

Pliley, Jessica R.; Robert Kramm-Masaoka, Harald Fischer-Tiné (Hrsg.): *Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890-1950. Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and 'Immorality'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016. ISBN: 1107102669; 333 S.

Rezensiert von: Ruth Ennis, Universität Leipzig

Located in the ever growing field of transnational history, 'Global Anti-Vice Activism' brings us on a journey through the entangled ideas and practices of late 19th and early 20th century vice. This edited book successfully demonstrates that the varying strands of vice, namely drugs, alcohol and sex, were not isolated phenomena, but rather historically intertwined both in practice and within debates on health and morality.

The overarching framework of these collective works, contributes to a history of transnational body politics. The authors shine light to historical actors who sought influence over how bodies should or should not be treated, regulated and managed by the state and society. As a collective, the chapters bring together multilayered stories of social-hygienists and religious-moral reformers, of colonial concerns and of subjects seeking to shape their own lives. We, the reader, are provided with a glimpse into the fears of the unknown and the changing. We learn of the strategies to maintain social control, racial hierarchies and to defend the state. We gain perspective on the lives and experiences of prostitutes, police, political activists and entrepreneurs. We are narrated through the production of regulation and reform, as well as the subsequent reactions from the people and the public.

While the majority of contributions successfully narrate these entanglements, the organisation of the book itself perhaps best demonstrates the difficulty in overcoming the segregation of these discourses. As the editors themselves point out, matters of vice have been long separated out in the process of historical writing and in establishing legal convention around alcohol, drugs and sex. However the fears and ideas on these matters were historically intertwined. Structured in three sections, namely 'Health and Body', 'Drink

and Drugs' and 'Prostitution and Sex Trafficking' the book's organisational principle somewhat falls reliant on the very distinctions it wishes to collapse. This leaves open the question of how we could alternatively arrange knowledge on vice. Perhaps in accordance to spaces of action and discourse production, or around groups of actors. Using laws and regulations as a starting point would once again result in distinct categories of vice being reinforced. Nevertheless, it is the content of the book that bears the fruits of its success. The contributors and their contributions have to the most part been very well selected, with the authors all working concurrently toward the book's main aims.

The book's first section 'Health and Body' reveals the non-newness of current movements on healthy living which embrace ideas of vegetarianism, reconnecting with one's own body and natural healing. To mention but a highlight of this section, Carey Watt guides us through the fascinating biography of one man, Eugen Sandow. In doing so, Watt shows the non-linearity of historical developments and of how contractions and conflicts existed in and between global connectedness. Born in Germany, Sandow went on to become an internationally renowned strongman of the 19th century. He later used his show business fame to promote his health products, pursue capitalist ventures and to dapple briefly in British politics. Despite relying on his sporting physic as part of his showmanship, Sandow worked hard to avoid the label of eccentric, by claiming that vices such as alcohol and cigars could be enjoyed in harmony to a physically healthy lifestyle. In this sense, Sandow embodied the contradiction that vice and health were in innately opposition to each other.

Section two on 'Drink and Drugs' shows us how colonial subjects appropriated knowledge and practice for their own purpose, despite the attempts of the governments to reverse cultural transfers so as to maintain racial hierarchies. This section also reveals how knowledge on varying substances such as cigarettes, differing drugs and alcohol became categorised as either safe, socially acceptable, healthy or harmful, with some changing strand over time. Emmanuel Akyeampong

for example brilliantly reworks a transnational history of interactions between British state actors, American evangelicalists and groups of colonised people in West African Society. Prior to World War I, liquor imports had made up a huge part of revenue in British Western Africa. Demand for liquor was so lucrative that even after American missionary efforts successfully pushed for an increase in taxing, it failed to have the intended effect of reducing consumption. As British and American discourses and experiences linked alcohol consumption with increased sexual activity and the spread of Venereal Disease among mobile military troops, a number of ordinances in the 1920's attempted to curb consumption by putting an outright ban on gin imports. This merely resulted in the rise of illicit distilleries in the 1930's and had no impact on the prevalence rates of Venereal Disease. The aims of Akyeampong's chapter are transparently presented, in which a narrative highlights the nodes and functions of knowledge transfer amid transnational interactions.

The book's final section 'Prostitution and Sex Trafficking' not only provides us with historical knowledge on the emergence and (re)appropriation of regulatory bodies and systems on prostitution, but it also provides us with some tools for trying to narrate the lives of those only spoken for in the archives. Jessica Pliley presents us with an intriguing story of how the 'White Slave Devision' of the US Immigration Bureau (1892 – 1924) functioned as a key space for cooperation and contradiction on legislation, research and policing practice. Pliley shows the multitude of historical understandings around prostitution and trafficking. In the spectrum of views and motives among feminist activists for example, or in the atypical perception of the Bureau's head, Stanley Finch. Contra to the opinions of many other state actors, Finch went against the bio-medical view of women as vectors of Venereal Disease. Rather, he sympathised with those who entered prostitution as being victims of economic inequalities. In another example of the numerous layers of meaning, many feminist activists linked in with established ideas on black slave abolition, which enabled them to build upon a preexisting discourse for reform and regulation. There in-

tentions were however primarily aimed at serving the interests of white women and girls. Further to this already complex picture, Pliley's chapter points to the simultaneous agendas of transnationalism and nationalism within the developments and dynamics around 'White Slave Traffic'. While US activists were enthusiastic about the emerging transnational movements, US policy makers and the Immigration Bureau were far from interested in international cooperation. For these state actors, sex trafficking was a threat that was foreign in nature, and thus in need of state-building solutions such as national monitoring and policing.

Within this same section, Stephen Legg provides us with a very different perspective on the history of 'White Slavery'. On the opening pages of his chapter, Legg employs a convincing narrative approach to give voice to the beaten sex workers who are expressing both their victimhood and agency. He thereafter goes on to narrate the state representatives and their reports. Legg consistently remind us that in both cases, we are being spoken to through the archives. His handling of the material is done sensitively, while he weaves through the complexity and constant multifacetedness of victimhood and agency. As a result, he gives us a lot of food for thought on how to treat archival material on the subject matter of prostitution.

Having been opened for us by the editors, the book is nicely brought to a close by David Courtwright, as he grasps us with a number of reemerging questions. Courtwright asks why, at that specific moment in time, did a wave of reform appear in the mid 19th century? Why was it that such a diversity of actors, with often incompatible motives, became so intrigued and drawn to anti-vice activism? And why is it that the subject matter of vice proved to be so resilient, given its ancient roots in religious text? The book offers numerous important and convincing reflections as to why the complex of themes around vice should be treated in conjunction with one another. En masse, the chapters are linked by a thread which points out how notions and practices around vice were appropriated and transferred between differing contexts. 'Global Anti-Vice Activism' serves as a solid

resource for scholars and students interested in how the varying strands of vice were entangled both in discourse and in practice. The collective works offer insight into how beliefs on health and morality influenced regulatory practices and debates, which through varying historical processes, continue to hold authority today.

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