

Summaries of articles

Birth of the Bureaucratic System in the USSR

Marc FERRO

What is the nature of the Soviet regime? How were the specific ties formed between the party, the soviets and the State? This article is a study of the genesis of the bureaucratic system, the passage from soviet republic to centralized state. The author shows that the conflicts among institutions (unions, factory committees, soviets, parties, etc.) had as much effect as the ideological conflicts, giving rise to a new group, already partially constituted in October, whose composition subsequently evolved. This explains the destiny of the regime.

Prostitution, Youth and Society in the Towns of South Eastern France in the 15th Century

Jacques ROSSIAUD

Prostitution, flourishing and official, sexual violence in the form of collective rapes committed by young men of the town, such were the two apparently contradictory phenomena which affected urban life in south eastern France in the 15th century. The present study is an attempt to explain such behavior by an analysis of the matrimonial structures: middle-aged men, successful rivals of the younger men on the marriage market, provided the latter with municipally controlled fornication (the sexual needs of fellow bachelors were well understood). They accepted and supervised the noisy but socialized functions of the young men's fraternities. Thus, until the beginning of the 16th century, prostitutes were not excluded from society: they acted as mediators for clerics as well as for persons of distinction, bearing witness to humanity's sad condition but helping in the fight against vice and violence.

A Feature of Social Psychology in the Mediterranean Countries during the Low Middle Ages: the Jewish untouchable

Maurice KRIEDEL

The condition of the Jewish populations in the mediterranean countries during the Low Middle Ages is often considered to be more favorable than that enjoyed by those of northern Europe.

Evidence on the Royal policy concerning the Jewish and their role in His Majesty's administration in Castille as well as in Aragon, especially the evidence drawn from the records of the Crown of Aragon, supports this opposition. But the document from the Royal Chancellery conveys the characteristic preoccupation of official policy. The urban records are more suited to reflecting the way the Jewish person is ordinarily perceived by his non-Jewish entourage. The city ordinances class him as an outcast, an untouchable. One can measure the gap that exists between the phenomenon of a Jewish aristocracy, favored by the authorities, and the repulsion that society on the whole felt for the Jew.

Rapid Justice

Nicole CASTAN

The powers of the exceptional courts, presided over by the Provost of the Maréchaussée, were, in the 18th century, increased to embrace the populations on the fringe of society, whereas the established classes were accountable to the ordinary courts. The Provost was awarded an armed force, the brigade of the Maréchaussée, indispensable in waging campaigns. His authority was extended to cover that most dangerous of all aggressors, the vagabond. His clientele, the "gallows-birds" came in overwhelming majority from the poor classes or those which were downwardly mobile: peasants without land, craftsmen without work, servants without a master, and from all those fleeing the army or justice (penal servitude, ban...). Paradoxically, they form a population mostly comprised of young men, many of whom are in their prime, forced out of their own milieu by demographic pressure or by economic mutations.

Relentless in its sentences without appeal and immediately executed (36 % forever eliminated from society), this is truly rapid justice. Rendered absurd by its lack of means, it could in fact no more than set an example.

Genesis of a Protestant Society

J. ESTÈBE et B. VOGLER

The above article is an analysis of seven consistorial registers which show the roles of the Elders in religious and ethical supervision, education and repression. The primary role consists of supervising religious practice, repressing blasphemy, assuring that no work is done on Sunday, regulating contacts with Catholics and suppressing the practice

of magic. Construction of a new society based on the Ten Commandments, concentrates simultaneously on building the family (parental and filial duties, dissent within the couple), eliminating physical or verbal violence, combating certain pastimes and assuring the individual's insertion in a social or professional life (the fight against idleness or the abuse of alms).

The conclusion emphasizes the points in common and the divergences between the two Churches which are different both with respect to their political status and to the characters of their congregations.

The Carnaval World

Daniel FABRE

*In this critical note, the author has tried to organize the profusion of ideas which Claude Gaignebet sets forth in *Le Carnaval* (Paris, 1974). He first identifies three major methods of analysis: the use of calendars, of mythologies and of ritual, all of which converge to elucidate the Carnaval themes.*

In passing, I would like to say that, with regard to specific examples, the breadth of the field covered by C. G. is greatly appreciated. On encounters saints' lives, tales from oral tradition, legends surrounding place names, and descriptions or depictions of rituals scattered throughout the history of the Western World.

The open-minded, comparative method is fortunately unlike the methods of a certain folklore-by-category, but it does have its limits and dangers: in particular, the too rapid negation of the spacio-temporal dimension which results in not grasping the different socio-cultural contexts of the Carnaval; the analysis of meaning from a purely empirical point of view; the failure to treat things symbolic. It may seem tempting to reduce the immense Carnaval complex to a hierarchically arranged religion, but it is inexact and perhaps even anachronistic.

The accompanying illustrations show scenes which are too often left to the imagination: contemporary carnivals of Languedoc and Catalonia; these lend reality to Gaignebet's analysis of the high points of the rite.

Le rose et le vert (critical note)

Michel MORINEAU

*These notes contain, first of all, the rectification of an unfortunate quotation of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. They then offer some considerations on establishing the population of France around 1680-1690, and finally, based upon a recently studied example (le Cambrésis) they show that the conclusions of *Les faux semblants d'un démarrage* are amply confirmed.*

Mediterranean Insurance in the 16th Century

Bratislava and Alberto TENENTI

This presentation of work in progress and soon to be published deals with maritime insurance in a 16th century mediterranean port: Dubrovnik. The authors have used a true series of data which makes it possible to analyse the different aspects of the phenomenon over several decades of economic activity.

The Decline of the British System of Slavery and the Abolition of the Slave Trade

Seymour DRESCHER

The prevailing view concerning the economic background of British abolition is that legal sanctions against the slave trade and slavery were preceded by and dependent upon a secular decline in the economic system they supported. In this perspective, the successive stages of abolition are seen as a strategy of radical surgery, severing a festering element from the vital organs. The relevant data, however, show that the British West Indies were increasing in relative as well as absolute importance during the period when the slave trade was attacked and abolished. The African component of the British slave system likewise reached its apogee at the end of the eighteenth century. The decline of British slavery followed, rather than preceded this crucial blow to its growth.

An Instance of Decentralization near Toulouse

Lucien SFEZ, Anne CAUQUELIN
et Jean-François BAILLEUX

Classical authors present decisions as being linear, rational, free. The analysis of this decision in the region of Toulouse demonstrates that this is simply not so. Beginning with a short history of Toulouse and more particularly the history of aeronautics in the South West, the authors trace the process which led to the installation in the 1960s of an aero-space complex in this area. The productive impact of the actors' rationalities, the decisiveness of those in charge, the choice of Toulouse, are elements which explain the partial success of the project. But this decision was also a relative failure: on the one hand, the rationalities of the private sector did not correspond to those of the public sector (there was a deep ideological split); on the other hand, the question arises, was Toulouse the obvious choice for such an installation. As to the methods: analysis of contents, structuralism and psychoanalysis are all amply called upon.