

D'une manière plus générale, le volume aurait gagné à être pourvu d'une bibliographie tenue à jour et d'une table analytique des matières, à défaut d'un *index rerum*. D'où vient que le Colloque de 1980, pourtant si fécond en apports inédits et en interventions brillantes, laisse une impression d'inachevé? A posteriori, on constate que les conclusions auraient dû aborder de front deux problèmes demeurés en suspens.

1° — Rupture ou continuité par rapport à l'Ancien Régime? On en restera au stade impressionniste aussi longtemps que l'on ne s'astreindra pas à une rigoureuse analyse du contenu. La voie a été frayée en ce domaine par M. Jean-Claude Perrot, (*Statistik und Staatsbeschreibung in der Neuzeit*, Paderborn, 1980, pp. 374-75), lorsqu'il dénombre l'objet des statistiques (commerce, population, finances, forces armées) en fonction de leurs occurrences, du total des tableaux, des sources exploitées. La même méthode peut aussi prendre en considération la terminologie, les systèmes classificatoires, les procédés de calcul ou d'exploitation.

2° — En matière d'utilisation des enquêtes de la période consulaire et impériale, on n'en est plus à la vision manichéenne qui consistait à tout récuser ou à tout prendre au pied de la lettre (p. 121). Puisque nous devons tolérer des marges d'erreur, on s'attendrait, dans un ouvrage voué à la statistique, à en trouver quelques évaluations chiffrées. Plus difficile encore, le problème posé par le silence des correspondants. Lorsque l'on cartographie dans le cadre d'un département, la provenance des réponses à un questionnaire de la préfecture, on constate l'absence de cantons entiers. Les bureaux ont-ils pallié cette carence par un camouflage adroit? Aurons-nous la naïveté de «faire comme si» de tels silences étaient aléatoires? Les historiens sont ainsi confrontés aux mêmes choix que les spécialistes des sondages contemporains mais sans avoir la ressource de recommencer les questionnaires.

La journée d'étude de 1980 est donc loin d'avoir épuisé une matière aussi controversée que captivante. Elle eut le mérite de poser bien des jalons et dans la bonne direction. L'œuvre si bien entamée doit être poursuivie.

Étienne HÉLIN  
Université de Liège

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PATRICIA O'BRIEN—*The Promise of Punishment: Prisons in Nineteenth-Century France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. xiv, 330.

In our current era of disillusionment and pessimism concerning penal institutions, experts and members of the public are reassessing the basic premises on which our prisons are founded. Can we reasonably expect them to accomplish rehabilitation, or should we resign ourselves to the fact that all prisons can really accomplish is the isolation of society's most recalcitrant offenders? Professor O'Brien's book is a worthy addition to this debate. Not only does her work enable the reader to understand the complex origins of our modern penal system, but more importantly, it illuminates the controversy surrounding that institution from the outset.

Professor O'Brien does not, though, pursue her subject along conventional lines. Rather, she takes her lead from Michel Foucault's seminal work, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (1976), which views the penitentiary as part of a larger strategy designed to re-establish social order on a new foundation in

post-Revolutionary France. According to O'Brien, the real significance of the penitentiary lies in its place among many such institutions (schools, asylums, armies, and workshops) meant to assure the surveillance and control of the labouring classes, widely regarded in the early nineteenth century as dangerous to the stability of bourgeois society. The prison, which acted as a sort of crucible for the intensive socialization of the criminal, was "only the most complete expression of an ideology that underlay two centuries of institutional evolution" (p. 20). In addition, O'Brien intends to rescue prisoners from historical oblivion, a goal she has accomplished admirably, drawing on sources heretofore unknown or unused by scholars. The result is a methodologically innovative, challenging work.

O'Brien is equally imaginative in her use of a wide range of sources. In addition to official reports and data drawn primarily from the Archives Nationales, she sought out eyewitness accounts and digested the vast body of reformist literature generated in the course of the century, using these materials with an appropriate dose of skepticism. Especially impressive are her analysis of visual materials, such as prisoners' tattoos and graffiti, and her mastery of interpretative tools borrowed from recent sociological and anthropological studies.

Professor O'Brien begins with an overview of the new punishment, its methods, its practitioners, and their motives. Although the wider goal of the penitentiary was the creation of a disciplined work-force, the true promise of punishment was the rehabilitation of criminals if not the elimination of crime in society. Reformers saw the system as an experiment in social engineering carried out in a controlled environment. By means of a rudimentary programme of sensory deprivation (solitary confinement) combined with positive and negative reinforcement techniques, prison officials hoped to modify the behaviour of inmates. O'Brien writes: "These sanitary laboratories aimed at creating a therapeutic sterility out of which institutional beings would emerge to return to civil society" (p. 19).

