

(Guy Laperrière, « L'adaptation à de nouveaux modes de vie » dans En coll. *L'Eglise catholique et la société du Québec*, Musée du Québec, 1984, p. 169).

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C. HARDING, B. HINES, R. IRELAND and P. RAWLINGS — *Imprisonment in England and Wales: A Concise History*, London, Croom Helm, 1985. Pp. 308.

Traditional histories of law, crime and punishment have, with honourable exceptions (the Webbs, Rusche and Kirchheimer) been pitched between the picaresque and the legalistic, and all too often have simply assumed that the manifest shifts in the treatment of offenders have represented moral progress. Since the mid-nineteen seventies, in both Europe and America, a number of works have attempted to reclaim the territory for a more intellectually serious social history; in Britain the works of Ignatieff (*A Just Measure of Pain*, 1978); McConville (*A History of English Penal Administration 1750-1877*, Vol. I, 1981) and — for concepts rather than an entire theory — Foucault (*Discipline and Punish*, 1979) have been particularly influential in the sub-region of penal history. Between them they have provided a theoretically informed and socially contextualised account of imprisonment over the past two centuries, and in linking its growth and development to changes in class relations, the composition of the state and the progressive enfranchisement of the working class they have, however temporarily, pulled the subject of punishment and social order from the margins to somewhere nearer the centre of historical enquiry. The time was undoubtedly ripe for a secondary treatment of these developments.

Imprisonment in England and Wales: A Concise History attempts to fill this gap, (in relation to one legal jurisdiction) by utilizing not only the recent revisionist histories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also earlier scholarship on the period prior to 1750. They acknowledge the massive influence of the above writers and claim that they aim merely "to bring together in one moderately sized volume a history of imprisonment from earliest times to the present, a history which is neither too detailed to deter the non-specialist, nor too superficial to be of any utility." Their factual data, although not as comprehensive as it might have been, are far from superficial, and in general terms it must be said that they achieve their aim. Nonetheless, the book does not entirely fulfill the criteria by which a secondary text should be judged, largely because of their failure to adequately confront the theoretical issues raised by the revisionist historians. They allude to them throughout the book, but even their concluding summaries of the "evolutionist illusion" and the 'dustbin' theory of imprisonment (prison seen as "a dumping ground for a varied collection of society's undesirables") cry out for further elaboration. They write lucidly, and abridge texts well, and the task would not have been beyond them. It was surely incumbent upon them to explain something more of the intellectual frameworks from which the new revisionist histories were generated, and in a book which is otherwise well referenced it is surprising to find no mention of Ignatieff's own reappraisal of the theoretical issues involved [in Bailey (Ed.) 1981, and Sugarman (Ed.) 1983].

The book is divided into four main sections; The Middle Ages (beginning with the 892-93 Law of Alfred, where British imprisonment is first mentioned); the Early Modern Period between 1500-1750; the period of the new penitentiaries (1750-1877); and the Modern Period dating from the centralization of the penal system to the present. Each section is organized slightly differently, around themes such as the functions of imprisonment in a given period, the prevailing philosophies of punishment, the organization and scope of the penal "system" (in the feudal period it was a decentralized mosaic of establishments, variously controlled, hardly a system at all) together with profiles of both the keepers and the kept, and the conditions they shared. Except for the absence of much comment on women prisoners, such themes and emphases are valid and informative.

The book is much too rich in argument and detail to cover all of it and as neither of the present reviewers are conversant with medieval history, all we can say of the early part is that the use made of Ralph Pugh's (1968) definitive work on imprisonment in this period seems suitably thorough. Most of our comments will therefore be based on data in the later sections. The picture of prison that emerges from this historical overview is that, contrary to widespread belief in "a general movement away from primitive custodial objectives to a sophisticated system of penal correction" there have always been "a number of consistent basic objectives which have been shifted around each other over a period of time in response to changing pressures." Even when imprisonment was predominantly concerned with pre-trial detention, punitive and coercive functions existed, e.g. with debtors; and "remand," the modern equivalent, remains important in a predominantly corrective system. Reform and rehabilitation have, furthermore, surfaced at different times and in several forms. The pressures which have determined these changes in the structure and functions of the penal system have been both internal and external; the resistance of gaolers to changes which threatened their livelihood, and the loss of the American colonies are important examples of each, excellently explained in this book.

The authors provide a useful "Review of Literature and Sources," which draws on a wide range of obscure articles and several inaccessible theses. The brief accounts of the sources' varying quality will undoubtedly be helpful to future researchers, and partially explains the existing threadbare patches in penal history. Even here, however, there are omissions which an overview of this kind might have been expected to consider. There is, for example, no examination of the excessive secrecy which has surrounded the modern penal system, to which the Webbs first drew attention in 1922, and which is long overdue for a more detailed and up-to-date treatment (perhaps McConville's long awaited second volume will do this). Here, the present authors simply reproduce a lacuna in penal history without apparently noticing it. To say, as they do, that there was "a growing mood of secrecy" in the 1970s is in fact the reverse of what happened; the mood had existed for a hundred years and the seventies saw a major and partly successful reaction against it.

