
David Richardson

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instinctively..." (p. 3), and the striking inclusion of folksy images such as, "he never bounced on his knee a potent intimacy a grandson" (p. 49). This is an impressively scholarly text that translates overlooked dimensions of a well-investigated world. It would have been even better if Hokum had not so assiduously kept the emperors off-stage. As it is written, the book reads like one half of a fascinating conversation.

Ann McBride-Limaye


This is a global history of the decline in eradication of human bondage. Most of Ziskind's book traces the legislative acts and royal decrees emancipating slaves. It is much needed history in the literature on slavery. Ziskind has written it in an excellent narrative style. The following is a characteristic paragraph of the book.

In the ups and downs of battle, Toussaint L'Overture proved himself to be a skillful strategist and a charismatic leader. On August 29, 1793, he circulated a proclamation: 'I am Toussaint L'Overture. My name has perhaps become known to you. I am bent on vengeance. I desire the establishment of Liberty and Equality in St. Domingue. I strive to bring them into being. Unite with us, brothers, and fight with us in the common cause.' He trained his volunteers in rudimentary tactics, drill, weapons and discipline. Battle victories came, but the cost were great as the British brought in more and more troops. Riggaud's mulattos overcame French forces and imprisoned the French Governor, Leveaux. Toussaint, through secret maneuvers had Leveaux released and in gratitude the Governor made Toussaint the Lieutenant Governor of St. Domingue. (p. 107)

As the book title indicates, Ziskind gives his narrative a legal framework, as well as a chronological one. This the earliest emancipation act he discusses is the of King Hammurabi, in Babylon, around 2000 B.C. Hammurabi's code had several laws that require giving freedom to a slave of improving a slave's status.
But these Middle Eastern accounts of the emancipation of slaves are part of a chapter, "Ancient Manipulation of Slavery: In Babylon, in Judea and Samaria, in Ancient Islam." Athens, in Aristotle's time was based on slavery, as well and democracy; and the Sophist, Alcidamus, gave only a weak complaint against the institution.

Not least among the advocates of manumission were slaves themselves. And on this account the slave revolts in Italy and Sicily, after Hannibal's time, have due attention. Ziskind, himself a labor lawyer, traces out the procedures of the Roman legal genius, to convert slaves to free citizens. A chapter traces the medieval modifications of servitude. Here, and in the rest of the book, the accounts and the statistics are well documented, while the narrative flows. "Archbishop Theodore (670-690) declared, 'If a man leads astray his slavegirl, he shall set her free and do penance for six months.'...It is said that in 651, St. Wilfrid, who escaped being made a slave by pagan Saxons, converted their king who in turn granted him land and 250 slaves whom Wilfrid baptized and freed."(pp.29-30) Ziskind marks the few moves towards the amelioration of slavery in other medieval European and Muslim areas.

But substantial emancipatory efforts began after 1800. Countries declared against the slave trade at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and particularly in the Brussels Conference in 1890. The author singles out the laws of various nations that prohibited the slave trade; but these legal acts and merely the undergirding upon which his narrative rests. He discusses the reform movement, the political turmoil of the 1800's, and the fear of slave insurrections in British Jamaica and French St. Domingue. Sir William Dolben's accounts of the horrors he had documented on the filth and crowded conditions in the middle passage, which brought disease and death (p. 48) is part of the scene. In this milieu, the Slave Trade Regulation Act of 1788 was a big step. It provided for the amelioration of conditions aboard slave ships. But step by step in year after year, British colonial assemblies and societies of Indian landholders and celebrated abolitionists and Prime Ministers and the houses of Commons and Lords, moved to outlaw the slave trade. The same process of abolition occurred in America from 1642 onward. (p. 54)

Ziskind sketches out the immense web of slave trade routes by land and sea. And he specifies the great number of bilateral and multilateral treaties between nations on the slave trade. In all of this, he refers to specific historical events, including Britain's persuading the Netherlands to prohibit the slave trade in 1818. As for treaties in the Ottoman Empire, the author deftly disentangles the true slavery of Circassians, who had emigrated from Russia, from the elite Janizary slaves of the Turkish sultans and pashas. He does not even refer to those special slaves who were groomed for the bureaucracy and military forces of the Empire. For they were slaves in name, not in fact. Yet he does mention the medieval serfs, who were not slaves name, but lived in slavish conditions.
The gradual emancipation of slaves during 4000 years accelerates over the Globe after the 18th century. The author does not attempt to touch on every historical item. Instead, he narrates a great many vivid incidents, which highlight the historical record. "In 1833, the Maria de Gloria, flying a Portuguese flag, was seized by a British cruiser outside the Rio de Janeiro harbor. It was carrying 400 slaves, half of them children under twelve years of age. ...The Mixed Court in Rio de Janeiro decided the Maria da Gloria was a Portuguese ship and was detained improperly. However, it was not released. Instead the British captors took it on to the Mixed Court in Sierra Leone." (87-88). The Africans who survived were placed out of reach of slave owners on Brazilian plantations.

There are chapters on emancipation acts in France and her colonies, in Spain and her colonies, in Britain, in other European countries, and in the United States. The American chapter closes with a discussion of the removal of segregation in public places and workplaces. Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1960, 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1966, which re-established and fortified the emasculated civil rights statutes of 1866-1875.

