

describes the important place of the Stube, a distinctive feature of houses in the German towns. It was a large room with a tile stove which made it possible to keep the temperature above freezing day and night. For this reason it became the centre of most economic and social activities.

Much of the literature on the late medieval and early modern peasant focusses on his poverty. Hundsbichler, in contrast, describes a relatively high level of material culture. The well-fed goose graced every landscape and even the peasants had goose-down filled mattresses and comforters.

Elizabeth Vavra's description of art helps us understand the feelings and attitudes of medieval people to art, music, literature and theatre. Increasingly the artist gained self-confidence and freedom partially through contacts with Italy. Actors and entertainers were relegated to the fringes of society together with the physically handicapped and the prostitutes. Nevertheless they provided all, from noble counts to peasants, with relief, entertainment, and news. Her discussion ranges from the high culture of the artists who painted and sculpted for the Church, the prince and the merchant to the popular reading and story-telling of the minstrels.

Overall the writers make an important contribution to our understanding of late medieval society by looking at its material objects both as they can be seen today and as they were described in medieval written sources. This collection is a convenient and up-to-date description of the social history of late medieval Europe east of the Rhine river. In addition it is a wealthy source of anecdotes and illustrations for the lecturer in medieval, renaissance, early modern or western civilization courses.

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W.R. LAMBERT — *Drink and Society in Victorian Wales, c. 1820-1895*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983. Pp. 294.

Most historians of Britain will admit somewhat guiltily that Wales is the part they tend to ignore. Paradoxically, while theirs is the country most fully assimilated with England legally, administratively and statistically, the Welsh have the strongest claim to separate nationhood by the classic criterion, survival of a separate language. As W.R. Lambert shows in this well-executed study, the drink issue also played a major role in defining the Welsh identity in the nineteenth century.

"Drink" here effectively means beer, since unlike the rest of the Celtic fringe the Welsh were not imbibers of spirits. In an excellent opening chapter which surveys the social and economic dimensions of drink, Lambert suggests that beer played a particularly significant role in Welsh life. An example is the distinctive rural custom of the bid ale, a self-help feast at which beer would be sold for well above market price and gifts solicited to finance marriage on a version of the installment plan, it being understood that such assistance would be repaid over time by reciprocal gifts. Into this insulated peasant (the term is more appropriate to Wales than elsewhere in Britain) society, industrialization erupted with peculiar suddenness, producing in South East Wales at least, towns that came even closer than Engels' Manchester to the vulgar stereotype of the industrial revolution hell-hole.

Such a place was Merthyr Tydfil, a raw town wholly created by the coal and iron industries. The majority of its 1850 population of 50,000 was unskilled, crammed into speculative housing of the worst kind. It was a town with virtually no middle class, which meant no hospital, no fire engine, no workhouse, no Board of Health, no paving or lighting, ranking second only to Liverpool as the unhealthiest town in Britain. Its chief amenities were 506 legal (and many more illegal) drinking places. Over half of these were beerhouses, often no more than ordinary workers' cottages with perhaps a shed added on to justify the higher property rating needed for a beerhouse licence. Half of Merthyr's beerhouse keepers were employed in the iron works, often as foremen or subcontractors of labour. Thus the drinking places were job centres, pay offices and banks (cashing paper money

in a coin-short economy). Not only was beerhouse keeping one of the few roads to wealth for the working man, it also conferred political power. Nearly a third of Merthyr's electorate in 1850 were publicans or beerhouse owners.

Disciplining a work force seemingly determined to "drink up" any surplus earnings, their intoxication adding still further danger to already very dangerous jobs, was the employer's justification for low pay, longer pay intervals (to enforce saving) and truck (which its defenders claimed put the pay into the more responsible hands of the wife). But the ingenuity of thirst responded by turning beerhouses into trading posts for truck goods, which would then be resold to the truck shops. Many manufacturers resigned themselves to the drink problem and made what they could from it through public house ownership.

The solution to this was temperance, not just moderate anti-spirits temperance — pointless in Wales — but teetotalism. Yet the fact that the Welsh temperance movement had (and still has) its greatest strength in the non-industrial North indicates that this was not simply a crude social control campaign in the interests of self-serving industrialists. It was rather a continuation of the moral crusade of Welsh nonconformity, particularly the distinctively Welsh Calvinist Methodist sect which already claimed considerable success in rescuing the Welsh people from eighteenth century depravity. Whether the Welsh were as a nation particularly sunk in darkness is a moot point. Was Taffy a thief, as the old English nursery rhyme claims? All the more glorious then his redemption, according to the reasoning of revivalism. But when the notorious Education Commissioners' Report of 1847 called attention to the low cultural, moral and religious condition of Wales it was widely resented as a vicious Anglican slander of the overwhelmingly non-conformist Welsh people, a national insult. In any case temperance was the logical goal for the programme of national regeneration.

