Eastern and Western officials, based on nineteenth century concerns about national homogeneity and population management. Consequently, the revolution of 1989 was not just a fairy tale ending to the Cold War saga, writes Zahra in her final chapter. The fundamental tension between the individual right to exit and the principal of national sovereignty and border control did not diminish after the fall of the Wall, nor did concerns about the racial/civilizational status of Eastern Europeans. The waves of emigration that followed the war in Yugoslavia and the expansion of the EU spurred new controversies and attempts at regulating the unprecedented freedom of movement in post-2014 Europe.

Zahra's book does remarkably well in tracing the underlying tensions of migration policy in Europe and the US, particularly where they are interconnected with the discourses of nationality, race and gender. The main merit of the book,

however, rests in her use of the past as a means of understanding the present. Why is it that the ECE countries, the former "suppliers" of migrants, have recently expressed so much hostility towards people coming to Europe from the war-torn Middle East? Part of the answer, at least, rests in the troubled racial status of Eastern Europeans and the peripheral position of the ECE countries in a world shaped by two hundred years of mass migration and displacement. For all those interested in the history of the present, Zahra's newest book offers a particularly rewarding choice.

Filip Herza