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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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Sewell, John. *Police: Urban Policing in Canada.* Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985. Pp. 160. $15.95 (cloth), $5.95 (paper).

John Sewell is well-known in Canada as the reform-minded mayor of the City of Toronto in the late 1970s, who was nonetheless unsuccessful in his bid for re-election to that position in 1980. His campaign for re-election was vehemently and very publically opposed, with some effect, by the Police Association of Metropolitan Toronto — in part because of Mr. Sewell's support of homosexual and minority group rights in that city — and one can well understand Mr. Sewell's subsequent interest in developing and teaching a course on Police, on a contractual basis, at York University. The present book — in the James Lorimer series of "informed, up-to-date critical introduction to key issues facing Canada and Canadians" — is the result of the York University lecture course.

Mr. Sewell's book tries to fill an enormous gap in the literature. It is a comprehensive, fluently written and reflective survey of most of the useful writing on the police in Canada, and it performs the helpful service of summarizing and popularizing research and scholarly writing that would otherwise be unlikely to have a mass audience in Canada. This reviewer was particularly impressed by the precis Sewell provides of Richard Ericson's otherwise very extensive findings of patrol and detective policing in the Peel Regional police force, and Cliff Shearing and Phillip Stenning's pioneering research on the rapid development of private security policing in Canada. But the book also has a clear and well-researched introductory chapter on the origins of policing in medieval Europe and the transformations that led to modern, uniformed, State policing in the nineteenth century. This historical account is, indeed, more balanced and detailed than most other literature on the origins of policing in Canada and should in itself ensure the book's adoption on a great many undergraduate criminal justice or urban history courses.

In some other respects, unfortunately, the book is much less satisfactory. Mr. Sewell clearly sees his objective as providing "introductory-but-critical" discussions of a range of issues (from philosophies of the police to the questions of police accountability and "police deviance"). This may, indeed, have been his brief from his editor at James Lorimer. But the end-result of the concern to be "introductory" is that Sewell seems continually to fall into the kind of banal concensualism so characteristic of high school social studies texts. Nearly all the problems of policing are seen to derive from the unexpected unwillingness of "society" to resolve contradictory demands "it" makes of the police. Any other problems derive from the developing complexity of "modern society" and the continually more refined sets of legal rules that accompany modernisation. In this situation, for Mr. Sewell (in much of the text), the police are reduced to being pawns in a much larger bureaucratic and/or pluralistic social formation, attempting to serve often quite contradictory mandates.

The problems with this view are both empirical and theoretical. Sewell himself points to several instances of police targeting particular social groups (like gays, blacks, the left) for surveillance, harassment or even (in the case of domestic hostage-taking) "justifiable homicide," although he omits discussion of the killing by police of the innocent carpet salesman in Sherbrooke, Quebec, in 1984. So the designation of the police as relatively innocent pawns of bureaucratic, pluralistic society can be contradicted on empirical grounds. More tellingly, there is no *theoretical* explanation here for the systematic and patterned way in which "society" is differentially policed: there is no sense of the police's specific relations to a society that is in reality structured into various forms of class, race and gender inequality.

One of the unavoidable consequences of Mr. Sewell's refusal to engage in sociological realism and his preference for generalities about "society" is a real ambiguity or tension in the author's own view of police power. On page 148 the emphasis is on policing as an activity responsive to the actions of "others" in society, and on page 162, we are offered a view of a constrained police force operating within fairly influential legal limits. But on pages 142 and 182, the suggestion is, indeed, of what Sewell himself calls a "police-run justice system," a view warranted *inter alia* by Sewell's own discussion of the police practice of "charging up" offenders (laying several charges in relation to a single incident) or of detention prior to trial (consistently more people being so detained than are imprisoned after trial). In general terms, the book does read as a critique of the very considerable power of the police, but this perspective is *not* consistently held throughout. Neither is any account offered of why the police *should* hold such power in a "pluralistic" modern society.

The theoretical ambiguity of the text also coexists with a certain instability of political perspective. At one level, Sewell is clearly attracted, almost in the manner of a social democrat like R.H. Tawney, to a moralistic critique of consumerism and possessive individualism. He contrasts the crime situation in Canada and the U.S. quite unambiguously:

> . . . in the United States, racial discrimination results in more stressful interpersonal relations, and thus more criminal activity. Guns are much more widely available in the U.S. than in Canada. In the free-enterprising U.S., people care more about money, and thus are drawn into crime. Americans live with a wider gulf between the haves and the have-nots, leading to crime undertaken out of sheer desperation (p. 39).

