

ostrak-izô, banish (esp. from Athens) by potsherds, ostracize

ostracism

political practice in ancient Athens whereby a prominent citizen who threatened the stability of the state could be banished without bringing any charge against him. (A similar device existed at various times in Argos, Miletus, Syracuse, and Megara.) At a fixed meeting in midwinter, the people decided, without debate, whether they would hold a vote on ostracism (ostrakophoria) some weeks later. Any citizen entitled to vote in the assembly could write another citizen's name down, and, when a sufficiently large number wrote the same name, the ostracized man had to leave Attica within 10 days and stay away for 10 years. He remained owner of his property. Ostracism must be carefully distinguished from exile in the Roman sense, which involved loss of property and status and was for an indefinite period (generally for life).

Ostracism is said by Aristotle, in his *Constitution of Athens*, to have been introduced by Cleisthenes in his reform of the Athenian constitution after the expulsion of Hippias (c. 508 BC), but the first use of it seems to have been made in 488-487 BC, when Hipparchus, son of Charmus of Collytus, was ostracized. After Hipparchus, four more men, the last of them being Aristides, were ostracized before the amnesty in 481, preceding the invasion of Xerxes I. The institution was invoked less frequently after the Persian Wars, falling into disuse after it was used ineffectively, probably in 417, to resolve the political impasse caused by the rivalry of Nicias and Alcibiades. Compare exile and banishment. (See "*Constitution of Athens*".)

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ancient Greek civilization

The system of ostracism

A further novelty of the early 480s was the first ostracism. This was a way of getting rid of a man for 10 years without depriving him of his property. First, a vote was taken as to whether an ostracism should be held in principle; if the voters wanted one, a second vote was taken, and, if the total number of votes now cast exceeded 6,000, the "candidate" whose name appeared on the largest number of potsherds, or ostraca, went into this special sort of exile. An obstinate tradition associates the introduction of ostracism with Cleisthenes, but this hardly matters because the evidence is explicit that no ostracism was actually held until 487. The object of this very unusual political weapon has been much discussed; whereas some ancient writers considered it as a way of preventing a revival of the Peisistratid tyranny (hardly a real threat after 490), modern scholars see it as a device for settling policy disputes--that is, as a kind of ad hominem referendum. It is possible, however, to be too rational about ostracism; of the large numbers of ostraca that survive, not all have been completely published, but one can see that their content is sometimes abusive and sometimes obscene. One accuses Cimon of incest with his sister, another says that Pericles' father Xanthippus "does most wrong of all the polluted leaders." The idea of the politician-leader as polluting scapegoat is a recurrent one in Greek political invective, and it is perhaps in terms of invective, or the need for a religious safety valve, that ostracism can best be understood.

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ostrakon, to, earthen vessel, Aristoph. Frogs 1190, ti=Aristoph. Eccl. 1033, Lys. 3.28, au=Lys. 4.6; flower-pot, Thphr.HP6.7.3.

2. fragment of such a vessel, potsherd, IG42(1).121.82 (Epid., iv B. C., pl.), LXX Ps.21.16, al., Ostr.1152, etc.; ipnou ostraka Hp.Morb.2.47; esp. the potsherd used in voting (v. ostrakizô): hence toustrakon paroichetai the danger of ostracism is past, Cratin.71; ta ostraka, = ostrakismos , Pl.Com.187; to o. epipherein tini to vote for any one's banishment, Plut. Alc. 13, cf. ti=Plut. Per. 14.

exile and banishment

prolonged absence from one's country imposed by vested authority as a punitive measure. Exile and banishment probably originated among early peoples as a means of punishment. The offender was made an outcast and deprived of the comfort and protection of his group. Exile was practiced by the Greeks chiefly in cases of homicide, although ostracism was a form of exile imposed for political reasons. In Rome, exile (exsilium) was originally a means to circumvent the death penalty. Before a death sentence was pronounced, a Roman citizen could escape by voluntary exile. Later, exile applied to all gradations of expulsion, whether it was temporary or permanent and whether citizenship was lost and property confiscated or not. In general, the Romans determined punishment by class: banishment was for the upper classes and forced labour for the lower.

From the Anglo-Saxon penalty of outlawry, English law developed the practice of banishing criminals as an alternative to capital punishment. By the 18th century, European countries were removing criminals to penal colonies in America, Australia, and Siberia (see penal colony). In the 20th century, political reasons became a frequent basis for exile. See also deportation.

