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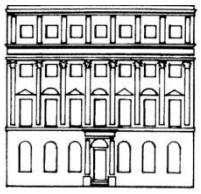

BULLETIN

ISSN 0269-8552

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At the Margins of the Welfare State: Changing Patterns of Including and Excluding the 'Deviant' Poor in Europe 1870–1933.
Conference Report
German Historical Institute London Bulletin, Vol 32, No. 2 (November 2010), pp 104-109

At the Margins of the Welfare State: Changing Patterns of Including and Excluding the 'Deviant' Poor in Europe 1870–1933, conference organized by the German Historical Institute London in cooperation with the Collaborative Research Centre 'Strangers and Poor People: Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day' (CRC 600, University of Trier), sub-project 'Poverty and the Politics of Poverty in European Cities in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', and held at the German Historical Institute London, 25–7 Feb. 2010.

The ambivalence and dynamics of discourses and social practices referring to the poor are among the central topics of the research which the Collaborative Research Centre 'Strangers and Poor People: Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day' has carried out at the University of Trier since 2002. The conference at the GHIL concentrated on modes of dealing with the 'deviant' poor, such as vagrants, 'lunatics', criminals, and the 'work-shy'. One of the main questions it raised was how the emergence of the modern welfare state since the late nineteenth century had influenced the perception, representation, and treatment of the 'deviant' poor. The conference papers illustrated a wide range of perspectives, including the discourses of contemporary experts, administrative practices, and the strategies of the 'deviant' poor when dealing with the changing patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Andreas Gestrich, Director of the GHIL, opened the conference with an overview of different approaches to inclusion and exclusion in the social sciences. To be at the margins, he said with reference to the conference title, does not necessarily equal exclusion in so far as the concept of inclusion was based on communication. Gestrich named integration into the labour market, the right of citizenship, and residency as some of the decisive factors defining inclusion or exclusion in the modern nation-state.

The first section dealt with 'Transnational Discourses on Poverty and Deviance'. In her paper on 'Poverty in Transnational Discourses: The Debates of Social Reformers in Germany and the Netherlands around 1900', Christina May (Münster) investigated whether reformers' societies in these two countries were able to introduce new perspectives on the causes of poverty into political discussions. Using new methods of researching societal problems, she stated that

German and Dutch experts stressed the structural causes of poverty, thereby questioning the dominant view of poverty as an individual and moral problem. In Germany, structural explanations put forward by experts from the Verein für Socialpolitik had played an important part in the discussions of political elites, while in the Dutch case a strong liberal tradition contributed to retaining the conventional view of poverty. In contrast to this account of general patterns in the discussion of poverty, Beate Althammer (Trier), in her paper 'Transnational Discourses on Vagrancy around 1900', focused on the debates about a specific group of the 'deviant' poor. Outlining the interrelated national and transnational discourses on the 'vagabond question' in the fields of criminal law and poor relief, she highlighted the interchange of ideas between experts and philanthropists from various European countries and the United States. Another field of contemporary discourse which Althammer examined was the medical interpretation of vagrancy as an expression of 'mental inferiority', a mode of defining deviance that appears to have been more dominant in Germany than in other countries. The transnational experts' discourse about poverty in medical terms was also discussed by Jens Gründler (Trier) in his paper on '"Degeneracy" and "Moral Imbecility": Transnational Discourses of Deviancy in Local Scottish Poor Relief Administration'. Gründler analysed the statements made by Scottish witnesses to the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded and a number of case files from a Scottish asylum. Based on these sources he demonstrated that local discourses and practices were influenced by national and transnational developments in the medical and political sciences and reflected, for example, the ambiguous definitions of mental illness. Wilfried Rudloff (Kassel) spoke on 'Benefit and Intervention: Two Modes of Operation of the Local Welfare Administration in Germany between 1890 and 1939'. He drew on concepts from the administrative sciences, namely, *Leistung* and *Eingriff*, in order to categorize the local welfare administration's modes of operation. Using examples from different fields of welfare, he showed that each administrative operation combines benefit and intervention. However, different mixtures of these two modes can be observed in various local environments and political circumstances. A lively discussion ensued on whether these concepts could be used to create a typology of welfare administrations, and on the limitations inherent in the administrative perspective.