But Sewell's critique is essentially moralistic: there is no attempt to link individualistic criminality or, indeed, the *log-*

ics of contemporary policing, in an explanatory way with the demands and/or the contradictions of capitalist political economy. And the "social democracy" Sewell adopts is curiously dated and conventional, showing little awareness of, or interest in, the widespread critiques, for example, that women have been making of the forms of contemporary policing, and the impact these critiques have had here and in other countries. There is little interest, either, in the attempts socialists to the left of conventional "statist" social democracy have been making to take popular anxieties about crime seriously and to try to articulate programs for the effective policing of working class communities. Neither is there any discussion of the ways in which the Right has attempted in other countries, and in some respects in Canada as well, to make use of popular concerns over law and order for its own electoralist and other purposes. It may be indicative, indeed, of Sewell's characteristically liberal-progressive scepticism as to the seriousness of crime as a popular social harm that he should discuss the Canadian criminal statistics for the year of 1979 at a time when the 1983 statistics (with significantly higher levels of violent crime in evidence) were available.

This is a full and thoughtful introductory text on Canadian policing, written from a generally liberal-reformist inclination. There is no equivalent or competing other text. But it still has the political and theoretical limitations that tend to be characteristic of orthodox liberal writing in the social science field.

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Rowat, Donald C. *Recent Urban Politics in Ottawa-Carleton.* Ottawa: Carleton University, 1985. Pp. 177. $9.00.

One of the more innovative publishing experiments in the last 13 years has been that of Donald C. Rowat, a professor of political science at Carleton University in Ottawa. In that time he has edited and published by photo-reproduction nine volumes of student essays, a number of them in two editions, and one in three.

At the core of the venture is an effort to give a wider distribution to good research papers of senior students, without engaging in the protracted process of revision for formal assessment and publication. The inevitable uneveness in quality and the spartan format is more than made up for by fast reproduction of valuable material for the research community.

This volume is a companion to *Urban Politics in Ottawa-Carleton: Research Essays* (1974; 2nd ed. 1983), and like it contains essays written by students in graduate seminars, most of them from Rowat's seminar on local government and politics in Canada.

All the essays in this new volume betray the graduate seminar liturgy of the review of current theory, case study and theory-testing, and policy implications or recommendations, and all betray the pressing claims of time on their authors. Students of the politics of local government are unlikely to find much that is new or illuminating on the theory side, though local policy makers in the Ottawa-Carleton area might well find some interesting ideas on policy matters. Nor is the theory-testing especially persuasive, whether due to partially-developed rhetorical skills, or the constraints undoubtedly attendant on developing elaborate case studies as part of a single university course.

What is enormously valuable is the heaps of raw material embedded in the descriptive parts of the essays. The essay by Geoffrey Baker, "Political and Administrative Policy Making: The Rideau Area Project," is, for example, likely to be the definitive study for some time of the tangled, ten-year evolution of Ottawa's newest and largest downtown shopping, hotel and convention centre. A second essay by Baker, "Ottawa's Public Participation Policy" is only somewhat less thorough, and will provide students of such policies in other cities a definitive outline of Ottawa's vanguard initiative in this area.

A parallel essay, "Citizen Participation Through Community Development Corporations," by George Brown, provides an additional dimension to that of Baker by looking at a specific opportunity for citizen participation.

One of the few examples available of a systematic examination of the role of the press in local politics is provided by D. Fraser Likely in "Who Controls the Issue Agenda? A Study of the Ottawa Board of Education and the Media." Though hampered by weak data, he confirms what most suspect: high on the media's agenda are the items of controversy. It may not be surprising, then, that to the public "education appears to be an area primarily in the midst of dispute" (p. 51).

A second essay by Likely, "For Ward or Not in the City of Gloucester," details contemporary agonies of a fast-growing bedroom suburb in evolving an acceptable system of representation, one that will accommodate old neighbourhoods and new, local and regional representation, and a considerable minority of Franco-Ontarians.

The final essay in the volume, Julie Hauser, "Provincial Support for Urban Transit," again provides a fine descriptive study of local-provincial relations and the origins and