English summaries

The Gayssot Act and the Constitution   M. Troper

The Gayssot Act, passed by the French Parliament in 1990, makes it a crime to deny the existence of the crimes committed by the nazis during the Second World War. This law has been criticized not only by revisionists, but also by liberals. It has been argued that it is contrary to the principle of freedom of expression, that serious historians can easily destroy the revisionist's thesis, that a democracy should not establish official truths. The paper discusses these arguments: freedom of expression is not and can never be absolute, but must be weighed against other principles and rights, depending on the values which are the basis of this freedom in a specific field; the principles only protect the expression of an opinion, but not an action capable of causing by itself serious damages; finally, there is in every legal system a system of official truths, called presumptions, which serve to prevent variations in the interpretation of the facts by the courts. What the Gayssot Act does, is precisely to establish such a presumption, so that courts will not be forced to decide between professional historians on a historical truth.

Laws, norms, individual and collective practices: infancy in ancient Rome   M. Corbier

Historians of ancient Rome have recently begun working on the theme of infancy, which poses very specific methodological problems. Given a marked increase in research work that has clearly widened the documentary field, it has become absolutely necessary, as a preliminary step, to classify the different categories of available documents according to their nature, their scientific status, and the levels of reality and representation on which they throw some light. Within this perspective, the author has chosen to study two practices that can be compared with medieval and modern societies — the exposure of newborns and the consigning of the child to the care of a wet nurse — and to bring to light the affective relationships that "food" creates. The results of this critical reflection address particular points, concerning which the author puts into question certain accepted ideas, but they also have to do with a global approach to Roman society. The example of Rome invites us to think critically about the distinction between radical otherness, on the one hand, which are created by fundamental juridical differences, and, on the other hand, apparent and real similarities between practices like abandonment or the consigning of children to wet nurses and, more generally, modalities for expressing affection. Roman society is both foreign and familiar to us.

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

The support of abandoned children (besprizornost')
in Soviet Russia during the twenties (1917-31)
<div align="right">D. CAROLI</div>

The purpose of this article is to trace the evolution of social protection in the case of the most serious social problem that Soviet Russia had to face during the twenties: the besprizornost'. This problem which reached catastrophic proportions after the 1912 famine was the object of a very important debate among political leaders (V. A. Lounatcharski, N. K. Kroupskaja and A. I. Elizarova), jurists (S. E. Kopel'-janskaja, M. A. Istomina) and psychologists (G. D. Aronovic and A. B. Zalkind): this unique situation gave them an ideal opportunity to experiment with revolutionary theories concerning the creation of a collectivist society. Based on a three-phase study, the article focuses on a single aspect of the Soviet reform adopted for the social control of juvenile abandon and delinquency, that is on the history of the establishment of support institutions: orphanages and work communities. This approach allows to understand the influence of ideology on the structure of these institutions, the disintegration of the revolutionary project of "total and collective" support of the children and the reasons for the development of a "science of childhood." The main assumption of the article is that the twenties can be viewed as a parenthesis in the history of social politics: beyond this period, social problems were no longer approached in the context of social protection, but of Stalinian criminalization.

In a big round hand: purveyors of news
in seventeenth-century Rome
<div align="right">B. DOOLEY</div>

This article explores the way in which political information became a commodity in Western Europe in the early modern period through the regular transmission of handwritten notices or "avvisi" on political affairs. In Venice, veritable scriptoria employing dozens of scribes reproduced these sheets for long lists of customers. The focus here is on a group of newsletter writers operating in Rome in the seventeenth century. New evidence reveals that many of them worked in the offices of well-known notaries. They based their information on sheets they found already in circulation, on rumors, as well as on secret diplomatic sources; and very often their sheets, or copies made from them, were sold openly on the streets. The relative immunity they enjoyed, as well as the longevity of their profession in spite of the advent of printed newspapers, was due to their connection to the powerful patronage networks described here.

Uses of untruth. Criminal "faits divers"
and criminal novels in nineteenth century
<div align="right">D. KALIFA</div>

Build on the same narrative line, seen by contemporary observers as the specific forms of their cultural modernity, "faits divers" and criminel novels make a crowd of narrative, which historical use seems uneasy. Illegitimate outputs, they keep with truth a doubtful relation, who jumble the usual status of referenciality. If any documentary use seems impossible, this paper tries to point out the other ways of their historical exploitation. The crime is a very complex social construction, who cannot be easely objectived, and who appears maybe more clearly as a cultural fact,

and in this unworthy narratives. Indicating the figures of criminal risk, the places of social vulnerability and the actors of public order, they are an excellent repository who structures the perception of criminal realities. They show the ways of moralization and normalization working in social world and appears as one of the best signs for pointing out the process of cultural and social integration of the dominated classes. They contribute also to organize the public sphere and the public debates. Inquiries, who become progressively the main narrative structure of these texts, can then appear as a "master-fiction" where can be read at once the legitimacy and the contradictions of the democratic society.

Durkheimism and Reformism: the founding of an identity based sociology in Egypt
A. Roussillon

An early initiation to Durkheimism was the first stage through which Egypt opened to sociological thinking in the thirties and fifties of our century. The purpose of this study is to analyse the inflexions through which its main concepts and "theorems" were appropriated by the first generation of Egyptian sociologists through a khaldunian reading(s) of Durkheim's texts which was to make possible in reverse a durkheimian reading(s) of Ibn Khaldun, promoted as the "true founder" of sociology, and more generally of the whole Arab-Muslim political and social thinking. Its purpose is also to analyse the way Durkheimism was coined as a theoretical framework for a reformist project based on the logics of identity (re)building against both indigenous and exogenous adulteration, a framework in which were to play the crucial role of "imams" for the coming social changes.