The second section, 'Modes of Criminalization and Rehabilitation', started with Philipp Müller's (London) paper, '"But we will always have to individualize": Police Supervision in Prussia and its Reform around 1900'. Müller showed that police supervision had been intended to support and control former prisoners. Its reform could be explained as a reaction to the failure to re-integrate these people into society. Müller concentrated especially on the important part played by welfare associations in the new regime of 'monitoring care' after the reform and argued that despite some methodological changes, such as an emphasis on the individuality of the ex-prisoners, the dual function of support and control persisted. The issue of inclusion and exclusion of prisoners and ex-convicts was explored more deeply by Désirée Schauz (Munich). In her paper, 'Convicts at the Margins of the Welfare State: Permanent Detention or Rehabilitation?', she described how private welfare associations involved in prisoner care had reacted to new societal expectations raised by the modern welfare state and the penal reform movement. One of the main problems was that the majority of released prisoners would not accept any help from religious charity associations because of their paternalistic strategies. But when these associations were confronted with their failure to reintegrate ex-prisoners, they did not react by introducing fundamental reforms. Instead, they picked up the newly invented category of the mentally inferior and the suggestions of the penal reform movement in order to exclude habitual criminals from support. In her paper, 'Defence of Necessity? Begging and Vagrancy in the Context of Social Policy, Police, and Legal Practice (Austria, 1920s and 1930s)', Sigrid Wadauer (Vienna) returned to the subject of itinerant people. While begging and vagrancy were strictly forbidden by a law of 1885, her analysis of court records from various regions of Austria provided evidence that these rather vague categories were, in practice, used in a variety of ways. In some cases, begging was not only tolerated but even permitted, for example, if the authorities acknowledged the failure of public social assistance. This was true even when the persecution of beggars and vagrants intensified during the period of Austrofascism from 1933 to 1938. Juliane Hanschkow (Trier) spoke on 'Becoming "Gypsy-Like": The Process of Labelling Homeless and Itinerant People in the Prussian Rhine Province before 1933'. On the basis of administrative sources and case studies from the poverty-stricken regions of Eifel and Hunsrück,

she demonstrated that Prussian 'anti-gypsy' regulations left ample scope for the local police to ascribe the labels of *Zigeuner* or *nach Zigeunerart umherziehend* to people whose way of life was perceived as 'deviant'. Thus homeless families and itinerant tradesmen and craftsmen became objects of permanent observation and deportation. Ignoring structural causes such as the housing shortage and a lack of employment opportunities, authorities criminalized and stigmatized the poor and restricted civil rights such as free choice of residence.

In the third section the focus turned to workhouses and their inmates. In her paper, '"A Den of Drunkenness, Immorality and Vice": Public Representation of the Workhouse and the Poor in Late Nineteenth-Century Belfast', Olwen Purdue (Belfast) concentrated on the debate about those workhouse inmates who used it as a 'casual lodging house' and often only stayed for one night. In contemporary debate this was seen as an abuse of the workhouse system, which was originally expected to provide a form of 'moral policing'. Inga Brandes's (Trier) paper, 'Survival and Stigmatization: Poor Relief Recipients in Ireland, 1885–1925', explored the relationship between receiving poor relief and stigmatization. While it was commonly assumed that workhouse inmates in particular were stigmatized, she pointed out that there was often no sound empirical basis for this claim. In order to achieve a more differentiated view of stigmatization in research on poverty and poor relief, she reconsidered the indicators that could be used to identify it. The research presented by Megan Doolittle (Open University) was based on working-class autobiographies. As she showed in her presentation, 'Enforcing/Contesting the Duty to Provide: Fatherhood and the Workhouse in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century England', fathers were expected to be the main providers for their families. In reality, however, poor families often relied on different additional strategies and resources, such as the help of relatives or the income of women and children. Still, the failure to live up to this role model was associated with shame and stigmatization. This became especially apparent if a family had no other option but to enter the workhouse. In contrast to the workhouse system in Britain, workhouses in Germany had a different history, as was shown by Thomas Irmer (Berlin) in his paper, 'Deviant Poor between Preservation, Detention and Annihilation? The Municipal Workhouse in Berlin-Rummelsburg 1879–1951'. Irmer surveyed the history of this workhouse, focusing on the Nazi era,

