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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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M. BALL, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921-1929*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987, pp. XVIII, 226.

Sometimes bad titles disorient the reader and otherwise misrepresent scholarly books. Private traders and entrepreneurs of the NEP era could hardly be labeled "capitalist" when the system itself was a mixed market socialist economy. Nor does the book limit himself to Russia as the title suggests but to some extent encompasses other republics of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the monograph makes a fresh interpretation of the Soviet experiment with a mixed economy and provides valuable insights into its functioning during the 1920s.

While focusing on the so-called Nepmen, the author analyses the legal, organizational, and political framework that assigned a substantive role for the private sector in trade and production. This approach corrects the dogmatic Soviet view that NEP was merely a transitional episode which inevitably evolved into true socialism based on plan and command. It also corrects a biased view in the West that led to the ascendancy of a Stalinist command economy.

The monograph analyses how the system actually functioned. This fundamental question is approached from the standpoint of the scope and tribulations of small-scale private managers and entrepreneurs. The author shows how they were needed and even protected as an integral part of the market-oriented system. He shows how the private sector interacted with the domineering state monopolies. He demonstrates that the state exercised extensive controls over the private sector by manipulation, taxation, bank credits, rents on state property, and access to goods produced by nationalized enterprises. While the orthodox Marxists condemned the manifestations of private greed, the conspicuous super-normal profits of the entrepreneuring speculators merely reflected market disequilibria and shortages brought about by inefficient but privileged state monopolies.

The author offers an important insight about the detrimental effects of uncertainty and state-imposed risks on the ability of the private sector to perform its useful socio-economic tasks. If the Communist government violated the legal

guarantees to private enterprise under the NEP system, how can people today trust the promises if the Party continues to hold its monopoly of power?

Economic historians will be pleased that the author makes good use of the neglected economic studies and commentaries of the 1920s. He did not succumb to an avalanche of details offered by Soviet historians peddling their official theses about the origins of the Stalinist system. Surprisingly, however, he defers to the authority of Walter Duranty who got the Pulitzer Prize for his reports on the USSR; but it has been recently demonstrated that Duranty used the New York Times to deceive the outside world and cover up the tragic famine in Ukraine in 1933.

The present reviewer agrees with the underlying thesis of the monograph that NEP was not merely an ever-changing historical phase, but a distinctly structured well-functioning system. As a relatively humane and viable economic model of market socialism, NEP deserves to be studied and understood.

V.N. BANDERA  
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

G. DERTILIS (ed), *Banquiers, usuriers et paysans: Réseaux de crédit et stratégies du capital en Grèce (1780-1930)*, Paris: Editions La découverte et Fondation des Treilles, 1988, pp. 321, FF 150.

This volume is a clear indication of the considerable progress that research in Greece's economic history has made in the last two decades. It deals in an imaginative and illuminating manner with the constitution, reproduction, and long-term transformation of the Greek financial networks and markets from the eighteenth century until the inter-war years. Furthermore, it shows the relevance of such networks for the type of development or underdevelopment that has been experienced in Greece.

The editor is also the main contributor to the volume, since his three chapters of synthesis are responsible for more than half the text, and set the general themes that are discussed and further elaborated by the other contributors. In the introductory chapter, Dertilis gives an overall picture of Greek development during the period under consideration, focusing particularly on those specificities of the Greek case that are relevant to the book's main area of concern.

From this perspective he discusses the prominent role that Greek merchants and financiers have played within and outside the Ottoman empire; the relations between the Greek bourgeoisie diaspora and the indigenous dominant classes in post-independence Greece; the relative weakness of big landed property in the nineteenth century; the predominance (particularly in the Pelo-

ponnese) of small agricultural producers whose output was controlled by local merchants and usurers; the connections between merchant finance capital and a chronically indebted state that was using vast resources for its own extended reproduction and for achieving irredentist goals; the great openness of the nineteenth-century Greek economy and its dependence on international financial networks partly controlled by diaspora Greeks; etc.

After this overview, Dertilis focuses more directly on credit networks and their development from the eighteenth century onwards.

He shows that, notwithstanding the development of the banking system and the influx of diaspora capital during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, credit fragmentation still persisted — the Greek economy not managing to develop an integrated financial market.

