

free from British rule, according to M. K. Gandhi, was rejecting these bribes (131, 86). But the ruthless instrumentality at the heart of the system—especially where racial others were concerned—continued. Public refusal of honors was rare, Harper tells us, but in 2003, the British poet and vocal critic of empire Benjamin Zephaniah publicly declined an OBE, stating that he was “unwilling to join the oppressor’s club” (166). The popular backlash that followed made it clear that while the empire was a thing of the past, the racial order that it had created was alive and well in the Order of Chivalry that continued to bear its name.

Marrying individual stories with a penetrating and sociologically informed analysis of the entire honors system, Harper helps account for the glacial pace of change in British society, and the ways in which structural inequalities are recreated generation after generation. *From Servants of the Empire to Everyday Heroes* is an important book and a great resource for social historians at all levels.

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JEREMY HARTE. *Travellers through Time: A Gypsy History*. London: Reaktion Books, 2023.  
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The amateur scholars and enthusiasts in Victorian and Edwardian England who collected stories and vocabulary from Romany travelers called themselves *gypsylogists*. Jeremy Harte, author of *Travellers through Time: A Gypsy History*, a compendium of narratives and vignettes, follows in their tradition. Gathering anecdotes and reminiscences from historical observers and more recent memoirists, Harte offers “a history *for* Gypsies . . . from the perspective of a Gypsy . . . through the voices of the people it happened to” (8). Though generally aware of scholarship on the history, politics, and ethnography of Romany Gypsies, Harte makes no engagement with it. Very few of his cited sources were published in the last twenty-five years. He draws upon my *Gypsies: An English History* (2018), but such crucial studies as Yaron Matras’s, *I Met Lucky People: The Story of the Romani Gypsies* (2014), David Mayall’s, *Gypsy Identities 1500–2000: From Egyptians and Moon-Men to the Ethnic Romany* (2004), and Becky Taylor’s, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* (2014) are absent from the bibliography. Slender coverage of Gypsy history before the gypsylogist era is offset by generous citation from later conversations and interactions, including some privately printed or reported in obscure periodicals. Most of these relate to Gypsies and travelers in the county of Surrey.

Harte, the secretary of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society, has previously written on the folklore of fairies, holy wells, and the devil. Though not himself a Gypsy, he is energetically supportive of this much-vilified minority. He makes knowing use of Anglo-Romani words such as *dukkering* for fortune-telling, *rokkering* for talking, *gorjers* for non-Gypsies, *gavvers* for the police, and *drom* for the road. He enthuses about “the good old days” (18), “the people who traveled in the bright wagons” (11), and the “gay and colorful ensembles” (98) of Victorian Gypsy women. A glossary of 175 Romani words appears in an appendix.

Like the classic gypsylogists George Borrow (d. 1881) and Charles Leland (d. 1903), with whom he has much in common, Harte imagines an elemental division between “those who were of the Romany and those who were not” (10). He confidently discerns the “ethnic markers” of “a true Gypsy, a tatcho Romanichal” and celebrates “exemplary

Gypsies—people who had never deviated from the ways of the Romany” (46). While acknowledging their “selective intermarriage with other traveling people” (53), Harte hews to romantic notions of what he calls true Gypsies. The problematics of Romany identity—of labeling, representation, blending, and assimilation within a shifting legal and economic landscape that has long occupied scholars—are blithely ignored.

Harte’s chapters are arranged chronologically, following five hundred years of English Gypsy history, but his grasp of detail before the Victorian era is uncertain. He notes that “the records of Gypsy life in sixteenth-century England form a depressing sequence of arrests, apprehensions and deportations” (25), but provides scant evidence of such dealings from the archives. Rather, he is concerned to assert that “wherever the Gypsies came, they brought a touch of the exotic into otherwise humdrum lives” (24). He describes the 1563 statute criminalizing “Egyptians” as “ridiculous” and, misunderstanding the early modern calendar, misdates it to 1562 (29, 62). Skipping most of the seventeenth century, in the next chapter (on Georgian Britain) he retells the stories of Mary Squires, the Gypsy falsely accused of kidnapping, and the celebrity Gypsies of Norwood, south of London, who created “a successful brand” (49). One would not know from Harte’s account that the Quaker John Hoyland (d. 1831), described here as “a bookish old gentleman” who would listen when Gypsies “came and rokkered to him” (71–72), wrote the most sophisticated account of Gypsy occupations and practices of the early nineteenth century, *A Historical Survey of the Customs, Habits, and Present State of the Gypsies* (1816).

Harte is more concerned with Gypsy genealogy than with their interactions with settled society. He follows the most famous Gypsy families across generations, offering fascinating detail on their naming practices, travels, and escapades. The sections on Victorian England include lively depictions of fairs and festivals, prize fights and races, tents and wagons. The twentieth century is similarly served with accounts of Gypsy servicemen in the First World War, gatherings on Surrey commons and the “golden memories” (172) of Gypsy autobiographers. Harte briefly mentions “mogadi” (169), the sense of ritual uncleanness, but allows no reference to the pioneering anthropological work of Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (1983), which explores Gypsy customs of purity and contamination.

Recent times have seen many changes, including intensive harassment by authorities, racist campaigns in the popular press, and struggles over caravans and encampments, the arrival in England of Irish Travelers and European Romanies, and the emergence of educated media-savvy Gypsy celebrities. Harte offers anecdotes about these developments without much argument. His approach throughout is romantic and eclectic rather than analytic or systematic. *Travellers through Time* is pitched to general readers and Gypsies, with little to occupy a historian.

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KEVIN HICKSON, ed. *Neil Kinnock: Saving the Labour Party?* Routledge Studies in British Politics. Abingdon: Routledge, 2022. Pp. 288. \$273.00 (cloth).  
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Neil Kinnock’s leadership of the Labour Party, and its wider political legacy, has been subject to a vast array of differing scholarly and popular interpretations. To some, he is the “Welsh windbag,” (87) a gaffe-prone political lightweight who lacked the temperament or even intelligence to have been prime minister. For others he is “Ramsay MacKinnock,” (David Howell,