when most workhouse inmates were classified as 'anti-social' or 'workshy'. Many of them were sent to concentration camps, a fact that is not very apparent in the German culture of remembrance. In the discussion, it was pointed out that the history of the workhouse as a whole should not be seen only in the light of what happened there between 1933 and 1945.

The last section, 'Colonies and Camps: Places of Inclusion or Exclusion?', dealt with the spatial dimension of inclusion and exclusion. The papers given showed that the concentration of deviant poor into colonies or camps could have different motives and effects. In her paper, 'Labour Colony, Model Village, or Research Station? The *Heimatkolonie* Friedrich-Wilhelmsdorf and European Discourses of Social and Environmental Improvement, 1882–1914', Elizabeth B. Jones (Colorado) showed how discourses of social and scientific improvement were closely intertwined around the turn of the twentieth century. Although the Protestant pastor Eberhard Cronemeyer had founded this agricultural labour colony with the main aim of teaching vagabonds the 'joy of work', the colony also served as an agricultural research station which aimed to fertilize the moorlands. In this way, the colony sought to reform both land *and* people. Different attitudes towards poverty and deviance within a work colony played a significant role in Edward Snyder's (Minnesota) paper, 'Friedrich von Bodelschwingh and the Vagabond Question: A Transnational Examination of German Protestant Attitudes Towards Poverty and Deviancy, 1880–1923'. Snyder highlighted the connection between the Bethel foundation's missionary work in East Africa and the project of reforming vagabonds. With emphasis on work ethic and religion, vagabonds in Germany and Africans in the colonies were to be reformed into good Protestants. After the First World War, however, attitudes changed among the leaders of Bethel, who now became receptive to eugenic approaches. The missionaries returning from Africa after the war, however, held on to the traditional approach of moral reform. In her paper, ' "New Morocco" in the No Man's Land between Trier and Euren: Drawing Boundaries and Constructing Deviance (Germany, 1925–33)', Tamara Stazic-Wendt (Trier) focused on links between poverty, social and spatial exclusion, and labelling processes. Because of a housing shortage in the 1920s, the city of Trier had removed more than a hundred poor families to a barracks camp outside the town. The stigmatizing attribution of difference, reflected

in the label New Morocco, enforced, stabilized, and legitimized the social and spatial exclusion of the families living in that 'undesirable' place. As letters written by the inhabitants show, those labelled as 'deviant' questioned the symbolic and practical boundaries in many ways.

In his summary at the end of the conference Lutz Raphael (Trier) outlined the most important results and some further perspectives. He pointed out that the notion of 'marginality' was constantly changing and that 'margins' should also be seen as the result of labelling processes. He suggested using Michel Foucault's concept of the *dispositif* to link the analyses of discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion. Concerning the definition of deviance, the increasing weight of psychological explanations of poverty, which were at the same time linked to older moralizing discourses, seemed to be a striking characteristic around the turn of the century. As some presentations showed, the utopian ideas of experts who viewed rural colonies as a solution to the problems of industrial society also played an important part. While he acknowledged that a strength of the conference was that it shed light on the options open to the poor when dealing with administrative and institutional frameworks, Raphael also emphasized the power of explicit spatial exclusion.

As the lively discussion throughout the conference demonstrated, combining such different perspectives as transnational discourses and local practices opens up a promising field for further research on the changing patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Without any doubt, the planned publication of the conference proceedings will make a valuable contribution to the research on poverty and deviance.

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