Throughout the century, credit demand at village level was met by the local merchants-cum-usurers who, in their turn, were linked with usurers and merchants higher up in the financial hierarchy, at the top of which stood the country's two major banks (the National Bank and the Ionian Bank). These banks preferred to lend to merchants and financiers who could provide serious collateral, rather than directly to small producers. In this way the various intermediaries were profiting from the difference between the banks' rate of interest (6 to 10 percent) and the exorbitant rates demanded from the peasants (from 14 up to 50 percent). According to Dertilis, this highly complex, strongly hierarchised system of intermediaries did not permit the kind of competition that could eventually lower the cost of credit and eliminate the oligopolistic or monopolistic controls the usurer and merchant were exercising at village level. The local money lender was not at all competing with others of his kind, but was simply a client of the money-lender higher up. From this point of view the local markets had a *segmental* character, in the sense that they did not lead to an integrated, national market. This credit system lasted until the late 1920s, when the state, via the newly established Agricultural Bank of Greece eventually broke the stranglehold over the peasant household by the local usurers and financial middlemen by lending directly to the small producers.

L. Fontaine shows, with reference to John Campbell's anthropological study of a transhumant shepherd community, the various credit networks and arrangements that tied the community to city merchants, suggesting interesting points of comparison with a similar community in Oisans, France. N. Bakounakis's contribution concentrates on the connection between the Peloponnesian raisin growers and the merchants and financiers, both foreign and indigenous, residing in the town of Petras. C. Hadjiiossif, finally, examines the financial networks of Greek-controlled banks in Alexandria, their involvement in the formation of big industrial capitalist units followed Marx's Way II rather than his way I: i.e. that, as a rule, Greek industrialists came not from the ranks of small

artisans but from merchants and financiers. A second qualification of the thesis that Greek capital avoided industry during this period comes from K. Kostis, who shows that, contrary to what has been generally accepted, banks did finance industrial projects — albeit almost exclusively big ones. C. Agriantoni shows a very important acceleration of the industrialising process during the 1860s and 1870s, due to favourable national and international circumstances. The situation changed for the worse, however, in the last quarter of the century, when technological advances in the West accelerated exactly at the moment when, due to relative abundance of labour, Greek industrial capital opted for labour-intensive technologies.

In the last chapter of the volume, Dertilis pulls together the various points made about finance and its relationship to industrialisation. He first notes that, despite the qualifications elaborated by Agriantoni and Kostis, the overall nineteenth-century Greek industrial project was both modest and fragile, and that one is therefore quite justified to speak of Greece's failure to industrialise in that period. For Dertilis this failure is to a large extent due to the long-term scarcity of both unskilled and skilled labour in nineteenth-century Greek industry. If the predominance of peasant smallholders, and the wholesale emigration of landless peasants unwilling to join the proletariat explain the non-availability of cheap unskilled workers, the lack of practical and vocational training in the Greek educational system explains the non-availability of skilled ones.

A second major reason for Greece's failure to industrialise in the nineteenth century lies in the strategies of the capitalists — indigenous, diaspora, or foreign — who, with a few exceptions, were reluctant to invest in industry. It is not difficult to see why this should be so, if one takes into account that investments in commerce were more profitable and that, due to the oligopolistic character of the financial markets, the returns from a variety of financial placements were even more so.

For Dertilis the overall picture is gloomy, despite the three short periods (1860-75, 1920-30, 1950-70) when the process of industrialisation seemed to gain momentum in Greece. Each of these three periods, and particularly the second and third, were followed by severe crisis which, instead of leading to the modernising and restructuring of industry, generated a process of de-industrialisation. For Dertilis this is not surprising, given the non-competitive character of Greek industrial enterprises, the lack of a long-term strategy for modernisation with a view to exporting industrial products, and the existence (until comparatively recently) of easier opportunities for high profits in the oligopolistically organised trade and finance sectors. These sectors were «closed and rigid at the lower levels, and open to foreign and diaspora financial networks at the top» (p. 235).