The continents of Africa and Asia have had their own history of emancipation from slavery. Ziskind narrates the African and Asian movements toward human freedom. And he clarifies the various legal acts, as in the other chapters. He has hit upon a type of agreement that will resist mightily any sweeping under the rug of human rights to freedom. Modern Ghana's ratification of the ILO Forced Labor Conventions No. 29 in 1957 and No. 105 in 1958 have infinitely more power than a mere custom or oral agreement of deployments. So, too, does the League of Nations Slavery Convention.

Ziskind convinces me that the covenants, declaration, and conventions that are spelled out and disseminated in print by the United Nations will have a staying power.

In a concluding Epilogue, Ziskind philosophically extends the theme of his study of emancipations and freedom to the progress of civilization on other fronts. "I see emancipation as the most significant labor law in past history, and as a beacon for the most significant labor law in past history, and as a beacon for the improvement of existing labor laws." (334) He holds out that the truths concerning slavery are not self-evident; for they were not self-evident to the writers of the American Constitution "Few, if any, truths are self-evident." He intimates that the laws of emancipation of human laborers from unjust working conditions and unfair remuneration are not self-evident, either. "That recognition that every human being is worthy of the considerations shared within the free community has not been taken very seriously." (336)

"The great majority of humankind are out there, almost forgotten. Even in our most affluent societies, we see the homeless and neglected." He adds, that we have not yet resolved the controversy between property rights and human rights. Thus he implies that the right to property weighs to heavily in the balance.
against the right of Labor to a good life. And he compares the status of present day labor legislation to the all too slow emergence of emancipation acts. "Specific proposals to introduce new labor legislation—as any other proposal to depart from existing practice—are almost certain to be controverted. This was the case with every emancipation proposal."

One of the solutions in "dealing with all oppressive labor practices is a persistence in fact gathering."(342) Garrison and Clarkson's gathering of irrefutable facts in America's ante bellum days countered the assertion of slave owners in Parliament or Congress that their slaves were better off than they had been. Ziskind is very persuasive in his independent agencies should investigate the true facts of labor in the light of labor law. This reminds me of "60 minutes" on CBS. "It is essential that there be cultivated [world-wide] a public recognition that the emergence of truth in the thinking of the world is dependent on such undertakings."

Here, Ziskind broadens a very practical fact of political and economic life to a philosophical verity: the evil of the cover-up. Ziskind's philosophy of truth is better than its celebrated opposite: Plato's proposal for the Republic's leaders to conceal their machinations form the citizens by the lie and the cover-up. Ziskind is as much a man of the age a Plato was of the time. After 1918, when European empire-building and colonizing came upon bad days, Plato lost his most ardent supporters. The aristocratic elitism of Pericles, Plato, and Aristotle fell out of fashion. The late Sir Karl Popper condemned Plato's politics as a Fascist concoction. He would be very pleased with Ziskind's formula for labor's freedom.

The primacy of human value in his philosophy even leads him to "place the development of the full potential of every human being above the goal of improved production."(344) He wants a work that is personally satisfying as well as rewarding. He is thinking of the opposite: those jobs that are oppressive, and the element of helplessness of involuntary submission. Physical compulsion to the point of enslavement may be absent. Yet, economic necessity can make laborers in to victims. The Earth still has slave-like conditions in the work of multitudes of human beings.

Ziskind is a labor lawyer (J.D.) and also a doctor of philosophy. His jurisprudence does not cast his book off-course, but, instead, gives him insight into the laws and their force. The forces of written laws and signed treaties and conventions have powerful leverage over national governments. And third world societies and becoming nations with free labor communities.

The book closes with several appendices. The first is in the form of chronological listing of anti-slavery acts. Item: "1771 NY Doc. rel. Col. Hist. N.Y. v.293," Item: (in Samoa) "1920 Mandate of League of Nations to British...Prohibited slave trade and force labor..." The second Appendix is a chronology of emancipation acts. They add up to several hundred in all affected
As Darwin taught, the method of scientifically sound narrations of a multitude of evidence can give an argument immense persuasiveness. David Ziskind has written such a book. I strongly recommend it for its clear insights into the well-being of the labor community.

David Richardson


Six brief chapters introduce this work, covering New Spain from 1519 to 1821. The conquest, encomiendas, political history, ecclesial administration, and population and settlement are the topics. Each of these chapters has a map of simple design, easy to read, and quite essential. With all this the reader is introduced to the bumpy road to a settled Spanish encomienda system, the fractionation of the land into alcaldia mayores and corregimientos, and the various territorial-administrative arrangements and re-arrangements of the Roman Catholic Church. Sections then follow on source of information, place-name spelling, citations and abbreviations, and suggestions for research.

We then come to the bulk of the volume: the 129 political units, treated in alphabetical order, from Acapulco to Zimpango de la Laguna, each with a mercifully crystal-clear place-name and boundary map. For each of these territorial units, in two or three pages, one is informed of encomiendos, alternate place-names, population and settlement and their changes (and sometimes notes on ethnicity), a few sentences of geographical or historical import, and some remarks about sources of information.

The volume closes with an appendix of modern Mexican states and their colonial components, and a glossary of Spanish (and some Indian) terms.

This does NOT constitute a historical geography of New Spain. The word "Guide" in the title is to be taken seriously. This is a comprehensive source