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Jordana Bailkin (2018) *Unsettled: Refugee Camps and the Making of Multicultural Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

By Lucy Mayblin, University of Sheffield

Contemporary studies of migration have increasingly been criticised for their lack of attention to history. Equally, in the British public sphere, there has tended to be a highly selective orientation to history, with only those which paint the country in a favourable light being popularly remembered. 'Unsettled' contributes both to the scholarly agenda of re-historicising our understandings of migration histories, in this case the vast historical architecture of refugee encampment across the British isles, and has the potential to also shift popular imaginaries of encampments past and present. As Bailkin explains: 'this book is about camps in Britain, but also about their erasure from public memory. This amnesia is selective' (p.12). In this way, through putting refugees at the centre of the national narrative, this fabulous work of painstakingly detailed archival research is also deeply, though quietly, political.

Empirically, Bailkin has drawn on a range of sources including documents from the (British) National Archives, the archives of camps in East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey, a range of oral histories (including from the British Library's Sound Archive, the North West Sound Archive in Lancashire, and the BBC Asian Network's Millennium Memory Bank Interviews), as well as her own interviews with people who lived or worked in refugee camps. Memoirs, photographs and poems are also woven through the book to add 'fuller expression to refugees themselves' (p.13). While Bailkin does discuss the early life of British camps, starting from concentration camps in South Africa, and the troubled categories of the encamped, such as the blurred line between British citizen, subject, and refugee, the focus of the book is on camps in the British Isles. This is sensible considering the vast scale of encampment within Britain; Bailkin identifies 96 camps across England, Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Man.

This impressive body of data would be hard for anyone to discipline into a singular narrative for the purposes of a book, and one of the joys of this text is that it sits with the inevitable complexity and only loosely disciplines it for the purposes of discussion. What are presented, then are a complex set of stories which often unsettle what we thought we knew about refugee camps in the past. Structuring chapters thematically into 'Making Camp' (everything you ever needed to know about Nissen huts in one place), 'Feeding and Hungering' (on the vital role -symbolic, cultural, religious, nutritional- of food and eating in camps), 'In Need' (on refugee care and the kinds of subjects produced by it), 'Happy Families?' (on the definition of a family and how encamped families related to contemporaneous ideas about families), 'Mixing Up' (on how the encamped interacted with and were responded to by local communities), and 'Hard Core' (on those refugees that were deemed difficult to settle after encampment) offers just enough of a scaffold around which to organise this vast body of historical data.

The title 'Unsettled', then, is multi layered in that it refers to more than the unsettling of peoples across borders. Many aspects of the book unsettle easy narratives which seek to simplify experiences of encampment. For example, the camps that Bailkin discusses housed

both British nationals and refugees, often mixed together. Many 'refugees' were, furthermore, British subjects -citizens of the British Empire. The idea that camps represent the division of citizens and non-citizens therefore does not stand up to historical inspection, even if it is the case today. Bailkin writes 'at different moments, camps could signal either the unity of citizens and refugees or their segregation' (p.1), and rather than taking citizen/non-citizen as her key distinction, it is the settled/unsettled distinction that she focusses her analysis upon. While Bailkin is a historian, and therefore less concerned than a social scientist might be with theorising and generalising from the historical materials that she has found through her research, she explains that "'unsettled" became a way to make sense of -and bring together- the variety of people whose mobility was perceived as dangerous' (p.5). Equally, she unsettles the idea that camps are solely miserable places, revealing 'their complex cultures and demographics- as spaces of possibility as well as confinement' (p.9). Indeed, the industriousness of encamped peoples from forming bands and orchestras, to newspapers, and art classes, is inspiring. Much of this will resonate with researchers of camps in the contemporary moment and there is such a rich body of historical data here that readers will easily find synergies with their own data and frameworks. But it must be emphasised that in embracing complexity Bailkin will also trouble some of what we think we know about camps, and in doing so enrich our understandings not just of the past but also the present.

My only, tentative, criticism, is that the book lacks a conclusion. Instead, Bailkin offers a beautifully written epilogue on the afterlife of encampment –'the chaotic and incomplete process of camp closures, and the shifting definition of resettlement' in her words (p.191). There is a wonderful section in the middle of the epilogue which discusses 'forgetting and remembering encampment' (p204-211) and for me this contemplation of the disjuncture between the rich histories that she had shared across this book, and the amnesia of these histories in the British popular imagination could have been the focus of a forthright concluding chapter. But that may be the sociologist in me. As it stands, this book is a triumph of historiography that I recommend all researchers of migration to Britain, and encampment, read.