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**Ghost Walkers: Southern and Eastern Europeans at the US–Canada Border in the Interwar Period**

Balázs Venkovits

**Johnson Bavery, Ashley. *Bootlegged Aliens: Immigration Policy on America's Northern Border*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2020. 278 pages. ISBN 9780812252439. Hb. $49.95.**

Current immigration debates in the Americas often concern issues of illegality, deportation, and border control mostly focusing on the US-Mexican border, and frequently labeling immigrants as undesirables, criminals, and potential threats to society. In her engaging book, Ashley Johnson Bavery shows us that such debates are not entirely new but fit into a longer narrative of US immigration control, nativism, suspicion as well as have clear roots in the 1920s and the experience of southern and eastern European immigrants looking for better opportunities in the new world. Scrutinizing events and trends taking place one hundred years ago, Bavery demonstrates how ethnic Europeans were stigmatized as likely burdens on society, criminals, illegals, and even terrorists, which led to harsh living and working conditions, discrimination, and exclusion, also due to a combination of local, national, and international decisions and policies.

Between the 1870s and 1920s more than twenty million people immigrated to the United States, primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe, during the era often referred to as the period of New Immigration. Such a wave had a major economic, social, and cultural impact on the receiving country as well as the newly arriving immigrants and their home societies. The era did not only bring about unprecedented immigration rates, but also growing attempts at control, restriction, selection, and testing, which ultimately manifested themselves in the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), the introduction of a literacy test (1917), and culminated in quota limitations clearly targeted against immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe in 1921 and 1924. Simultaneously with the introduction of these quotas, Canada remained relatively open. (Johnson Bavery could have devoted perhaps a bit more attention to the examination of the reasons behind the different attitudes of the two countries.) Consequently, European immigrants saw Canada both as a possible new destination and also as an (illegal) springboard to the US, eventually leading to shifting patterns of arrival, smuggling, and varied attitudes of, and towards, newly arriving immigrants.

Most of the works on European immigration focus on the decades preceding the 1920s, studying questions of integration, nativism, assimilation,

ethnicity, and race among others. Bavery, however, picks up the story exactly where many scholars stop and provides refreshing insights into the post-1924 era and peculiarities of southern and eastern European immigration to North America. This in itself makes it an attractive reading but the author does more than that when she presents so far little-examined trends in a transnational, inter-American setting, examining not only the United States, but also Canada and, more specifically, the Detroit-Windsor transborder region, highlighting the phenomenon of illegal immigration. The novel approaches and focus areas are coupled with scrupulous archival research and an enjoyable style of storytelling that make the book a worthy reading for both scholars in migration studies and the broader public interested in the topic.

Studying immigration history, politics, labor relations, while simultaneously focusing on transborder and local policies, the author sheds light on key themes that have often been neglected so far. One of these novelties and strengths of the book includes her focus on the northern border of the US, examining the emergence of immigration policy not only in Washington D.C. (as is most often done), but also in Ottawa, often discussing events on both sides of the border, in Windsor and Detroit alike. This is crucial as the events and emerging trends of the 1920s cannot effectively be studied if the focus is on the United States only. While she employs this broader context, the author also stresses the significance of local actors and decisions, and how these shaped federal policies and their actual implementation, successfully revealing how immigration is also a profoundly local issue with the Detroit and Windsor area, providing a distinctive example for it. Studying the perceptions of the whiteness, foreignness, otherness of immigrants from Russia, Hungary, Italy, and Poland, among others, she also adds valuable comparisons with the experience of Mexicans, Arab Americans, and African Americans. Bavery's book shows that European immigrants have not always been seen as legal and offers an alternative history characterized by harassment by nativists, bad working and living conditions, and stigmatization.

