

Whalen's arguments do raise a number of issues that he does not address. He never discusses fully why Germany should have or did offer social welfare to war victims. The Empire refused to recognize any "right" to recompense, while the Republic acknowledged "responsibility" for disabled and survivors. This fundamental shift in attitude merits analysis. Whalen never discusses why the Independent and Majority Socialists joined in voting for a pension system designed to preserve the existing social hierarchy. He did not have time to evaluate the latest literature on the apparently inescapable economic and fiscal constraints which Weimar Germany faced, but war victims' political ineffectiveness may actually have reflected the society's simple inability to finance their demands. In this context, comparing the victims' gains with those of other groups in Germany and with war victims in other countries would be illuminating. Adopting Freud's model of melancholia, Whalen argues that victims groups responded to the Nazi seizure of power with either suicide (dissolving themselves) or mania (vociferously committing themselves to Nazi ideology). As the Nazis would undoubtedly have imprisoned any victims group leader who tried to pursue any other option, this analysis conceals more than it reveals.

Although *Bitter Wounds* leaves a number of broader questions unanswered, it provides an informative and stimulating view of a significant social group in inter-war Germany.

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GORDON WRIGHT — *Between the Guillotine & Liberty: Two Centuries of the Crime Problem in France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. pp. ix, 290.

Gordon Wright has written a history of the intellectual, political and institutional responses to the problem of crime in France from the end of the eighteenth century to the present. The enigmatic title does not imply any progression, during those years, from one mode of punishment to another, but rather derives from the title of a nineteenth-century drawing meant to satirize the penal reformers' promotion of imprisonment as the "golden mean" between capital punishment and simple release. Moreover, the subtitle is somewhat misleading: Wright does not focus on the problem of crime *per se* so much as reactions to it. Although the author's stated goal is "to discover and explain how a society has grappled with the problem over time, and to understand how and why attitudes toward crime and punishment have evolved" (p. vii), he has neither concentrated on changes in popular *mentalité* nor written a social history of prisons from the inside out such as Patricia O'Brien's *The Promise of Punishment* (1982). Instead, he has focused on the more readily discoverable reactions of the articulate minority that recorded its views and provided the activists and politicians who promoted reform and formulated legislation, a task which, Wright admits, is "naturally easier, and not necessarily unimportant or elitist" (p. vii).

As a result, Wright's study is methodologically traditional, treating what he considers a "faddish" subject in a conventional manner. Whereas O'Brien views reactions to the crime problem within the evolution of class relationships, Wright dismisses system-builders as naive reductionists who explain the complexity of reality by simplistic single causes that are more "plausible than persuasive" (p. 21). The ghost of Michel Foucault, whose *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (1976) set the agenda for subsequent discussions of penology, seems to haunt Wright's narrative. The author does not hesitate to wrestle with his foe in the first chapter, where he discusses Foucault's view that the prison was the capstone of a disciplinary society. Foucault, he asserts, only avoids the appearance of "reductionism" by making his hypothesis part of a larger theory of cultural change that can be accepted only on the basis of faith, not evidence. Wright's approach logically determines

the nature of his sources: memoirs, treatises, newspapers, minutes of legislative sessions, government reports and statistics, as well as recent historical studies on crime and criminality. But due perhaps to Wright's antipathy to system-building, his own efforts to present and analyze the material sometimes seem lame. Nevertheless, he has digested and organized an impressive array of materials to produce a much-needed survey of the subject.

Wright's survey is essentially chronological. He begins by examining how the traditional assumption that the goals of punishment were retribution and deterrence yielded to the notion that rehabilitation was desirable and realizable. Whereas under the Old Regime magistrates assumed that penalties had to be harsh and exemplary to be effective, reformers contended that the goal of deterrence would be more effectively attained by calculated, measured punishment as opposed to horrifying spectacles that evoked sympathy for the condemned. Wright suggests that the early reformers were inspired more by rationalism than humanism and often devised penalties equally horrific in their cold calculation.

In explaining this transformation, Wright weighs various factors. He cautiously concludes that although findings do not indicate an overall increase in crime at the end of the Old Regime, royal magistrates complained about rising caseloads, and officials continued to report a climate of widespread fear. These elements coincided with the rising momentum of the reform movement to create a receptivity to reform among the young magistrates of the royal courts. Wright quotes one magistrate who in 1798 recalled that Cesare Beccaria's treatise "had so changed the spirit of the old criminal courts in France that ten years before the Revolution they had been completely transformed" (p. 16). To ascribe this transformation to the advance of the bourgeoisie would be simplistic, Wright repeats. But he also warns that exclusive reliance on the traditional hypothesis that a "gradual and partially autonomous change in values" occurred in France and Europe, culminating in the Enlightenment, would be equally rash (p. 22). He allows that these values were connected to the social and economic changes of the time in some vaguely-understood but complex way: "It is more likely that the relationship between values and socioeconomic base, then as now, was reciprocal — that base and value system combine to shape a society's view of man and the world" (p. 22). In short, after skillfully summarizing and dismissing all "single causes," the author unfortunately contributes little to the debate.

Wright demonstrates how the notion of rehabilitation was inextricably linked to the revolutionary belief in the success of social engineering and the conviction that a more just society eventually would reduce the incidence of crime. During the post-Napoleonic period the social problem of crime and punishment provoked passionate public debate. Reformers, drawing inspiration from the religious strain of Romanticism that emphasized the moral uplift of the individual, promoted the concept of rehabilitation via solitary confinement. But the Revolution of 1848 blunted the momentum of their movement, and the Second Empire further repudiated the principle of cellular confinement by returning to the common prison and by resorting to penal transportation to rid France of its most dangerous criminals. In fact, Wright sees the entire second half of the century as a protracted contest between the advocates of cellular confinement and the promoters of penal transportation, with the latter carrying the day in 1885, when the legislature voted to transport recidivists.

In the late nineteenth century French positivists who stressed the social origins of crime came to dominate the emerging discipline of criminal sociology. They combined with the classicists who emphasized free will to produce a consensus incorporating the goals of "utilitarian social defense with a frosting of moral retribution to suit the public taste," a doctrine that prevailed until the end of World War I (p. 128). Between the wars the indifference of the public to criminological questions was matched by the intellectual stagnation of the specialists. After World War II, a drop in the crime rate that lessened opposition to reform persisted until the 1970s, when prison riots and a wave of social fear significantly altered the public mood. Notwithstanding this trend, after 1981 the socialist government of Mitterrand quickly abolished capital punishment, released many minor offenders and revised the penal code. Although protests grew when statistics indicated a subsequent overall increase in crime, the verdict is still out on the relative success of the reforms, the author cautions. He concludes

that aside from France's long reliance on penal transportation, its experience parallels the course of moderate reformism pursued by other Western nations and will undoubtedly continue to do so.

Like all synthetic works, Wright's overview is by no means exhaustive and will be faulted by specialists for sins of omission and commission. To take only one example of the latter, Wright pays scant attention to the growing intrusion of the forces of order and repression into the lives of a populace increasingly reliant on state agents to police society. He argues at one point that, prior to the reforms of the Revolution, the forces of order (such as they were) played a more active role than they later did in pursuing and investigating crimes (p. 26-27). In reality, the subjects of the king normally assumed that responsibility, and royal agents nearly always confined themselves to arresting and prosecuting suspects denounced or delivered to them by the populace. Nonetheless, Wright's survey of reactions to the changing reality of crime will afford social scientists an historical perspective on current problems and will provide with historians a lucid introduction to an important subject.

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