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BOOK REVIEWS

Neil Carrier and Gernot Klantschning, Africa and the War on Drugs. London: Zed Books, London, 2012, 184 pp, ISBN 9781848139664.

Locating their study within the 'war on drugs' paradigm, Carrier and Klantschning seek to appraise the moral panic and fear rhetoric that grew out of President Nixon's 1972 concatenation of policing with military intervention. The War on Drugs was the product of the post-cold war reorientation by the Western bureaucracy of threat management, towards countering the drug trade in the scramble to find a new enemy and both deploy, and continue to develop, military technologies of surveillance and attack, and to justify budgeting and staffing into the future.

International attention by Western agencies of drug control came to rest on Africa, and particularly West Africa, as a transit route for South American narcotics in the 1990s and 2000s. Whatever balance may have been achieved, two purposes were served by the gaze of the West falling on Africa's drug phenomenon: a new continent of opportunity for drug control agencies in which to exert their repressive policies and control, and a reinvigorated perception that public action is necessary to counter the threat of drug trafficking and use. Carrier and Klantschning reveal evidence of both through their presentation of case studies from countries with contrasting modes and targets of intervention, particularly Lesotho, Guinea-Bisseau, and Nigeria. The significant contribution to the field of study of transnational policing of drug cultivation, trafficking and use is the depth of insight offered by embedding the drug phenomenon in specific cultural, social, economic and national contexts. The breadth of their work encompassing, for instance, the impact on food security of the cultivation of narcotic crops in Kenya in preference to coffee and other respectable crops, and the social betterment of women sex workers in East Africa funded by their linked activities in sex work and heroin use, supports the value of the book for those studying the field.

Written in plain English accessible to the general reader, the book recommends itself as a valuable contribution to a historical perspective which traces African use and trade in traditional stimulants, kola and khat, intoxicants, palm and plantain wine, and psychotropic drugs, notably cannabis and its association with Rastafarian and Reggae

culture. The historical link between trading in such drugs and trading in slaves anchors the study in the African context and allows Carrier and Klantschning to explore divergences and convergences between African and Western perceptions of drugs. "There is no social theory of drug use that can account for all the particularities of each substance in each particular social and cultural setting. For example, the social and cultural worlds revolving around khat and cannabis in Africa … often diverge from western ideas of what drug consumption involves and one can't just assume that concepts such as 'addiction', 'anomie' or 'social exclusion' will explain satisfactorily their continuing popularity."

The trend, familiar to studies in regimes of drug control, of criminalising trade in substances previously legal and endorsed or sold by state, and approved non-state actors, is considered by Carrier and Klantschning in relation to khat, which had escaped policing sanctions when its export to Europe was confined to the African diaspora but as its popularity spread to other users, it came under the same prohibitions as cannabis. By contrast, the preferential treatment of alcohol, traditional brewed beers and more recently, distilled spirits, despite the widespread social harm documented in studies, is linked to colonial practices like the notorious 'dop system' through which workers on southern African vineyards were paid for their labour in low-grade wine. Similarly, Carrier and Klantschning report Colonial governments derived significant revenues from taxing the late nineteenth century burgeoning gin trade which saw 'an astounding 85,000 hectolitres imported from Germany and the Netherlands into West Africa' in 1898. Although government officers of the Nigerian drug control force, the NDLEA, have been indicted for importing cocaine, it is clandestine, not the blatant complicity of colonial days which reached its apotheosis in the Opium Wars. The insight into the so called narcostate of Guinea-Bisseau advances understanding of the contemporary issue of narcotics funded terrorism and the focus of the Economic Community or African States (ECOWAS) on arms control, sea port security and regional narcotics trafficking control. In 2010 Ministers from Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone signed the "WACI- Freetown Commitment" endorsing the practical implementation of this new, coordinated effort by international organizations and West African Governments to fight organized crime.

While alluding to the limited focus in the literature on human rights perspectives in favour of the supply-side repressive control measures in the introduction, Carrier and Klantschning follow suit, neglecting any focus on obligations of states who have signed and ratified the major

conventions, and providing only passing reference to human rights implications in government policy. The value of Carrier and Klantschning's study in contextualising drug issues within the continent of Africa is evident to the general reader, but it falls short of its claim 'to examine the issues from the point of view of Africa', which is critically different from westerners focusing on Africa from the outside. Three western organisations supported the publication of this book but a collaboration with the Institute of African Studies in Ghana, in the heart of West Africa, may encourage African researchers to publish an African insider perspective which would recalibrate the war on drugs discourse which Carrier and Klantschning acknowledge 'is at heart an initiative driven by western interests.'