I think that, both substantively and methodologically, the volume as a whole

constitutes a very significant contribution to the economic history of modern Greece. On the substantive level, the synthesising chapters of the editor, and the more focused papers of the other contributors give us a highly refined and subtle image of the nineteenth-century Greek economy, of its structure, functioning, and long-term transformation. The combination of overall synthesis with specific analysis on key issues is an excellent device for bringing to life dry statistical tables and econometric computations. It allows the reader to get a sense of the social fabric, of the complex networks and configurations that lie behind growth indexes and other types of quantitative data. I believe that the link between the nature of financial networks and the weak and lopsided industrial development that Greece experienced in the nineteenth century has been convincingly established. Although in very broad terms, the establishment of such a link is not a new venture, examination of the detailed and highly complex mechanisms which, on *different levels of analysis*, connect financial strategies with Greece's industrialising project, does constitute an original contribution of *Banquiers, usuriers et paysans*.

My only reservation, in terms of substantive issues, relates to the volume's more or less implicit assumption that Greece's «failure» to industrialise in the nineteenth century, and her lopsided industrial growth during the first decades of the twentieth, was due *primarily* to the strategies of those who possessed liquid funds and/or controlled the highly oligopolistic financial networks. This seems to argue (as do the very concepts of «failure» and of «strategies») that there was a serious possibility for an *alternative* development, one nearer to that experienced by Western Europe several decades earlier. I do not think that such an alternative was possible in Greece, and the reasons for this are partly provided by Dertilis himself. Since merchants and financiers found industrial investments far less lucrative than financial or commercial ones, there was no chance whatsoever that, if left to themselves (as they were), they could have adopted an alternative strategy. I do think that, despite Kostis' misgivings concerning Gerschenkron's overall theory,<sup>2</sup> the latter was right in arguing that latecomers can only «catch up» with early industrialisers if helped by massive state intervention which, via its control of the banking system or in more direct ways, channels investments into the right sectors. Was this a real possibility in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Greece? Given the structure of the Greek state, I think not.

In fact, not only in Greece, but in all semi-peripheral and peripheral countries that tried to industrialise a century later than the West, the obstacles to a

<sup>1</sup> SEE J. K. CAMPBELL, *Honour, Family and Patronage*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> A. GERSCHENKRON, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Praeger, London 1962.

more balanced, less lopsided development were so great, and the state structures so unsuitable for overcoming such obstacles, that all of them show a similar pattern of industrial «failure». From this perspective it is not surprising that among the «late-late» comers,<sup>3</sup> the only two native states that managed to develop competitive industrial sectors and to overcome quite successfully the difficulties that Greek industrialists were faced with, are South Korea and Taiwan. Both of them gave exceptionally effective massive aid in the industrialising process, and to direct private investments into the right sectors without killing capitalist initiative. The Greek state, as well as the Greek banking system that it controls, was not only unable in the nineteenth century to intervene in such a flexible and imaginative manner, but it is equally unable to do so in the twentieth.

The above considerations in no way invalidate Dertilis' analysis of labour shortages and of the anti-independence Greece. They simply suggest that, given the timing of Greek industrialisation (in relation to the West) and the nature of the Greek state, the alternatives available to the country during the period under consideration were more restricted than some of the contributors to the volume seem to imply.

With regard to the methodological aspects of the book, finally, I think that the attempt to explore Greece's financial networks by studying them at different levels of analysis (from the village and the region to the national and international levels) not only provides a good many insights into the constitution and transformation of financial markets, but it also suggests ways of bridging the «micro» and «macro» approaches in the social sciences. Moreover, Dertilis' insistence that in the nineteenth-century relatively open Greek economy, national frontiers are not always a reliable guide for demarcating the areas to be studied, and that financial networks were cutting across such boundaries, is a highly promising methodological insight that deserves further development.

For all of the above reasons I think that *Banquiers, usuriers et paysans* constitutes a very important and decisive contribution to Greek economic history, and that it will certainly become a valuable guide to both students and scholars of nineteenth-century Greek society and economy.

NICOS MOUZELIS  
London School of Economics

<sup>3</sup> For the term «late-late comers» see A. HIRSHMAN, *A Bias of Hope*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1970, Ch. 3).

