

Review of:

Churchill, David

Crime Control and Everyday Life in the Victorian City: The Police and the Public

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Crime Control and Everyday Life in the Victorian City is an engaging and wide-ranging account, which presents a fresh perspective on criminal justice history. David Churchill, a Lecturer in Criminal Justice at the University of Leeds, marshals a vast amount of evidence to explain the mechanisms of crime control in three English cities in the nineteenth century. He argues that, contrary to the traditional state monopolisation thesis, the police did not inexorably take complete responsibility for dealing with crime from the public over the course of the nineteenth century. This period witnessed the development of 'modern' policing, with professional police forces spreading throughout Britain. However, Churchill paints a picture of a 'mixed economy' of crime control, in which the public continued to detect, report and tackle criminal activity in their neighbourhoods, and the efforts of the new police frequently fell short of public expectations.

The work is clearly structured and easy to follow, rendering it valuable for university students and the wider reading public alike. As Churchill explains in the introduction, which discusses the major themes and parameters of the study, the Victorian cities under examination here are Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. While it is certainly valuable to move away from the London-centric focus of much criminal justice history, it is perhaps problematic to generalise about 'the Victorian City' based on three northern English industrial cities.

Following the introduction, the first half of the work examines urban policing. Churchill highlights the development of professional police forces in the cities, but more importantly also reveals details of policing activities on the streets. He argues that, in terms of suppressing criminal activity, policing failed to meet the growing expectations of the public. Some of the most significant impacts of the 'new' police forces were an enhanced anticipation of what policing could accomplish, and an increasing awareness of the standards of conduct in public life, as police officers made their presence known on the streets of Victorian cities.

In the second half of the work, Churchill examines civilian involvement in crime prevention, investigation and resolution. He suggests that civilians continued to play important roles in this sphere throughout the nineteenth century, and indeed that their priorities for dealing with crime differed from those of the state. Property owners developed security measures, while the police and the press encouraged the public to be vigilant towards criminal activity. He also examines in greater detail the evolving police-public relations over the course of the nineteenth century, highlighting the complex factors which shaped perceptions of policing. The conclusion draws together the themes, and reflects on the parallels with modern day crime control.

Crime Control engages with a wide range of scholarship, and provides a contribution both to social history, and to criminology and the social sciences more widely. Churchill's examination of policing practices in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester develops the work of scholars such as David Philips, Robert Storch and David Taylor to provide evidence of the practical activities of police officers. The work also contributes to the history of prosecuted criminal activity, following the lead of scholars such as J.M. Beattie and Robert Shoemaker. Churchill also draws upon the work of a range of social scientists of crime in his deconstruction of the state monopolisation thesis. One of the values of the

work is the fact that Churchill refuses to be pigeon-holed into police history, the history of crime, or social history; instead, he examines both the role of the police and the roles of civilians in tackling criminal activity.

A great strength of the work is Churchill's lively style, and his combination of broad analysis with engaging examples. Alongside statistical evidence, where it is available, he draws extensively on newspaper reports, court records, police records, and some memoirs to provide snapshots of crime control interactions to support the wider argument. This style provides clarity for the reader, and also brings alive the process of criminal justice administration, and the everyday interactions between the police, victims and offenders on the streets of Victorian cities.

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