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penal colony

distant or overseas settlement established for punishing criminals by forced labour and isolation from society. Although a score of nations in Europe and Latin America transported their criminals to widely scattered penal colonies, such colonies were developed mostly by the English, French, and Russians. England shipped criminals to America until the American Revolution and to Australia into the middle of the 19th century. France established penal colonies in Africa, New Caledonia, and French Guiana (of which those in the latter, including Devil's Island, were still operating during World War II). French Guiana epitomized the worst features of penal colonies: harsh punishments and the underfeeding of prisoners assigned to hard labour were routine. The Siberian colonies maintained by the Soviet Union were initially organized under the tsars but were most widely employed from the Russian Revolution through the Stalin era. Governments have since turned to alternative means of crime control, and most penal colonies have been abolished. See also exile and banishment.

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deportation

expulsion by executive agency of an alien whose presence in a country is deemed unlawful or detrimental. Deportation has often had a broader meaning, including exile, banishment, and the transportation of criminals to penal settlements.

In Roman law, deportation originally described a form of banishment for life to a foreign country, usually an island. Deportation was at first inflicted upon political criminals, but, in time, it became a means of removing those whose wealth and popularity rendered them objects of suspicion. It was also a punishment for adultery, murder, poisoning, forgery, embezzlement, and other crimes. Deportation was attended by the confiscation of property, loss of citizenship, and loss of civil rights. The practice of transporting criminals to foreign soil began in Europe in the 15th century, when Portugal sent convicts to South America, where they became some of the earliest settlers of Brazil. France initiated deportation during the Revolutionary period; the practice survived until 1938 despite much public criticism of the prison conditions on the islands of French Guiana, particularly the notorious Devil's Island. Peter I the Great of Russia ordered political prisoners to Siberia in 1710, thus beginning a practice that has continued through the 20th century. (See French law.)

In England deportation developed from the policy of allowing an arrested man the option to abjure the realm. He would take an oath to depart and never return. Often this represented the convict's only alternative to execution. Gradually a formal system of transportation of convicted criminals developed as a substitute for capital punishment. The inhuman treatment of criminals sentenced to servitude in the colonies of North America and Australia generated public pressure for penal reform, and the practice was abandoned in the 1850s. (See English law.)

In Anglo-American law today, deportation is a civil enactment imposed on persons who are neither native-born nor naturalized citizens. The alien is ordinarily, but not necessarily, returned to the country from which he came, usually because he has entered the deporting country illegally or without proper passport or visa. Aliens who become public charges, commit crimes involving moral turpitude, or engage in subversive activities can also be subjected to deportation proceedings. U.S. courts have shown leniency in circumstances in which families are split apart unjustifiably and left with no means of support.

Deportation differs from exclusion, extradition, and exile. Exclusion is the refusal by a governing authority to admit an alien. Extradition is the removal of a criminal to the country from which he has fled to avoid criminal prosecution or prison. Exile is a prolonged absence from one's country, either voluntary or by direction of the sovereign. See also exile and banishment; penal colony.

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boycott

collective and organized ostracism applied in labour, economic, political, or social relations to protest practices that are regarded as unfair. The boycott was popularized by Charles Stewart Parnell during the Irish land agitation of 1880 to protest high rents and land evictions. The term boycott was coined after Irish tenants followed Parnell's suggested code of conduct and effectively ostracized a British estate manager, Charles Cunningham Boycott.

The boycott is used most frequently by labour organizations as a tactic to win improved wages and working conditions from management. U.S. law distinguishes between primary and secondary labour boycotts: a primary boycott is the refusal of employees to purchase the goods or services of their employers, and a secondary boycott involves an attempt to induce third parties to refuse to patronize the employer. In most U.S. states, primary boycotts are legal if they involve no physical violence, coercion, or intimidation. Secondary boycotts, however, are illegal in most states. (See organized labour.)

Boycotts were also used during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s as a social and political tool. Stores and businesses that discriminated against blacks were boycotted, in the expectation that falling revenues would influence a company to change its policy.

The term boycott may also signify a refusal to participate in given proceedings. Representatives of a nation may boycott international conferences or convocations, for example, as a means of indicating disapproval of another nation's political policy or conduct.

Boycotts have also been employed by a nation or a group of nations, or by an international organization to influence or protest the policies or actions of another country. The United States, for example, called for a boycott of the summer Olympics of 1980 in Moscow in protest over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the previous year. In an instance of a boycott called by an international organization, the United Nations in 1965 asked all member states to break off economic relations with Rhodesia, which had illegally declared its independence from Great Britain earlier that year; the boycott remained in effect until 1979.

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