

moins rapproché de dégager un tableau d'ensemble. Il pouvait aussi, d'autre part, entreprendre une première synthèse permettant le repérage des caractères principaux du système et de son évolution. C'est la deuxième voie qu'a choisie Fecteau. Bien que plus tentante, l'entreprise n'était pas sans risque. Toutefois, la richesse et la diversité de l'appareil théorique dont s'est servi l'auteur lui ont permis de dégager un cadre interprétatif solide, nuancé et tout à fait crédible de l'évolution de la régulation sociale au Bas-Canada. Il correspond d'ailleurs dans les grandes lignes à ce que nous avons pu observer à l'échelle plus réduite de l'asile. En cela, Fecteau a gagné son pari, et il ne sera désormais plus possible de traiter de quelque aspect du développement, au Québec, des instruments de répression et d'assistance des classes populaires durant cette période sans tenir compte d'un *Nouvel ordre des choses*.

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Maureen Flynn — *Sacred Charity. Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain, 1400-1700*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989. Pp. x, 200.

The distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor is one that can be traced back to the sixteenth century. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Christian tenet held that the poor would be always with us, but, more importantly, the poor served a useful function as a source of generosity for the more fortunate. Communal and individual acts of charity were incumbent upon all, and it was not until the changes of the Reformations, Protestant and Catholic, and the rise of the nation state that an attempt was made to impose a degree of rationalization, centralization and uniformity in the treatment of the poor.

Maureen Flynn's study of confraternities in the city of Zamora in old kingdom of Leon-Castile in the period 1400-1700 discusses the role played by confraternities and the remarkably common cultural outlook on charity that pervaded western Europe. There were more charitable confraternities in Spain, however, than in Europe, beyond the Pyrenees, and more in Zamora than in other cities in Spain. In 1550, 150 of these brotherhoods operated in a city where the population at its peak was only 8,600 residents. This may have compensated for a relatively weak guild structure in the city. The brotherhoods were egalitarian: only 10 were exclusively aristocratic and only 2 required purity of blood, which would have excluded conversos or converted jews. Nor were they usually gender exclusive, although women did not usually hold governing positions, except in their own confraternities which met special needs such as assistance in childbirth. Among other works, confraternities managed hospitals for foundlings, for the aged, infirm, pilgrims and the homeless. There are few modern hospitals in Spain today that do not trace their origins back to one of these confraternities.

In the critical years at the end of the sixteenth century, the needs of the poor had evidently outstripped the resources available. Protestant reforms and the stricter rules of the Counter Reformation gave an impetus to measures which diverted charity from the direct involvement of the giver to a more bureaucratic administration involving the state as well as the church. Municipalities attempted to limit and organize poor

relief: beggars were licenced, and general hospitals set up to centralize shelter and food distribution. Local governments imposed restrictions on outsiders, immigrants and vagabonds. All these measures were directed toward control as much as toward care of the poor.

The debate over the "enclosure" of the poor with its authoritarian overtones was heated in Spain. Flynn points out that the concept of charity remained essentially medieval in Spain until rationalization was resurrected by the "Ilustrados" of the eighteenth century. For this reader, the most engrossing aspect of the book deals with the way the confraternities mirrored changes in popular religious sentiment in sixteenth-century Spain. Marian veneration declined in absolute terms and images of the radiant young virgin with the baby on her arm were replaced by the sorrowful mother bracing the dead Christ across her lap. Another feature was the popularity of flagellant groups. This form of confraternity had existed elsewhere, notably in Italy, but it took hold and became extremely popular in Old Castile. Flynn sees these cultural expressions of mourning and penance as evidence of a decline in confidence and optimism among the general populace. Flynn's evidence indicates that the influence of the Council of Trent on expressions of popular piety and on the confraternity system was relatively weak in Zamora.

While I would not take issue with the author for not having written a different book, I would certainly have liked a longer book — one which developed the ideas which she brings out in her last chapter on popular piety. For instance, how did the changes she describes relate to the charitable functions of the confraternities? Flynn's interesting study of charity before it became welfare raises some provocative questions for historians of popular culture and religion.

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Gary Gerstle — *Working-class Americanism. The politics of labor in a textile city, 1914-1960*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1989, 356 p.

À n'en pas douter, nous sommes en présence d'un grand livre. De ces livres qui ouvrent de nouvelles pistes de recherche et qui réinterprètent une période ou une question. Car il ne faut pas se laisser tromper par le sous-titre de l'œuvre. Gary Gerstle fait bien plus que raconter l'histoire ouvrière d'un centre textile, en l'occurrence Woonsocket (Rhode Island); il réécrit l'histoire ouvrière des États-Unis au 20^e siècle en faisant ressortir l'importance du discours de l'américanisme dans les mutations de la pratique syndicale, une pratique qui devait de plus en plus compter avec le rôle grandissant de l'État.

Dans un premier temps, Gerstle présente Woonsocket, « la ville la plus française aux États-Unis ». S'appuyant sur plusieurs travaux et sur quelques sources imprimées, il étudie la culture et la structure sociale, essentiellement traditionnelles, des Canadiens français et le milieu ouvrier où se mouvait la majorité d'entre eux. Guidés par une élite imbue d'idéaux catholiques, ces travailleurs, immigrants de la première et de la deuxième générations, étaient incapables de développer une conscience de classe. Lors de la Première Guerre mondiale, le château fort de l'ethnicité commença