Johnston (Helen), *Punishment and control in historical perspective*

Palgrave, Macmillan, 2008, 269 pp. , ISBN 9 780230 549333.

Pieter Spierenburg

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/chs/1158>

DOI: 10.4000/chs.1158

ISSN: 1663-4837

Publisher

Librairie Droz

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 May 2010

Number of pages: 107-108

ISBN: 978-2-600-01425-0

ISSN: 1422-0857

Electronic reference

Pieter Spierenburg, "Johnston (Helen), *Punishment and control in historical perspective*", *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* [Online], Vol. 14, n°1 | 2010, Online since 07 June 2010, connection on 23 March 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/chs/1158> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/chs.1158>

McLennan rejects theoretical perspectives such as that of Foucault. Instead she presents a careful sociological-historical analysis in which the entangled relationship between all social groups involved is the central element. It is a pity that she has not enriched this analysis by using the theoretical perspective of Norbert Elias. In particular, the story of the reforms of the first two decades of the twentieth century – which McLennan briefly extends until the beginning of the Second World War – would have lent itself to such a perspective. Based on Elias' notion of changing sources and relations of power, Herman Franke has analyzed the gradual improvements in the lot of inmates calling this process the emancipation of prisoners. As with all social processes, this emancipation was not unilinear; it had and has its drawbacks. In McLennan's story the 1920s, when conservatives in New York succeeded in having a 'four strikes and you're out' law adopted, represented such a drawback. It quickly caused prisons to become overcrowded, with an accompanying deterioration of prison conditions.

A consideration of Elias' theory would have made this an even better book. But it already is a very clever study.

Pieter Spierenburg
Erasmus Universiteit (Rotterdam)
spierenburg@fhk.eur.nl

Johnston (Helen), *Punishment and control in historical perspective*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2008, 269 pp., ISBN 9 780230 549333.

It is tempting to compare this collection to the book by Rebecca McLennan that I also reviewed for CHS. On agreeableness of length the Johnston volume, with 240 pages of text, wins, because the other book has twice as many. For the rest, the advantages of a single-authored study over the average edited collection are obvious. This is the more so, since the very first chapter in the volume under review has Sing Sing for its subject, so that it is made superfluous by McLennan's study. As if the author, Michael Fiddler, wanted to underline this, he finds inspiration in the completely outdated works by Rusche/ Kirchheimer and Melossi/ Pavarini. All other contributions refer to England, which, as well as the focus on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, should have been acknowledged in the volume's title. Anette Ballinger examines the case of a woman who shot her husband in 1945 and got away with a nine day sentence. The killer successfully posed as the «more sinned against than sinning» type, despite much evidence to the contrary. Instead of explaining why judge, jury and even prosecutor so eagerly wanted to believe this, Ballinger chides them for doing so, because they helped one woman at the expense of upholding a stereotype detrimental to all women. Tony Ward mixes a discussion of historical cases related to the insanity defense with comments on Foucault's views. The editor contributes with an article on prison officers as a category relatively neglected up to now. She shows that even by the mid-nineteenth century there was little social distance between them and the inmates, so that the prisons of that time fitted only imperfectly into Goffman's model of the total institution. Moreover, prison officers suffered under extremely long working hours. It is good to hear, from Jamie Bennett, that my sort-of-countrymen once imprisoned Winston Churchill (during the Boer War), even though he was a hero for Dutchmen that lived through

World War II. The British also remember him as a prison reformer in 1910 and Bennett places this episode in context.

John P. Locker contributes with an interesting chapter on perceptions of white collar crime in the nineteenth century. The public and the media perceived fraudulent middle-class men as a kind of anomalies, because they challenged contemporary categorizations centering around respectability. Of one white-collar criminal, for example, known as a philanthropist, many did not want to believe he was guilty. In addition, middle-class defendants failed to conform to the physical image that was thought to characterize the born criminal. Bronwyn Morrison examines inebriate institutions: prisons for habitual drinkers that were in operation in England between 1879 and 1923. Although women constituted a small minority among those convicted for drunkenness offenses, they were overrepresented in the inebriate institutions. According to Morrison, drunken women were seen as more of a problem than drunken men in late-Victorian England. She also shows that the institutions in question had a much harsher regime than previous scholars have acknowledged. Heather Shore shows more or less the same for the various institutions for juveniles in the nineteenth century. Sarah Anderson and John Pratt examine prisoner memoirs from the second half of the nineteenth century. The prisoners in question complained about many things, including the size of their cells, absence of a mattress, unhygienic conditions, hunger and bad food, while many suffered from mental anguish. Prison authorities usually denied the charges, designating complaining inmates, especially if they were Irish, as troublemakers. Alyson Brown compares the prison riots at Chatham in 1861 and Dartmoor in 1932. The contribution by Abigail Wills is the only one that falls outside the volume's time frame. She presents a portion of her research on juvenile delinquents in the 1950s and 1960s, focusing this time on resistance by the inmates of juvenile institutions.

The editor has written a brief introduction as well as some concluding remarks. Despite a few relatively weak contributions, the volume as a whole has enough to offer for scholars interested in crime and punishment in nineteenth-century England.

Pieter Spierenburg
Erasmus Universiteit (Rotterdam)
spierenburg@fhk.eur.nl

Gerald Blaney, Jr (ed.), *Policing Interwar Europe. Continuity, Change and Crisis, 1918-1940*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 240 pp., ISBN 13 978-1-4039-92642.

Cyril Fijnaut (ed.), *The Impact of World War II on Policing in North-West Europe*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2004, 183 pp., ISBN 90 5867 354 5.

Gerard Oram (ed.), *Conflict and Legality. Policing mid-twentieth century Europe*, London, Francis and Taylor Publishers, 2003, 217 pp., ISBN 1 903427 20 7.

Ces trois livres collectifs ont été publiés à la suite de séminaires et colloques qui se sont tenus entre 2002 et 2004 en Allemagne, aux États-Unis, en Grande-Bretagne et aux Pays-Bas, sous l'égide ou avec la participation des animateurs du réseau « justice criminelle » de l'ESSHC (European Social Science History Conference). Ces