

BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Anderson and Henry B. Lovejoy (eds.). 2020. *Liberated Africans and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807-1896*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press. 465 pp.

This edited volume brings together regional experts from around the world to explore the experiences of a unique class of persons involved in the judicial process of abolitionism, adopting a global approach to focus on the implications and the human cost of the British anti-slave trade policies and strategies. More accurately, the purpose of the included essays is to delineate and resituate the concrete experiences of the Africans whom the British abolition act, naval enforcement, and mixed commissions were meant to help (p. 4). Therefore, the cases included here refer to the construction of the African-Atlantic space, underlying the interrelation of different nodes and spaces in the slave trade. Compared to the existing historiography, this book succeeds in providing an organic analysis of contexts and stories that should not be presented without the appropriate connections. Moreover, the volume complicates the problematic dichotomy “freed or enslaved,” showing the harshness of the apprentices’ lives. Following this line of thought, liberation from the slave ship did not mean “freedom” but rather the beginning of a protracted process that could last decades, and that varied considerably in different contexts and societies. Therefore, the chapters offer a comprehensive overview of the complex experiences, varying across contexts, related to the apprenticeship system, calling attention to masked unfree labor in English territories imposed on liberated Africans. The chosen time frame (1807-1896) is adequate to grasp both the precedents and the development of British anti-slave trade policies, focusing on their consequences as far as apprenticeships, resistance, and autonomy were concerned.

The book is divided geographically and thematically into six sections. The first part, “Origins of Liberated Africans,” explores the early development of Britain’s suppression campaign in the aftermath of the 1807 Abolition Act and the context of the Napoleonic Wars (p. 13). Therefore, the chapters included in this section suggest the longstanding importance of the policies that established the practices for dealing with foreign slave vessels, the scarce protections, and, most importantly, the labor obligations for liberated Africans. Part two is devoted to Sierra Leone, the heart of Britain’s antislavery operations. Part three focuses on the Caribbean, highlighting the diverse experiences of liberated Africans between what occurred in the British colonies—where slavery was abolished in 1834—and in Cuba, embedded in the second slavery. Considering that the nineteenth-century slave trade was principally conducted in the South Atlantic, the fourth portion of this book explores the production of liberated Africans in mid-nineteenth century Angola and the illegal slave trade to Brazil. For instance, notably connecting British antislavery diplomacy in Cuba and Brazil, Maeve Ryan’s contribution in this section underlines how British policies tackling the global suppression of the slave trade were guided by wider strategic and commercial interests (p. 18). Part five, “Liberated Africans in Global Perspective,” expands the global history of liberated Africans, presenting research on the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Cape, and the island of St. Helena. Lastly, part six, “Resettlements,” focuses on liberated Africans who were traumatically

forced to experience second involuntary resettlement, as Britain established the “disposal” policies—therefore using liberated Africans’ workforce to benefit the needs of the empire (p. 14).

The chapters of the book employ different kinds of sources while accounting for their potential shortages. For example, Allen M. Howard’s use of the 1831 Freetown census is descriptive and insightful but, at the same time, warns on how the information was obtained (p. 104). Moreover, Daniel B. Domingues da Silva and Katelyn E. Ziegler tackle the geographical extension of the slave trade, mapping its suppression in the nineteenth century in a database, based on—but not limited to—the correspondence between British commissioners, naval officers, and diplomats (p. 68). Nevertheless, this collection emphasizes that the experiences of liberated Africans should be explored in its cultural legacies, too. Thus, Shantel George proposes a study of oral narratives collected from 1952 to 2014, demonstrating how liberated Africans and their descendants remained culturally distinctive in post-slavery Grenada (p. 385).

In conclusion, this volume represents an excellent starting point for further research needed on specific and interrelated aspects of the diverse experiences of liberated Africans, hinted in the contributions included here: gender, the politics of language, community networks, and intersectional histories of identities. In this respect, I would strongly suggest this book not only to historians focusing on the African Atlantic and Diaspora studies but also to global labor history and dependency studies scholars.

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Nathan Andrews. 2019. *Gold Mining and the Discourses of Corporate Social Responsibility in Ghana*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 227 pp.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is based on the idea that business has the obligation beyond earning profits. A corporation is responsible not only to its shareholders but to all the stakeholders—customers, suppliers, employees, social communities, government as well as towards environment. Thus, CSR consists of voluntary activities undertaken by a company to operate in an economic, social, and environmentally sustainable manner. CSR is a multidisciplinary topic and is difficult to pin down in terms of identifying a single analytical framework that helps to address its various dimensions. This is apparent from Andrews’ book which draws insights towards the critiques of theories surrounding corporate citizenship, liberal citizenship, global governance, and poverty to explore the discourse of CSR.

By embracing a much broader understanding of discourse, this book critically examines the corporate practices, policies, and interactions which together represent the material way in which CSR discourse manifests itself on the ground. Andrews’ book grows out of his extensive fieldwork, focus group discussions, and interviews conducted in 2013 in Ghanaian communities located around two project sites of Transnational Mining Companies (TMCs), namely Newmont Mining Corporation and Kinross Gold Corporation in Ghana. The text is organized into six chapters, each representing a distinct yet complementary viewpoint and serves to juxtapose official and mainstream accounts of CSR with voices and perceptions of host communities from grassroots.