

Robert Jackson — *The Prisoners, 1914-18*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. Pp. viii, 162.

Unlike World War II, the War of 1914-1918 has produced relatively few studies of prisoners of war. Robert Jackson's work attempts to help fill this lacuna. Aimed at the general reader, it encompasses a broad array of topics: the rules of war as of 1914, the experience of initial capture, life within the camps, civilian internees, contributions of relief organizations, escapes, the impact of the armistice on camps, and German prisoners in Britain. British prisoners receive the bulk of attention, and a majority of the text consists of well-chosen, often graphic excerpts from detainees' accounts. It is based mainly upon primary source materials at the Imperial War Museum, London, plus published participants accounts. The work is clearly organized, precisely and directly written, and includes seventeen photographs, but no footnotes or endnotes.

Jackson's even-handedly points out how exigencies of war influenced governments' treatment of prisoners: both British and German states relied upon *ad hoc* administration to handle unforeseen and complex circumstances. At times, both parties violated the Geneva "Laws of war". British POWs received some of their worst treatment when Germany staged offensive operations, as in early 1918, when victory seemed within grasp; conversely, with the armistice of November 1918 and defeat imminent, German treatment swiftly became benign. The author, however, sensibly maintains that treatment depended ultimately on where, when, and by whom men were captured (26). He also notes that enlisted men frequently suffered more severely than did officers, yet, at times, no clear distinction emerged as both belligerents ignored the Geneva rules. Life for many British prisoners, particularly the foot soldiers, was barely subsistence level: meagre food (often parcels from relief agencies spelled the difference between life and death), long and arduous work hours, inadequate clothing, wretched quarters and almost non-existent medical care. German guards sometimes appeared sadistic: in one instance, laughing uproariously after setting dogs loose on prisoners. Yet, gleanings of humaneness also shown through, occasionally, as "Hun" soldiers took pity on inmates with acts of charity and humanity.

Jackson brings in a myriad of tantalizing tidbits. He touches upon racism with segregation of whites and "coloreds" at the Ruhleben camp and, in other areas, suggests antisemitism. Russian and Roumanian detainees received far worse treatment than did the British. The residual code of officers' honor (regarding parole) appears briefly. Reactions of German civilians to British POWs, strikes by prisoners, along with instances of collaboration, also appear fleetingly.

All of the above points should make interesting reading and appeal to the general war buff to whom World War I prisoners are *terra incognita*.

But with respect to academe, Jackson's volume would not pass muster for various reasons. Its title should indicate more precisely that British prisoners constitute the central concern. Indeed, one wonders if the very favorable handling of German POWs in Britain (chapter 10) is the whole story. Secondly, the book's dust jacket's assertion that studies of World War II prisoners have proliferated while "nothing has been written on this significant subject for the First World War" is simply inaccurate. A professor of psychology at the University of Toronto, John Davidson Ketchum, for example, wrote an excellent analytical account of his experience as a prisoner at Ruhleben in World War I, *Ruhleben: A Prison Camp Society* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1965). More recently, Charles Burdick and Ursula Moessner have produced *The German Prisoners-of-War in Japan, 1914-1920* (Lanham, Maryland:

The University of America, 1984). Earlier, Fritz Sachse and Hans Cossmann published *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton: Leben & Geschichte deutscher Kriegsgefangener in einem englischen Lager* (Munich: n.p., 1920). These are only a few titles; there are others.

Jackson could have enhanced his work by a more sophisticated conceptual framework with sociological and/or psychological approaches. Social scientists have laid the needed theoretical bases and, indeed, not only could some of Professor Ketchum's perspectives have been applied, but some of the excellent work done on World War II prison camps could have provided new angles of vision. If, as historians assume, contexts provide meaning, then, *The Prisoners, 1914-18* is rather thin in analysis and meaning. Secondly, with respect to research, German archival material, as well as secondary sources, are indeed extant and could have added a dimension to the treatment of British prisoners (as well as German POWs in Britain). The Red Cross' and other relief organizations' records might have lent data for more precise analyses of aid to prisoners. French archival and secondary materials could have illuminated further the British detainees' story, to say nothing of Russian and other materials. Gauged by scholarly standards, Jackson's work, indeed, has serious shortcomings.

John F. Kutolowski  
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Christine Johanson — *Women's Struggle for Higher Education in Russia, 1855-1900*, Montréal et Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987, x, 149 p.

Dans la Russie de la seconde moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les progrès et les reculs de l'enseignement supérieur dépendent davantage de la conjoncture politique que des efforts faits par les femmes elles-mêmes. Qu'on en juge ! L'avènement du « libéral » Alexandre II en 1855, la défaite militaire subie lors de la guerre de Crimée, les discussions animées par certains journalistes (Pisarev, Chernyshevskii) dans une presse qui se libère de la rigide censure imposée par Nicholas I contribuent largement à créer un nouveau climat intellectuel. Les autorités en place accueillent même favorablement l'idée d'un système éducationnel plus élaboré, car elles y voient un outil propre à renforcer l'ordre social et à conférer à nouveau à leur pays un statut de grande puissance. L'enseignement supérieur féminin, tant dans le domaine des sciences que des humanités, bénéficiera de cette nouvelle approche : ainsi, l'Université de Saint-Pétersbourg sera la première, en 1859, à admettre des femmes; Kiev et Kharlov suivront peu après, mais non Moscou. Toutefois, l'émergence d'un mouvement étudiant radical, lequel culmine en avril 1866 avec la tentative d'assassinat de Karkozov, ancien étudiant universitaire, amène le gouvernement à réorienter ses politiques en matière d'éducation. Convaincus qu'il existe une relation étroite et nocive entre accès à l'enseignement supérieur et radicalisme politique et tout imprégnés d'une « state's service-oriented view of education » (12), D.A. Tolstoi, I.D. Delianov et M.N. Katkow (les deux premiers, ministres de l'Éducation) vont s'efforcer, avec zèle et constance, d'étouffer de telles aspirations. Ainsi, en 1861-1863, les femmes russes seront expulsées des universités; après un certain répit, l'assassinat d'Alexandre II, en 1881, donnera le coup de grâce à l'enseignement supérieur féminin.