

and provocatively polemical book, *The Absent Minded Imperialists*. Porter spent a great deal of effort and time poking holes in the idea that British culture and British people were impregnated with an awareness or sense of empire in the nineteenth century. Twells is not to be compared to Porter. But in her quieter and systematic way, she adds a welcome and constructive set of complications to this question.

Thus, a key problem for missionary culture in Britain was the fit between the missionary experience in empire and the narrative of that experience in the domestic culture. From the beginning of the missionary enterprise, it was clear that the expectations that evangelical culture created of successful conversions and the steady growth of civilized habits of behavior was not going to be fulfilled. This created a disjunctive tension between missionary work as it really was and the aspirations for its achievements at home. Thus, from the beginning accounts of missionary work were carefully edited for domestic consumption. And a gentle and largely unacknowledged shifting of the paradigm of expectations was set in train. In other words, the image of empire that was projected through missionary culture was an invented image that owed more to the dynamics of domestic British society than it did to the imperial project. Missionary culture in Britain was less a reflection of the dynamic of empire, then; it was more a site for the display and assertion of a narrative of middle-class cultural, social and political identity. In this respect, one might say, empire was a profoundly *domestic* thing and served as a rhetorical device that was pressed into the service of the needs of particular segments of British society.

But the narrative of the missionary culture that is the subject of Twells's book *was* intimately connected with the narrative of empire in one extremely important way. Twells's main focus is on the growth and establishment of the missionary culture that emerged from the 1790s. She does a good job of describing that culture as a socio-cultural force, underpinned by the religious precepts of the evangelical revival. She ends at the moment when this way of rationalizing Britain's imperial relationship with subject peoples was about to give way to the "scientific racism" of the later part of the century. But core precepts of early nineteenth century missionary culture continued to make significant contributions to the imperial enterprise. Most importantly, the idea that the civilizing power of redemption through Christianity was a special duty of the British remained as the main public, ideological justification for the British empire from the mid-nineteenth century until its demise a century later. Thus, even though the ideology of racial difference exchanged its belief in a universal humanity for one of essentialized racism from the later 1850s onward, the justification for empire continued to be softened by the vocabulary and rhetoric of the civilizing mission as a duty and a sacrifice. In this way the legacy of those earnest and worthy men and women who form the subject of Twells's research lived on well beyond their time.

Richard Price

JUNG, MOON-HO. *Coolies and Cane. Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2006. x, 275 pp. Ill. \$25.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859009990514

The title might distract us from the very important point this book is making. Its real subject pertains to the tensions between the American ideal of free immigration and citizenship versus the realities of the labour market looking for cheap labour abroad, and

which, precisely because of its lack of citizen rights, can be hired cheaply. In 1862, at the beginning of the Civil War, the United States Senate outlawed the importation of coolies from China by American citizens and on American vessels because the practice was considered to be a continuation of the system of slavery. This law was aimed to stop the import of Asian coolies to the plantation belt in the states adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico. It did not, however, change the fact that thousands of Chinese had already entered the United States through San Francisco, and that they could easily move to the Southern states after the Pacific Railroad was completed in 1869.

In the aftermath of the Civil War and the emancipation of the black population of the South, the planters launched a campaign to import Chinese labour under the guise of “free labour immigrants”. The planter elite pursued their interests, trying to shift from slavery to indentured labour, even though they calibrated their language and spoke about free labour and free immigration. They dreamt of tens of thousands of Chinese labourers flooding the devastated sugar plantations of the South and reviving what was once an important sugar-producing part of the world. Few Chinese actually came, but it was enough to sharpen racial tensions. In the wake of the Civil War, Southern “poor whites” and smaller planters had hoped for the reconstruction of a white-dominated Southern settler community and definitely not a multi-ethnic society. Actually, the latter did not happen. Even though Asian migrants were reluctantly accorded legal status by US federal authorities, socially they were confined to the status of coolies throughout the nineteenth century. In fact, Chinese labour migrants were excluded from the US altogether from 1882 onwards. As Moon-Ho Jung notes: “The last slave-trade law, from this angle, was simultaneously the first immigration law” (p. 38).

The debates on Asian coolies were at the heart of the identity formation of the United States as a settler colony. After the abolition of slavery, American citizenship and whiteness were no longer identical, while the United States was not yet ready to conceive of itself as a multi-racial nation. The country began to redefine itself in the early 1860s as a country for white immigrants. It was in those years that the word “trafficking” was used to describe the migration of Chinese coolies across the Gulf of Mexico. Indeed, the same word is in use today to describe unauthorized immigrants who are smuggled in under appalling circumstances.

Again, this book offers a lot more than a labour history of Louisiana in the wake of the Civil War, as it touches directly on the nexus between citizenship, labour, and migration. And all this is based upon a meticulous investigation using primary sources. Yet, a minor point of critique may be appropriate. Though there is an extensive literature on race, migration, and citizenship in the United States, the author makes only scant reference to it. There is no reference to the work of Adam McKeown, for example, and only one, a rather tongue-in-cheek one at that, to the work of Matthew Frye Jacobson rather than the more extensive engagement with his *Whiteness of a Different Color* one might have expected.

Ulbe Bosma

GERRITS, ANDRÉ. *The Myth of Jewish Communism. A Historical Interpretation*. Peter Lang, Brussels [etc.] 2009. 220 pp. € 36.30; doi:10.1017/S0020859009990526

Few topics, if any, in historical and political debates have been discussed with more emotion than the involvement of Jews in communist politics. As André Gerrits, Associate