Following this overview, O'Brien turns to the examination of the prison population. The findings are, in many ways, unsurprising: most convicts were single, members of the labouring classes, from semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, and convicted of theft. Of particular note, though, is O'Brien's analysis of prisoners' responses to their environment, which ranged from occasional riots and violence to madness (more common among women) and suicide (more prevalent among men). Although most prisoners did adjust, they did so with subcultural adaptations. Distinctive argot, tattooing, and graffiti evolved as means of reinforcing their communality of experience, of asserting their individual identity, and of resisting the institutional life imposed on them. Homosexuality, common in nineteenth-century French prisons, was the most significant subcultural adaptation to the penal environment. O'Brien emphasizes that sexual differentiation in prisons still reflected attitudes towards sex roles in free society. For example, homosexuals in men's prison often organized into groups whose officers regulated the market in sex by providing information on the availability and health of "female" partners, known as *gironds*. These *gironds* were often considered prison prostitutes who took part in a controlled barter system: sex in exchange for cigarettes and wine. As in society at large, those who sold sexual favours were of low status, whereas those who bought them remained superior. In contrast, female homosexuality seems to have been characterized by real affection and romantic attachments modeled not on prostitution but on parent-child relations or heterosexual marriages.

Professor O'Brien also examines the ways in which productive labour and education were intended to effect rehabilitation. Because the authorities viewed

work as a moralizing agent, prisons were literally transformed into factories, producing for a market, distributing wages, and profit-oriented. Through work the prisoner would, at least in theory, internalize the dominant bourgeois values of self-control, punctuality, and frugality. Although early moral reformers believed that the prison and school shared common goals, they were surprisingly ambivalent about the role of education in the modern penitentiary. When rising literacy rates had little effect on crime, many theorists and politicians claimed that education actually contributed to the rise of certain crimes and the growing rate of recidivism. As a result, very little was done to educate prisoners beyond basic skills.

The recognized inability of the prison to attain its goals also led to various efforts to institute and enforce stricter controls over released prisoners. The result, of course, was the stigmatization of former inmates and the effective prevention of their reintegration into society. Not surprisingly, they reverted to a life of crime, raising the rate of recidivism to alarming levels. In response, the authorities called for the deportation of recidivists to New Caledonia and Guyana, where excessively high mortality rates prompted prisoners to refer to deportation as "the dry guillotine". Furthermore, by the late nineteenth century social scientists had come to deny that poverty and other environmental factors were crucial in the generation of crime. They increasingly argued that delinquency derived from personality flaws and agreed that penal reforms had not only failed to rehabilitate but had actually created a hardened criminal class, almost a separate race, which would have to be purged from the mother country. By then the true promise of punishment was a recognized failure and prisons were acknowledged to be what they had, in practice, been all along: "centers of contained disorder and chaos" (p. 304).

Overall, O'Brien's work is consistently provocative and revealing. Her well-reasoned periodization makes sense of successive trends in penology and criminology by relating them to the recurrent political upheavals of the century. More importantly, she has sensitively shown how prisoners reacted to their environment and how, in turn, the institution and all of society reacted to them. Punishment, she has demonstrated, must be viewed as a process. Some readers may object to her reliance on Foucault's "dominance and control" model of human relationships, which tends to divide all actors in history into controllers and controlled. Admittedly, no society can exist without educating its youth and socializing its members to observe conventions in behaviour and thought. When, one must ask, does socialization become "repression and control"? But it is to Professor O'Brien's credit that her complex study raises such vital questions. Moreover, it would be unjust to characterize this work as primarily derivative in nature. Although following in Foucault's footsteps, O'Brien fleshes out the bare framework that his essay suggested. In the process, she has done more than tell the story of another of history's forgotten people; she has influenced our perception of historical reality. Despite the pessimistic implications of her findings, social scientists must surely reckon with this important work.

Steven G. REINHARDT  
Louisiana State Museum

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BERND MARTIN and ERNST SCHULIN, eds—*Die Juden als Minderheit in der Geschichte*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981.

This collection of essays, *Die Juden als Minderheit in der Geschichte* (The Jews as a Minority in History), began as a lecture series given by the faculty