S.M. DI SCALA, *Renewing Italian Socialism; Nenni to Craxi*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Spencer Di Scala, the author of a fine study of Filippo Turati, *Dilemmas of Italian Socialism*, has now written an equally good history of the post-1945 Italian Socialist party (PSI). This movement has received much less attention from American historians than its rival, the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Di Scala resolutely seeks to reverse the historiographical bias. The result is a provocative, well-researched history of the PSI, based on a combination of archival work, interviews with major protagonists, and a comprehensive survey of socialist periodicals and secondary sources.

*Renewing Italian Socialism* is, in fact, two books, both equally useful, but very different in tone. The first two-thirds of the volume is an objective analysis of the party from the period of exile through the emergence of Bettino Craxi. In the final third Di Scala offers an enthusiastic defence of Craxi's new PSI. In a larger sense, Di Scala chronicles the demise of Italian socialism as an ideological movement by analyzing the process by which Marxist ideologues like Rodolfo Morandi and Lelio Basso gave way to the pragmatic Pietro Nenni and his disciple Bettino Craxi.

Di Scala traces the Socialist party through three phases. Subservience to the Communist party dominated during the long period of «unità di azione» which lasted more or less from 1934 to 1956. Throughout these years the PSI's reformist and maximalist wings disagreed about party goals and allowed the Communists to set the pace. Much of the blame falls on the shoulders of Nenni, who veered throughout his career from one political course to another on an erroneous reading of domestic and international events. Even Di Scala's sympathetic account does little to restore Nenni's reputation. One of the many merits of *Renewing Italian Socialism* is a minute analysis of Nenni's tortuous effort from 1953 to 1956 to extricate the PSI from his and Morandi's overly close alliance with the PCI after the disastrous Popular Front elections of 1948.

The continuing inability of the PSI to develop a coherent ideology with which it could conquer political space between the Catholic and Communist blocs marks the years of the centre-left from 1962 to 1976. Di Scala reconstructs the Socialist party's abandonment of any socialist content to its programme. Proposals of Riccardo Lombardi and Antonio Giolitti for comprehensive socialist planning, offered during the early 1960s, won little support either from the PSI's coalition partners or from the electorate. Although Di Scala does help us to draw a more positive balance sheet for the centre-left experiment, he might have gone even further in underlining the work of individual Socialist deputies like Loris Fortuna in the movement for democratic reform from 1962 to 1976. The contribution of the PSI in the centre-left years to the construction of a more democratic (although nonsocialist) society may have been more significant than the activities of the Craxi government and its as yet unrealized Socialist Project.

Finally, the book traces the development of the new course for the PSI. Di

Scala gives us a portrait of a driving, ambitious Craxi who parlayed a tenpercent parliamentary base into control of the process. Craxi outmanoeuvred his Catholic allies and ruthlessly tried to eliminate the small centrist parties (Republicans, Radicals, Social Democrats). But Craxi's major attack was always directed against the PCI. After years of humiliation at the hands of the Communists, the momentum shifted to the Socialists, as Enrico Berlinguer's efforts to reach power through alliance with the Catholics foundered after 1978. For the first time since 1945 the PCI lacked a firm strategy, while the Socialists moved relentlessly ahead. As Di Scala shows, Craxi in his single-minded drive for power threw out whatever remained of the party's old Marxist heritage and symbols. Leaders who remained too attached to socialist principles, such as Riccardo Lombardi, were driven into the political wilderness. In the process Craxi personalized but probably impoverished the party. Such were the pessimistic conclusions of Antonio Giolitti and Paolo Flores d'Arcais, whose judgments are contained in a last chapter symbolically entitled, «What remains of socialism?» Yet, in the end, Craxi's PSI seems no closer to the realization of the much discussed institutional reforms than it was in the late 1970s. And the solution to the old problem of electoral success commensurate with its key political role still escapes the new PSI, as it did the party of Nenni, De Martino and Mancini.

One need not agree with all of Di Scala's conclusions to appreciate this book. From these pages one understands better the activities of Morandi, Saragat, and Nenni and the frustrations of a party which could never reap the electoral rewards that its central role merited. Fundamental questions about the future of socialism are incisively presented. Indeed, it is a tribute to the author's scholarship and objectivity that, despite his ultimately favourable judgment of Craxi, the reader has ample material from which to draw quite different conclusions about the new PSI.

