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Clive Emsley

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- 1 Most people in the Anglo-Saxon world appear to believe that every French policeman is a gendarme in spite of the efforts that some of us have made to disabuse them of this. In England in particular, politicians, political commentators and many senior police officers since the end of the nineteenth century have continued to boast about having “the best police in the world” – a view that seems part of a sense of national superiority, or at best separateness, and has little regard for serious academic research into the history of British policing. So little regard in fact that there is no official policy on preserving any documents older than the last quarter of the twentieth century. The assumption appears to be that all British policing remains modelled on “the first modern police in the world”, namely London’s Metropolitan Police, and that the history is well-known and incontrovertible. The Metropolitan Police deposit with the National Archives many of their records, especially correspondence with the Home Office and papers dealing with what the weeders (themselves mainly ex-police) consider to be major crimes or “important”. In contrast, surviving Occurrence Books, Charge Books and other records from police stations are now difficult to access, having been deposited in “deep storage”. The archives of other forces – and there were more

than 200 on the eve of the First World War – depend on the whims of chief constables and other senior officers. Relatively recently one provincial police superintendent had over 100 years of the records of a local police destroyed so as to “modernise” his office.

- 2 It might equally have been said that the history of the *Gendarmerie nationale* was well-known and incontrovertible, and that there was little point in preserving old bits of paper unless they had important signatures. But the corps has a pride in its history and, over the last fifteen years or so senior officers have been keen to link with academics to explore critically this history. Jean-Noël Luc has managed the purely academic side of this, organising international conferences, a major seminar at the Sorbonne and fostering the publication of two dozen books on different aspects of gendarmerie history. *Les gendarmeries dans le monde*, which he has co-edited with one of the earliest members of his academic team, extends the work to provide an awareness of over 100 different institutions across the world that can be considered, and consider themselves, as a form of gendarmerie.
- 3 This is not to say that the definition of a gendarmerie is simple. Luc is wary of the simple Anglo-Saxon usage of “paramilitary police” not least because it avoids the specific military nature of, at least, the *Gendarmerie nationale*. Rather he lists a string of elements that need to be considered for understanding forms of gendarmerie and police institutions, though this does not entirely resolve the issue of “this is a gendarmerie because I say it is.”
- 4 Houte and Luc provide a long introductory chapter surveying the international spread of institutions that can be considered, and considered themselves, as gendarmeries from the period of the French Revolution through to the early twenty-first century. Luc himself is responsible for a four-part appendix advising on future research and providing brief details of 122 gendarmeries, or gendarmerie-type institutions, with a slightly closer focus on 72 of these. In between the long and illuminating introduction and the useful and thought provoking appendices the book is divided into three sections. The first of these contains nine essays beginning with the Napoleonic gendarmerie itself and the shift from the Napoleonic corps in Italy to the *Corpo dei Carabinieri Reali*, both by acknowledged experts in the field – Aurélien Lignereux and Michael Broers – then on to the Hapsburg corps established in the wake of the Revolutions of 1848, and eastwards on to the Ottoman *Jandarma*. The section concentrates on the nineteenth century ; the geographic spread is impressive and the presentations are generally informative and perceptive, which makes it rather unfair to quibble over the content. It might, however, have been useful to have had something on one or more of the German gendarmeries ; for example, something addressing the kind of relationship that was allowed to develop between industrialists and those who ran the Prussian Gendarmerie in the Ruhr and which was touched on in Ralph Jessen’s book *Polizei im Industrieviertel*, now nearly 20 years old.
- 5 The middle section focuses on gendarmeries in the wider world from roughly the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. States commonly looked to see how they might glean something from the institutions of their contemporaries regarding administration and organisation. Even states that had avoided European colonisation looked to European powers to provide men to organise bodies like their armies and gendarmeries. Denmark was not noted for having a significant gendarmerie though it did experiment with such a force on and off during the nineteenth century ; yet Søren Ivarsson shows here how Danish military officers were appointed to lead the Royal

Gendarmerie of Siam in its various tasks of bringing security to the provinces and establishing the authority and physical presence of the state. Stephanie Cronin describes the authorities in Iran, caught between the imperial machinations of the British and the Russians, seeking Italian *carabinieri* for similar tasks. The Italians refused, and the Iranian Gendarmerie finished with officers from neutral Sweden.

- 6 The third section principally explores the roles of different gendarmeries in colonisation and decolonisation. The Francophone experience figures extensively here with chapters on Cameroon, Mauritania, Vietnam and post-independence Algeria. Chapters by François Godicheau and Toshihiko Matsuda on, respectively, Spain's *Guardia Civil* and the Japanese *Kempeitai* are especially interesting for showing how overseas conflict can, through participation, help to reshape the tasks and behaviour of institutions on their home territory.
- 7 The eleven chapters that constitute the middle and third sections provide much of the most novel content in this collection but overall the book presents a series of valuable and stimulating surveys of recent research on the gendarmerie style of policing and offers a number of pointers towards what might be done in the future. It is a useful addition to the history of police institutions, illustrative of how far their role extends beyond crime fighting and how broad and complex can be the issues of establishing and maintaining order.

AUTHORS

CLIVE EMSLEY

(Professor Emeritus), Open University - clive.emsley@open.ac.uk