

these young, single, self-supporting and independent women of the 1830s assumed sole responsibility for the children of their often unstable “free” unions in the late 1830s and found fewer work opportunities in the recessions of the 1840s. The sense of empathy for the plight of these women brings the subjects of this section vividly to life for the reader. When some of these women spoke and organized again in the Revolution of 1848, they elaborated the “passionless” maternal justification for political rights because they feared the public would associate feminism with “immorality”, because they were mothers, because they no longer believed in “self-sufficiency” in the present economy and because they realized the need for political action to change women’s condition. Like their predecessors, the feminists of 1848 become concrete and complex heroes rather than shadowy supporting characters in the historical drama.

To accommodate the sensual, dualist and utopian feminism of the 1830s, the passionless, maternalistic and political feminism of 1848, and the moderate, individualistic, and egalitarian feminism of the 1860s and 1870s, Moses employs a broad definition of feminism as an ideology “based on the recognition that women constitute a group that is wrongfully oppressed by male-defined values and male-controlled institutions of social, political, cultural, and familial power” (p. 7). As all-encompassing as the definition appears, it excludes any mention of Catholic feminism and limits references to late nineteenth-century socialist feminism. While these omissions may well be justified by the term “male-controlled institutions”, some discussion of the grounds for omission would have relieved the reader’s doubts about the identification of feminism with the Left but only until the end of the century. To account for the trend to moderation, Moses cites the repeated lessons in the need for a liberal political system and the shift from upper working-class and lower middle-class leaders in the 1830s to the privileged leaders of the Third Republic. The political thesis seems irrefutable; the social hypothesis, though promising, needs further thinking and research. Specifically, it is not clear that the seamstresses who allegedly funded *La Tribune des Femmes* were upper working-class, nor has Moses considered who the followers were, then or later. This kind of social analysis will be difficult, but it is the next step in a process begun in the 1970s and significantly advanced by *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*.

M.L. STEWART McDOUGALL
Simon Fraser University

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JOHN A. MOSES — *Trade Unionism in Germany from Bismarck to Hitler, 1869-1933*. 2 Vols. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1982. pp. xi, 560.

This two-volume study of the German trade unions to the time when Hitler dissolved them is basically yet another attempt to explain what motivated Europe’s best organized and historically most powerful labor movement. Nearly every writer on this subject, from Heinz Josef Varain to Gerhard Ritter to Jürgen Kocha, has agreed on the facts surrounding the early history of German trade unionism and on the increasingly sophisticated efforts of these unions to form a centralized labor organization. Where these authors part company, sometimes subtly and sometimes dramatically, is over the question of just what drove Germany’s trade union leaders and their followers on against conspicuous governmental opposition.

Moses jumps right into this argument, one that has lasted, on occasion wearily, since 1956. Varain began the whole debate in that year in his book, *Die deutschen Gewerkschaften, Sozialdemokratie und Staat, 1890-1920*, by arguing, with significant factual evidence, that the trade unions were consciously pragmatic from the start and were never primarily interested in radically restructuring either the existing German state or German society. By contrast, Moses, repeatedly stressing the idea

of class conflict, insists throughout these pages that the German unions were sustained by a deep-seated ideological dislike for Germany's ancient regime and by a desire for major changes.

Moses' theme, while not unique, might have been intriguing had he come up with more evidence to support his contention. But, almost quirkishly, the limited evidence that he does muster never does prove his basic argument that the German trade union leaders "set themselves a mighty and daunting task: how to transform the most feared militaristic and authoritarian capitalist society." Instead, his proofs tend to reinforce Varain's more staid contention that German trade unionism was reformist from the start, and not essentially visionary or ideological.

The author's difficulties in interpreting his own evidence begin soon in volume I, which carries the story up to 1918. Here, he openly states that the German unions were "socialist-oriented" as early as 1877. While he never directly defines what he means by socialism, he does suggest on several occasions that both leaders and workers were carried along and inspired by the picture of a dramatically reconstituted German state. But contradicting one of his own motifs, he goes on to admit that "ideology, whether it was Lassallean or Marxian, was scarcely the main concern of those agitators for worker organization and social reform." It is true that certain leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, particularly August Bebel, wanted to turn the unions into schools for indoctrinating the workers with loftier socialist principles. But, as Moses shows, Bebel failed miserably and eventually had to bow to the piecemeal approach and lack of ideological concern of the unions.

At one point, Karl Marx had hoped to see the German unions "organizing the working class to fight the bourgeoisie." But early trade union leaders like Theodor York, ignoring Marx's pugnaciousness, argued more temperately for an organized labor movement that could win social reforms and make the workers not combatants, but better humans. This mundane desire to improve the workers' standard of living within existing society was picked up and perpetuated loudly by Germany's most famous labor leader of the pre-1914 period, Carl Legien. Even though the German unions were, in Moses' view, consciously at odds with Germany's "militaristic and authoritarian capitalist society," Legien himself rarely spoke in such provocative terms. For example, after 1900 Legien condemned the general strike as revolutionary and, therefore, dangerous, something that Moses admits. If anything, Legien shied away from the concept of class struggle; tactically, he talked a gentler language. In the process, he toned down the hotheads in his movement and moved German trade unionism toward the middle of the road politically. One of the problems with the first volume here is that Moses does not adequately point to Legien's sense of moderation.

This is not to say that Moses does not have any insights into the first five decades of German trade unionism, for on a number of occasions his deductions do follow scientifically from his documentation. For one thing, he traces very closely and very accurately the tension that existed between the Social Democratic Party and the ever-expanding trade unions. The party undoubtedly wanted to control and direct the unions politically. However, as the German working-class movement became more organized under Legien and Karl Kloss, the trade unions became both more autonomous and more truly independent. In time, the Social Democratic Party even had to bow to union strength. Nothing demonstrated this reversal of roles better than the Mannheim Party Congress of 1906 where Bebel reluctantly conceded to Legien's obvious distaste for the general strike. In this instance, the party leaders wound up following the working masses away from leftist doctrine and toward greater pragmatism. One of the most telling points that Moses does make is his realization that Edward Bernstein's revisionism really created the intellectual climate within which the party actually drew closer to the unions.

The same dichotomy that characterizes volume I of this work reappears in volume II, the shorter part of this study. Volume II focuses on the history of the trade unions between 1919 and 1933. Here again, Moses sometimes goes a bit beyond the facts he has collected, while, at other times, his interpretations do hew rather judiciously to his evidence. An illustration of the former emerges rather quickly in volume II. Here, he correctly states that the trade unions were able to persuade the Weimar Republic to accept "an increasingly active role in social policy." But, simultaneously, he implies that its Wilhelmine predecessor was insensitive on this issue. Yet, very state was the very

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.

Vincent J. KNAPP
State University of New York, Potsdam

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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.