ALEXANDER DE GRAND MAISC  
North Carolina State University

E. LABROUSSE, *Come nascono le rivoluzioni*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1989, pp. LXXVII-384.

Among the many initiatives of 1989 to celebrate the bicentenary of the French Revolution, this volume containing numerous studies carried out by the French historian Ernst Labrousse in the long period between 1933 and 1976 stands out. The studies take various forms: from the central essay on the French Revolution, which is the longest (about 120 pages) and most important to the article published in memory of Georges Lefebvre in «Annales historiques de la Révolution française»; from the long introduction written by Labrousse for the *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française* by Jaurès to contributions for conferences such as the one given at the Xth International Congress of Historical

Sciences (Rome, 1955), in the course of which Labrousse launched a project for a large-scale enquiry into the European bourgeoisie. The material is therefore very heterogeneous, ranging from the methodological essay to the commemorative article, but overall compactness is provided by the central theme of revolutions and the extraordinary uniformity of style. The work is accompanied by a long introduction about Labrousse by Marina Cedronio, an introduction which for its wealth of references becomes a brief essay on French historiography of the Revolution.

In the first three chapters of the volume, *prezzi e redditi nella Francia del secolo XVIII* (1933), *La crisi dell'economia francese alla fine dell'Antico regime* (1944) and *La rivoluzione francese* (1959), Labrousse enquires into the economic origins of the Revolution, advancing the concept of «marked concomitances» and suggesting a periodisation for the movements of the main variables, particularly those of prices (long term, cyclical or ten-yearly, seasonal). With considerable methodological complexity accompanied by rich illustration, he shows the rise of the French bourgeoisie during the eighteenth century to the backdrop of several fundamental themes: the great demographic increase, caused mainly by the fall in infant mortality; the doubling of industrial production related to the limited extendability of cultivable land; the significant rise in the flows of gold and silver and consequently in the means of payment in circulation; the contrasting trends between rents, which were increasing, and wages which did not keep pace with the general rise in prices, leading to a worsening of the proletariat's standard of living. Describing the most important economic processes, Labrousse draws a fresco in which the «actors» of the Revolution appear with their characters and their motivations, one after the other. You can almost hear the rising of the revolutionary tide: the impoverished and unemployed proletariat, the peasants afflicted by the bad harvests of 1788-89 and in full anti-seigneurial ferment, the nobility and high clergy who vigorously try to defend and reaffirm their privileges, the urban bourgeoisie, increasingly more class conscious, defining itself and distinguishing itself from the other estates and seeking greater political and social recognition to match its increased economic role. In the midst of all this stands the King's attitude: with his irreparable attempt to escape the last thread tying the country to the monarchy is broken, opening the doors to the Revolution.

Labrousse's fresco is powerful, even if at times subject to overstatement, such as when he asserts that the victory of the Third Estate in the National Assembly (with the acceptance of universal suffrage) represented the definitive annihilation of the Ancien Regime. Some important observations are introduced by the author with excessive brevity and some ideas, such as his mythologising of the small peasant tenant farmer as a model of agrarian society, have been advanced by numerous writers, among them Sismondi.

Two essays in the volume of a methodological nature should be mentioned, even though throughout the work there are suggestions about sources and the treatment of statistical data: *Per una nuova storia della borghesia occidentale nei secoli XVIII e XIX (1700-1850)* (1955) and *Slanci e vicissitudini della crescita econ-*

