

the bourgeois art form, bar none. Actually the second argument does support the first, for a pre-requisite of transferring the social 'site' of a cultural development has to be a clear understanding of the social foundations of that development. Nevertheless a crucial link in the argument is missing. For it is only, and exactly, the masterpieces, the works which negate the market of their origin, which can come to life again for a new class through new means of reproduction. This is possible precisely because they are not entirely limited by the social relations that produced them. A struggle over culture must be a fight for the high ground (Gramsci).

But a stronghold has to be situated before it can be stormed. The most original argument in this fascinating (and sometimes infuriating) essay is that oil painting as a whole, whatever the interior diversity of its periods and subjects, had a specific class function. In stating this clearly and baldly *Ways of Seeing* takes an important preliminary step towards an historical materialist understanding of why masterpieces are outstanding, and why, therefore, they have contemporary significance.

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Immigration under Capitalism

The authors of *Immigrant Workers* begin by observing that 'The race relations approach has dominated research on immigration in Britain'.¹ This approach has been mainly liberal in outlook, and frequently followed American models; 'few British social scientists have paid any attention to . . . immigrants in the far closer countries of continental Western Europe' (p. 2), and fewer still have looked at the question in a Marxist perspective. In a recent survey for example, Michael Mann's *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class* (1973), the problem is confined to one footnote.

The main aim of this work is to redress the imbalance; it is an admirable start towards doing so. The authors argue that 'Virtually every advanced capitalist country has a lower stratum, distinguished by race, nationality, or other special characteristics, which carries out the worst jobs and has the least desirable social conditions', and that rather than the familiar categories of colour and 'prejudice', the 'basic determinant is the function which immigrants have in the socio-economic structure'. Immigration has become a long-term, possibly permanent feature of advanced capitalism (p. 6). It is having a profound effect upon both class structure and class consciousness; in particular, it helps foster within the indigenous working class 'a view of society conducive to

¹ *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, by Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, Oxford University Press and the Institute of Race Relations, 1973, £5.50.

acceptance of ideas of individual advancement, rather than collective advancement through class struggle' (p. 7). Furthermore, it has a notable significance for relations between advanced and under-developed lands (whence immigrants increasingly come), for 'Labour migration is a form of development aid given by poor countries to rich countries' (p. 8).

These theses are illustrated in a number of chapters dealing with different aspects of migrant labour in four countries: Britain, France, Switzerland and Germany. Position in the Labour Market, Housing, the Trade Unions, and Education and Training are all dealt with in this convenient comparative way; each chapter has a 'Conclusion' where the general findings are summarized. More theoretical sections deal with the economics of migration, the nature of 'prejudice', and effects on the class structure.

It is the authors' anxiety to break away from the conventional social-science approach that makes this the book which serious discussion of the topic must now rely upon. Yet, the same anxiety leads them to understate the peculiarities of the British problem. While setting the latter in its proper European context, they have tended by polemical over-reaction to minimize its *differentiae*. But these singularities do emerge nevertheless from their concrete comparisons: the overwhelmingly ex-colonial background, the predominant *laissez-faire* attitude of government and unions, language identity between immigrants and natives, the ghetto question, the fact that emigration from Britain has nearly equalled immigration, all form a distinctive set of traits. Above all, as they say themselves, in marked contrast to the continent 'British immigration policies on the whole have not been shaped by economic considerations . . . (it) has been the result of political factors, and its restrictiveness in recent years has not served anybody's economic interests' (pp. 424–5). Indeed, one merit of their (as of any scientific) approach is that it helps one to perceive and judge such *differentiae* more effectively.

Although correct, their theoretical chapters are also elementary. Prejudice is examined in the light of Frankfurt School theories, and the study of class ends by affirming that native working classes have fallen foul of 'false consciousness' *vis-à-vis* the immigrants, in the absence of 'a class consciousness which reflects the true position of all workers in society' (pp. 481–2).

In this context, one remark may be worth making. After years of ignoring or understating the issue, there is an obvious risk of left-wing reaction now over-stating its importance. It has become fashionable. However, study of the vast and complex panorama presented in the Castles–Kosack book ought to discourage this too. There is in fact little possibility of advance in the direction of 'true class consciousness' without significant alteration in other directions as well as on the part of indigenous workers: towards their nations and national parties, for instance, and towards Europe. The migrant labour problem is part of the problem of 'multi-national' Europe; not vice-versa.

T.N.