What of the authors' conclusions from their study? The claim that "the character of imprisonment has been largely determined by the action possible to each successive generation" requires qualification. In periods of reform, several possibilities co-exist, as the body of the text itself demonstrates, and the options taken invariably reflect not what "a generation" considers feasible, but what powerful interest groups consider necessary. For example, the 1896 Lushington Report on reformatory and industrial schools (not mentioned here) presciently opposed incarcerative strategies for young offenders, but at the time was overshadowed by the more prestigious Gladstone Report of 1895 which, despite Godfrey Lushington's evidence, favoured them in principle, and influenced policies that were technically beyond its terms of reference. Non-incarcerative solutions were clearly conceivable for some categories of offenders at the turn of the century; whether their manifest undesirability was due then (but not later) to the impossibility of their implementation in the prevailing economic and political circumstances is a question which preoccupies revisionist historians, but which could have been made clearer here.

It is more difficult to dissent from the authors' view that, in the light of its entrenchment in society for over a thousand years, rationalized by different ideologies, imprisonment is unlikely to vanish in the foreseeable future, even if — as in the past — new names are invented to describe its diverse functions. But it is not so much the likelihood of imprisonment's survival in Britain which warrants explanation and the present time, as the increasing extent of its use. One could read this book without learning that modern Britain, for all its allegedly libertarian traditions, has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in Europe, and compares most unfavourably with Holland and Scandinavia in its use of institutional solutions to crime. The received view explains these greatly varying rates largely in terms of post-war developments in the different countries, but it would have been interesting, in a book of this scope, to have had an historian's opinion, however tentative, on whether the roots of Britain's penal obsession go further back than this.

The substantive limitations of this book are largely the limitations of existing penal history; its key weaknesses are its failure to deal with theoretical issues, particularly those which would have sensitized the authors to the importance of matters like secrecy and the post-war growth of the prison

system, and also its failure to specify the field's still unanswered questions. There is, in fact, a great deal that one would not wish to quarrel with, and the book is of undeniable value to non-specialists. To read it in conjunction with the revisionist texts themselves (which have grown in number since this book was published) would give any Canadian historian a thorough grasp of penal development in Britain.

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HARRY KUHNEL in cooperation with HELMUT HUNDSBICHLER, GERHARD JARITZ and ELIZABETH VAVRA — *Alltag im Spätmittelalter*, Verlag Styria, Graz, Wien, Köln, 1984. Pp. 351 plus notes and bibliography. 430 illustrations, 48 in color.

This book is the work of four staff members of the *Institut für Mittelalterliche Realkunde Österreichs* located in Krems, Austria. Its goal is to study the material culture of *Sachkultur* and to interpret all sources on a systematic basis. The authors want to examine the variety of ways in which daily living took place and to understand the connection between social and economic structures and cultural values. They do not pose material and intellectual cultures as opposites. Furthermore they wish to understand material culture in terms of long term changes and how medieval people perceived them.

The authors avoid preoccupation with theoretical sociological or anthropological systems. They provide the reader with rich and detailed descriptions from written sources, from paintings and from material objects mostly very well integrated with the literature resulting from the research of others.

Harry Kuhnel's contribution is a description of concepts and measurements of time, organization of urban society, popular piety and pleasure and entertainment. The rhythms of daily life first followed the rituals of the church as its bells told people how their day was progressing. As townspeople needed more precise means of telling time their wheel clocks installed in the towers of their council buildings took over. One illustration has the baby Jesus striking the hours on a town clock. It is a symbolic joining of Medieval Europe's understanding of epochs (theirs being inaugurated by the birth of Jesus) with its needs to measure immediate time.

His section on popular piety shows the pagan remains in Christian practices and how devotional acts eventually themselves become secularized. Thus he suggests that tourism and souvenir collection grew out of the practice of going on pilgrimages. Pilgrims brought back mementos from the site to show that they had undertaken the prescribed penance.

Gerhard Jaritz gives us a thoughtful discussion of the stages in life. He begins with death because it dominated everyday life. Funeral processions, cemeteries, the plaintive cries of mourners, the daily prayers, masses and chiming of bells all reminded the people that someone had died. With the help of books on the art of dying one prepared one's soul for death. Through recipes, bath houses, bloodletting, medicines, rest houses and through faith in the miraculous healing power of saints, one hoped to delay death. Jaritz then discusses the conditions at birth, of childhood, youth and adulthood. Medieval people not only saw developmental stages in chronological terms but marked them also according to achievements such as marriage or the attainment of an academic degree.

Helmut Hundsichler describes the dwellings of late medieval people. The house served as a mediator between its occupants and the natural and social environment. It protected against attack and set the border between them and the wider society. The smaller wooden structures were seen as moveable possessions and were partially disassembled and taken along when one moved. He