

first in Europe to introduce, as Moses himself admits, an extensive system of social security legislation and other laws protecting children and adults on the factory floor and banning work on Sundays. The progressive social policies of the Weimar Republic were a logical extension of what Germany's pre-war government had done, not something wholly unique as Moses infers.

Moses is on much firmer ground in discussing the flood of social legislation that did come out of the Weimar Republic. He informs us that, during the 1920s, the German trade unions became "an integral part of society." The Weimar parliament recognized this and responded with more and more legislation licensing what the unions wanted. One measure that the unions lobbied for and got was the creation of workers' councils. They also gained parity with management under the law and the right to negotiate conditions of work, wages and rates of productivity. While Moses is at his best in documenting these gains, his interpretations once again raise some questions. For one thing, he makes heroes of the unions and socialists, insisting that they were sincerely dedicated to the workers. The legislation supporting workers' rights was also voted for by the representatives of the Catholic Center and Democratic Parties, the two coalition partners of the Socialists. But their reasons, he tells us in one of his most dubious conclusions, were not serious, but were just "politically motivated."

All in all, Moses' work makes for fascinating reading. It includes a great deal of data that is both informative and written in a clear and lively style. However, his effort, at times, is also rife with interpretations that are seemingly in conflict with his facts. Much can be gained by going over these two volumes, but in digesting them the reader should recall that ideology and history are not the same thing.

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PETER SPIERENBURG — *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression: from a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

This stimulating little book seeks to explain why between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries public corporal punishments became the normal form of punishment throughout Europe and why in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most such practices came to an end. It succeeds admirably in the first task but is somewhat less convincing in the second.

Both changes, according to Spierenburg, were at their root the result in changes in political organization. In the chaos that Europe experienced after the fall of the Roman Empire private vengeance was the only justice available. Beginning in the twelfth century as territorial principalities emerged in feudal Europe, princes attempted to impose their justice on their people. Except for the fleeting example of Charlemagne, they were "the first rulers powerful enough to combat private vengeance" since the fall of Rome. (p. 4) At first they confined themselves to the most serious of crimes, leaving wide latitude to local and private justice below. As their power grew, they extended their grasp, reaching firmly into medieval cities only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The increase of visible and recorded corporal and capital punishments in those centuries reflected that development. It did not reflect, however, a growing taste for violence and suffering, but rather the "growth and stabilization of a system of criminal justice." (11-12) Spierenburg insists that people's attitudes to violence remained much the same and that the apparent increase in violence of those times results from the fact that the state took over the methods of private justice and made them its own.

In one of the most interesting parts of the book Spierenburg addresses the apparent paradox: if the prince imposed the same sorts of penalties on offenders that private justice had, why were executioners so unpopular? From his evidence there is no doubt that they were unpopular. Executioners were frequently beaten, stoned, shunned, and generally treated as "infamous" or unclean. Spierenburg rejects earlier explanations that rely on supposed magical-sacrificial aspects of the executioner's work or on the general nastiness of his job. Two other factors were much more important. First, while the use of physical force was acceptable and even admirable, its use by executioners for pay and against people wholly unconnected to them was viewed as shameful. The mercenary likewise was viewed with suspicion while the knight was treated with respect. Perhaps more importantly, the executioner personified the prince's usurpation of private vengeance, which the people resented. As peasants attacked their lord's stewards, and rebels denounced not their king, but his evil advisors, so the people attacked the hangman for the prince's unpopular expropriation of their former right.

Executions, meaning the carrying out of all public punishments, not just capital punishments, were performed as a drama. In the Netherlands, from where Spierenburg gathered most of his information, they were called "awesome ceremonies". The robes, pipes and drums, prayers, and confessions were all designed to draw attention to the "exemplary" punishments, which demonstrated the prince's monopoly of violence. Because early modern states suffered from a low degree of public security, the prince's justice had to be highly visible.

Public executions began to come under increasing attack from the middle of the eighteenth century and for the most part disappeared in the nineteenth. Traditional historiography credits the humanitarian impulses of a few enlightened thinkers with destroying this aspect of the *ancien régime*, but Spierenburg disagrees. Nor does he accept the arguments of Foucault and others that reformers of this period were utilitarian and concerned only with control of criminals and the lower classes. The "privitization" of punishments came about because of a widespread and "fundamental change in sensibilities" of many Europeans, particularly among the upper classes. (200)

The development of this Enlightenment sensibility is the least well explained part of this book. According to Spierenburg, the first part of this transformation included an aversion to the sight of violence. It was a result of the "relative pacification" achieved by early modern states and the consequent appearance of "domesticated elites". Torture and the exposure of corpses were ended as a result of their repugnance to these sensitive elites. Public executions fell victim soon thereafter to the development of the nation state, which better integrated disparate geographic areas and social groups and was much more stable than the early modern state. With the establishment of nation states, whose laws reached all their people, public executions, which were already distasteful, were no longer necessary. These more pervasive and stable bureaucratic governments did not need regular public displays of their strength to remind the people they held a monopoly of violence.

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GEORGES VIGARELLO — *Le propre et le sale. L'hygiène du corps depuis le Moyen-Âge*. Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1985. 285 p.

Comment apprend-on la propreté? Voilà un souci majeur que partagent parents, maîtres, animateurs. Mais s'il est inconvenant d'être sale, la propreté a-t-elle toujours résidé dans le lavage du corps? Telle est la question que se pose, en historien et en pédagogue, Georges Vigarello, professeur à l'Université de Paris VIII.