Lambert is none too sympathetic to the Welsh temperance movement, or to non-conformity. According to him temperance should be seen primarily not as a means of collective social reform but as a means of personal salvation. He notes that the Calvinist methodists, who at one point considered making the teetotal pledge a condition of church membership, were the least politically minded of the non-conformist sects. He interprets temperance as part of an other-worldly impulse that was essentially escapist. Drink was a convenient explanation for all the evils of this world; the reformed drunkard (on whom the teetotal imagination was fixated) was an emotionally satisfying emblem of salvation. It followed from such a reductionist approach that the public house was "anti-God". The close connection between the "one-eyed intolerant creed" of teetotalism and the "kill-joy prejudices of Welsh non-conformity" meant that little attempt was made to provide secular alternatives to the social and recreational satisfactions of the drink culture. Teetotalism was its own reward. Lambert, though evidently no Marxist, seems to feel that among the working class the emotional and economic satisfactions of the temperance culture were accessible only to the aristocracy of labour at best. Moreover, the chosen instrument of coercive teetotalism, prohibition (via local option legislation) would deprive the pub drinking working class of its beer while leaving virtually unaffected the home and club drinking habits of the upper classes. But Lambert shows no surprise at the almost complete absence of organized working class opposition to the temperance movement. In the industrial valleys the temperance movement held sway because here was no traditional Anglican or landlord interest to resist the political and social power of non-conformity.

The temperance cause began to make significant political headway when the United Kingdom Alliance adopted classic parliamentary pressure-group tactics. While Lambert accepts the standard view that the UKA was tactically inept in its "all or nothing" approach to temperance, he allows it the "one great virtue" of having forced many non-conformists out of quietism and into politics. A particular attraction of local option in Wales was its nationalist resonance for non-conformists who could hope thereby to mount a grassroots challenge to the Anglican ascendancy as well as showcase the peculiar virtue of the Welsh people, who would surely be the first to enact local prohibition. As it turned out, local option was not to be. Ironically it got crossed up by the rival issue of Welsh dis-establishment in the crotchet-ridden politics of the late-Victorian liberal party. There was, however, one small victory for temperance which was a larger victory for nationhood. The Welsh Sunday

Closing Act of 1881 was the first ever parliamentary act to deal separately with Wales (Scotland and Ireland already had such acts).

If one reason for historians ignoring Wales is that in history, as elsewhere, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, the turn of this century finally saw Wales loudly call attention to itself. One is tempted to speculate, though Lambert does not, whether the sudden eruption of Welsh trade unionism and the dramatic growth of socialism in the valleys owes anything to the collapse of the temperance issue in the late 1890s. Was it the breaking of a spell? More direct is the connection between David Lloyd George and the temperance movement. He served his political apprenticeship in it, and its collapse was certainly convenient for his move onwards in a career that would be dramatically antithetical to its sterile monomania.

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MARTIN MCCAULEY — *Octobrists to Bolsheviks. Imperial Russia 1905-1917*. Edward Arnold: London, 1984. 226 p.

Martin McCauley, de l'université de Londres, nous offre un recueil de textes et documents sur la Russie impériale de 1905 à 1917. Une brève et classique synthèse de l'histoire russe de cette période sert d'introduction au volume et fournit ainsi une mise en place permettant de situer par la suite les documents dans un contexte général. Selon l'usage dans ce type de recueil, la plupart des 152 textes qui suivent sont précédés d'une très courte présentation.

Le volume se divise en sept sections, d'inégales dimensions : d'abord deux longues parties sur la politique de 1905 à 1914 et de 1914 à 1917 (72 textes) : la seconde moitié de l'espace disponible est ensuite partagée entre les affaires étrangères (14 textes), l'économie (26 textes), le développement social (27 textes), la culture et la religion (8 textes) et la question des nationalités (5 textes). L'ouvrage se termine par quelques suggestions de lectures et une chronologie détaillée de la période.

On peut regretter que l'auteur n'ait pas d'abord pris le soin d'exposer les objectifs de son choix de textes ni surtout d'indiquer ses critères de sélection tant à l'égard de la période retenue que de la nature même des textes sélectionnés et de leur choix proprement dit. On aurait peut-être alors mieux saisi pourquoi, conformément au titre de l'ouvrage, seule la partie politique se rend jusqu'à octobre 1917 alors que, sauf deux textes de 1916, aucune des autres parties ne va au-delà de 1914. De même aurions-nous alors mieux compris l'hétérogénéité des textes qui sont pour la plupart des sources documentaires de première main, mais auxquels s'ajoutent tableaux et statistiques reconstitués par des historiens ou même des analyses postérieures d'autres auteurs occidentaux et soviétiques. L'ouvrage est donc essentiellement un recueil de documents mais dans une certaine mesure aussi un recueil de textes.

Une explication des critères de sélection aurait également pu éclairer la pertinence du choix de certains textes. Pourquoi, par exemple, 21 des 26 premiers textes se retrouvent-ils également, souvent dans une version plus complète, dans le volume 3 du recueil de documents de G. Vernadsky qui nous présente 149 textes de 1905 à 1917 (*A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, Yale Univ. Press, 1972)? Pourquoi la décision de couvrir la période 1914-1917 pour laquelle nous disposons déjà de 663 pages de documents très pertinents dans le recueil de Frank Alfred Golder (*Document of Russian History 1914-1917*, Peter Smith, 1964)? L'auteur a sans doute une logique que le lecteur aurait intérêt à partager.

Si l'ouvrage ne peut donc être présenté comme un recueil modèle quant à la sélection des documents, il ne l'est pas non plus quant à l'identification de la provenance des sources. À ce titre,