

Richard J. Evans, ed. — *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1988. Pp. xiii, 273.

This volume was assembled, in the editor's words, "to help in the process of recovering the lost history of the German underworld, ..." and "...to contribute to the methodology of this area of historical study as well as to provide examples of how it might be approached" (ix, xii). It continues under the Routledge imprint the Croom Helm German social history series, which has made available a rich harvest of research since its inception in 1981. Five of the ten chapters are revisions of papers originally given at the ninth Research Seminar on Modern German Social History at the University of East Anglia, in July 1985. Of the remaining chapters, two were published previously in German, while two others were drawn from works in progress. Chapter I, the Introduction by Richard J. Evans, places the enterprise into perspective. The editor prefaces the volume with the observation that "historical scholarship has all too often given the impression that the Germans have been an obedient and conformist people" (ix). The contributions assembled here do not necessarily take away that impression. Rather, these studies of deviance and law-breaking reinforce the image of a society placing a premium on obedience and order. The effort to link these selections as representative of a recognizable "German Underworld" that has existed throughout history does not quite come off. Taken individually, these carefully researched and documented contributions bring light to hitherto obscure aspects of German social history.

Bob Scribner's paper on "Mordbrenner" in sixteenth-century Germany documents how scattered incidents of fireraising — some, such as the 1540 Einbeck fire, with disastrous consequences — caused widespread public fear and panic, with attendant persecution and scapegoating of vagrants, beggars, and rogues. Concentrating on the panic of 1540, Scribner pays tribute to the scrupulosity of the existing judicial process by observing "...how few of those suspected of fireraising in Germany in 1540 were actually convicted of this offence" (48).

Suzanne Burghartz brings some much needed clarification to the perennial question of "the equation of women and witches". Her work demonstrates that the witch stereotype of the early modern period "was far from exclusively fixed on women", though the sharpening of the focus of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on "the weakness of women's nature" as the prime cause was unmistakable (59-61). This is an eminently sane contribution to gender-specific as well as general social history. The same can be said of Otto Ulbricht's "Infanticide in Eighteenth-Century Germany" (chapter 5) and Lynn Abrams' "Prostitutes in Imperial Germany, 1870-1918: Working Girls or Social Outcasts?" (chapter 8). Both of these studies deal with mainstream phenomena rather than entrenched deviancy. In fact, much of the volume documents actions based on credible-usually economic-motives, rather than on the truly *deviant*. Ulbricht confirms the close relation of illegitimacy and infanticide and the very ordinariness of the women who were driven by a number of social and economic factors to kill their infants. Though he makes clear that "...illegitimate motherhood should not automatically be equated with misery and desparation" (118), Ulbricht leaves no doubt that the "fear of want" and the "fear of shame" loomed large as the causes of infanticide. Lynn Abrams provides a significant service to women's studies by scrutinizing a legal system that "...sanctioned and encoded the double standard of bourgeois morality" and the titillation of the middle-class male (202). Though one wishes that she had refrained from calling these women "girls"

throughout her piece, Abrams competently outlines the mainstream roots of many members of "the oldest profession" and their transitory practice of it.

Uwe Danker's thorough investigation of banditry in early modern Germany once again highlights the tendency on the part of the German authorities to exaggerate the threat to stability posed by criminal elements. Regina Schulte's account of poaching in Upper Bavaria in 1848 makes clear that some illegal activities enjoyed widespread popular support and certainly cannot be considered "deviant" behavior by outcasts of society. Eric A. Johnson's paper on "The Crime Rate, 1830-1930" concentrates on questions in the interpretation of available crime statistics and takes issue with established points of view; it also serves to put the detailed studies presented in the other contributions into perspective. The final two chapters, Wolfgang Ayass' study of "Vagrants and Beggars in Hitler's Reich" and Alan Kramer's paper on "Law-abiding Germans, 1945-1949" hold little surprise. Case studies of Hamburg rather than broadly based comparative studies on a national scale, the two papers, perhaps inadvertently, demonstrate that Germans adhered to conformity in adversity as well as under normal conditions.

The editor and his contributors are to be congratulated for their scholarly presentation of significant topics in German social history. Each of the studies offered stands solidly on its own, the research is impressive, the translations are sound and the writing is on the whole coherent, though the narration now and then seems disjointed. But if it was the underlying purpose of this collection to put into question the thesis of a prevalent *Untertanengeist* in German history, that purpose is not fulfilled by the points made in the individual studies and the arrangement of the entire volume. The intensity of the German reaction against deviance and law-breaking documented here proves the opposite.

Ernest A. Menze  
Iona College

\* \* \*

Michael P. Fitzsimmons — *The Parisian Order of the Barrister and the French Revolution*. Harvard Historical Monographs, Vol. LXXIV. Harvard University Press, 1987.

The legal profession is generally portrayed as actively supporting the French Revolution. Georges Lefebvre, for example, characterized lawyers as one of five groups which formed the corps of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. Claiming that "such assessments are based primarily on the composition of the National Assembly rather than on any analyses of the legal profession itself," Michael Fitzsimmons sets out to reevaluate the legal profession's role in the French Revolution (ix). Fitzsimmons' *The Parisian Order of the Barristers and the French Revolution* traces the history of the professional association of the Parisian Barristers from the outbreak of the French Revolution, through the Order's abolition in 1790, and up until its reinstatement under Napoleon Bonaparte, in 1811. In contrast to the standard position, Fitzsimmons argues that the Parisian barristers "reacted timidly to [the French Revolution] and yearned for an ideal that was irretrievably lost, viewing the Revolution as more of an end than a beginning" (198).