The author provides fascinating insights into contemporary documents, reports, also referring to immigrant accounts in different languages, even if sometimes she does so with some spelling mistakes or other problems, like describing the Hungarian-language *Amerikai Magyar Hepszaba* [*sic*] as a Polish newspaper based in Chicago (63). The great variety of sources represents a strongpoint, and the interwoven personal stories highlight that behind the statistics and quotas there were real people and families facing tough decisions, and often discrimination and exploitation, while being vulnerable to deportation. Still, the European side of the story is something that the author

could have expanded on a bit more, revealing how European countries reacted to the quotas and how their policies influenced the migration trajectory. There is, however, a brief attempt at this on page 59. This is not meant to be a strong criticism as the scope of the book probably does not allow for a detailed elaboration of this aspect. Later studies, possibly as part of international collaboration between the two regions, could be conducted in this regard as immigrant decisions were not only shaped by policies in North America, but also in Southern and Eastern Europe, where large-scale emigration was a key issue from a political, economic, and also military standpoint.

The seven chapters of the book provide a detailed and illuminating overview of immigration policies, their implementation, and repercussions in the 1920s and 1930s, an era often ignored between the great waves of New Immigration and the post-World War II era. The first three chapters focus on the implementation of immigration quotas from 1921 to 1929, while the others tend to concentrate more on the Depression/New Deal era. Chapter 1, one of the longest units, provides a solid basis for the rest of the book and a comprehensive overview recommended for anyone interested in immigration history. The reader can gain a better understanding not only of the US regulations, but also of the growing state apparatus associated with it, as well as smugglers and "ghost walkers" trying to cross the US–Canadian border illegally, and how the formerly mostly imaginary border became a real one for many. In line with the rest of the book, there is a delicate balance between federal policy overview and the consideration of the ways employers, Border Patrol officers, and immigrants themselves decided how laws would actually be implemented locally. This is also a good resource for those interested in the history of nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment in the US and Canada, offering an overview of the activities of organizations like the KKK/CCC, Daughters of the American Revolution, and in later chapters that of the Black Legion. The chapter introduces many of the negative labels used for ethnic European immigrants of the time (undesirable, likely to become a public charge, and so on) to be expanded with other categories later on.

Chapter 2 focuses on various European immigrant groups and their attempts to keep their quotas high while distancing themselves from stigmas of illegality, revealing clear differences between the perception and treatment of Northern and Southern/Eastern Europeans (the latter facing raids, accusations, deportation, and policing). Such differences become even clearer in Chapter 3, which explores the commuter controversy of the border area, the problem of Canadian day laborers as well as how border crossing was

negotiated as an Anglo-Canadian privilege whereby "ethnicity played a key role in dictating who would be allowed to cross the border for work" (95).

The next four chapters focus on the Depression Era that brought about significant changes in immigration policy in both North American countries, but also in the perception of immigrants. The reactions to unemployment had a negative impact on immigrants and resulted in stricter deportation and immigration policies to protect jobs and benefits for citizens, also resulting in increased policing and profiling. The final chapters concentrate on Detroit more specifically, underlining the entanglement of labor, welfare, immigration, a nativist backlash, and the addition of new labels to describe Southern and Eastern European immigrants as threats for the society as communists (Chapter 6) and as welfare cheaters (Chapter 7).

The well-written policy overviews both in the US and Canada, and the detailed local reactions to them, are presented in a way that provides novel insights for scholars in migration studies while remaining enjoyable for a broader readership as well. Probably because of the attempt to cater for the needs of different readers, the author is sometimes a bit repetitive, mentioning and defining key events or concepts at several points, resulting in occasional redundancy. The chapters address different key topics but are professionally cross-referenced and find the right balance of national, international, and local reactions. Bavery provides new insights to her readers by examining a so far neglected area and group, in a little studied era within the field of immigration scholarship. Even if with a north-south and ethnic European-Hispanic shift after World War II, in many ways 100 years later we seem to be back to the same debates often fueled by nativist chords in the "nation of immigrants." Johnson Bavery shows how important it could be to look back and learn from the past, and she offers an attractive, well-researched, and engagingly written book for this purpose.

Balázs Venkovits, Associate Professor of American Studies, Director of the Institute of English and American Studies and of the Canadian Studies Center, University of Debrecen, author of books on travel and immigration to Canada.

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