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Ann Beaglehole, Refuge New Zealand: A Nation's Response to Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Otago: Otago University Press, 2013, 264pp, ISBN: 9781877578502.

In this book, Ann Beaglehole attempts to introduce an historical perspective into New Zealand (NZ) debates about refugees and asylum seekers. Beaglehole is of the view that the historical perspective is, "by and large, missing in current" NZ debates about refugees and asylum seekers (p. 17). The problem with Beaglehole's historical perspective however is that it does not deviate from the problematic Western metanarrative on the history of refugees. For instance, Beaglehole does not explore Gil Loescher's (2001) argument that since its establishment in 1950, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' policies (UNHCR) has always reflected the policy priorities of the U.S. and the other major Western governments. Nor does Beaglehole engage with the perspective that claims that the U.S.A's preoccupation with reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Europe after World War II, as well as their approach to the Cold War's refugees shaped the UNHCR's policy towards refugees (Loescher 2001). Thus, refugees became instruments of the Cold War; " 'escapees' who crossed over to the West 'voted with their feet' and represented a significant political and ideological asset for the West" (Loescher 2001, p. 35).

One of the strengths of this book though is its exploration of how the Jews and Slavs were initially denuded of their whiteness by a NZ immigration policy. For instance, Beaglehole points out that when NZ was asked to make a contribution to the resettlement of displaced people in Europe at the end of World War II, NZ favoured whites from northern Europe rather than groups such as Jews and Slavs. "This was justified by the assumption that a small community such as New Zealand could not afford to have 'alien groups who are not at one with ourselves'" (p. 44). Whiteness comes in shades; thus Jews and Slavs were regarded by the NZ government as not possessing the whiteness that conformed to a racialized understanding of Europeanness (Fox, Morosanu & Szilassy 2012).

According to Beaglehole, the European bias which characterised NZ immigration policy for most of the 20th century gradually changed from the 1970s onwards. Hence, "in 1971 – 72, 42 Chinese refugees facing racial and religious persecution came to New Zealand" (p. 63). During the same period New Zealand accepted 244 Ugandan Asians who were "expelled in the course of President Idi Amin's 'Africanisation' policy" (p. 64). First of all, Beaglehole does not explore the fact that the first expulsion in Uganda was not that of about 70,000 Asians, but of the roughly 50,000 Jaluos in 1970 - who originally came from Kenya. Secondly, Ugandan Asians were the only African refugees offered overseas resettlement by the UNHCR during the 1960s and 1970s - a volatile political period in Africa (Mamdani 1993). To fully understand why the West took exceptional interest in the plight of the Ugandan Asians, one has to locate the rise of Idi Amin to power within the historical context of global politics. Idi Amin came to power with the full support of Britain and Israel. However, soon after taking over the control of the Ugandan state, Amin had a fall-out with his supporters - Britain and Israel. Consequently, Britain supported efforts to overthrow Idi Amin (Bhagat 1983). The fall-out between Amin and Britain partly led to the expulsion of Ugandan Asians. "The expulsion was a direct blow against Britain because most Asian businesses were compradorial extensions of British economic interests" (Bhagat 1983: 1614). Thus, Britain and its Western allies decided to embarrass Idi Amin by widely publicising the expulsion of Ugandan Asians and offering them overseas resettlement.

Although the 1960s and 1970s produced thousands of refugees in Africa, the majority of African refugees self-settled without any international assistance from the UNHCR. The refusal by Western countries to resettle African refugees was rooted in the original Western

conceptualisation of refugees as being White and seeking refuge from Nazi Germany, and later from communism. Additionally, it was not until White people in the former Yugoslavia were victims of armed conflict and indiscriminate violence that the West made changes with regards to how Western states ought to deal with refugees running away from armed conflict and indiscriminate violence. According to Lambert (2013), since many of the displaced people in former Yugoslavia did not qualify for refugee status, a political compromise had to be found. "A policy of 'temporary protection' was developed and was implemented in most European states as a way to suspend or by-pass normal asylum procedures" (Lambert 2013: 209). Apart from individuals arriving from Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, a policy of "temporary protection" has never been extended to any other African refugees running away from armed conflict and indiscriminate violence (Lambert 2013).

The overarching point I am making here is that although Beaglehole claims that she aims to introduce a historical perspective in NZ debates about refugee issues, she neither locates the NZ's refugee policy nor the UNHCR's practices within the historical context of global politics. To fully appreciate the evolution of NZ's refugee policy requires a thorough understanding of the world politics in which to situate NZ's policies, as well as UNHCR's policies. That to me should be the starting point.

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