*omica* (1976). The first was a paper given by Labrousse at the Xth International Conference of Historical Sciences, held in Rome in 1955, during which the author launched his project for a study of the European bourgeoisie to be carried out in collaboration with other historians. For this purpose Labrousse gave a survey of the available archival sources in France. First of all, came the various types of electoral archives, like the census rolls and the prefects' lists which can provide a useful inventory of the notables of each department, to which may be added information drawn from the electoral rolls of the commercial tribunals and other economic advisory organs. This mass of data, which the author defines as «endless but discontinuous» should then be compared with the information to be found in the fiscal archives: the roles of direct and stamp taxes provide a panorama of the economic hierarchies and in particular the poll tax registers help to delineate «the social composition of the population of the towns together with a scheme differentiating their material situations» (p. 253). Nevertheless, as Labrousse points out, it must be remembered that at that time everything was based on «appearances», that is, on a presumed evaluation of the taxpayer's income and therefore the archives can give a distorted picture of the real distribution of wealth. In one of his repeated warnings advocating caution with the sources, the author suggests rigorous cross-checks with the much more detailed notary archives, which are fundamental for enabling us to trace the evolution of the fortunes of the subjects under study through sale deeds, deaths and marriages. Labrousse concludes with the demographic archives, the most exploited, even if often in a superficial way, and with a very short discussion about company archives. However, he makes no mention of the archives of the credit institutions which can provide much valuable information about the middle classes' capital, investments and savings, and this reveals, perhaps, a small lacuna in his brief essay on sources (fewer than 30 pages).

In the essay on economic growth, Labrousse describes the instruments used for «a synthesis of the growth realised in the century in which the industrial era occurred — vigorous and impressive growth which has no comparison in other periods — placing it, however, within the context of everyday life» (p. 307). Always with his eye on the social aspects of growth, he examines demographic trends, models for price trends, comparisons of data about money circulation and credit. Everything is placed within a scheme of periodisation incorporating the different types of crises (from the crisis in staples to industrial crises) and their consequences.

In conclusion we shall consider the short chapter (just under 20 pages) which gives the title to the whole volume: 1848-1830-1789: *come nascono le rivoluzioni*, presented at a conference for the centenary of the 1848 revolution. The author proceeds to identify the common ingredients of the explosive mixture which caused the outbreak of the three fundamental revolutions in French history: all three are spontaneous mass revolutions since they are largely determined by «the economic phenomenon» which Labrousse considers a mass phenomenon *par excellence*. In fact, in all three cases, the primary factor at the origin of the explosion was economic tension, induced by various but similar ele-

ments: the cereal and potato crisis was followed by these conditions: in 1848, greater economic complexity is involved (to the traditional type of crisis is added the crisis in heavy industry) leading to greater differentiation of the social structure. If in 1789 and in 1830 the protagonist is the middle class, in 1848 the proletariat appears forcefully on the scene, no longer dispersed in cottage industry but united by the factory, while the middle class is internally divided.

In Labrousse's description, the revolution breaks out in a world which is in economic turmoil, even though it is emerging from the more acute phases of the crisis, and it is this which, on the one hand, intensifies the social inequalities and on the other hand focuses social discontent. The opposition appears compact before a weakened government which is blamed for everything and which is compromised by an inevitable crisis in state finances. Socio-economic crisis, financial crisis and political crisis are the fundamental elements which Labrousse integrates with «an incredible quantity of contingent elements, not disregarding pure chance» (p. 231). Yet all these forces together would not have been enough to spark the revolution if they had not been met with a resistance factor which acted as detonator, causing the revolutionary explosion.

Stressing in 1948 (the year the article was written) the use for research of instruments provided by such disciplines as sociology and social psychology — which today we may take for granted — showed the great openmindedness of Labrousse, who asserted: «I only recognise positive historiography, that is, historiography that never tires of turning over all problems, of exploring them one by one in as much depth as possible, always considering the surface aspects together with those lying underneath» (p. 236).

I conclude by quoting a short, intelligent and generous lesson which emerges from the words of Ernst Labrousse: «in a work it is well to look for what is there and not for what the author has intentionally left out».

DANIELA FELISINI

CNR Institute on the South Italian Economy, Naples.

J. MARINO, *Pastoral Economics in the Kingdom of Naples*, Baltimore-London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1988, pp. XII-381.

Fruit of some twenty years of research on the «Dogana della mena delle pecore» (Sheep Customs House) of Foggia — the equivalent of the Spanish Mesta — John Marino's book is an extremely rich work both for the quantity of information and for the complexity of analysis. The *Dogana*, which regulated the pastoral economy of a vast inland area roughly comprising the Abruzzi, Molise and the palins of the Tavoliere where the herds stayed during the winter, is a centuries-old institution and a constant presence which is by no means second-

ary in the history of the Mezzogiorno in the modern era; John Marino uses it as an acid test in his analysis of the relations between state, economy and society from the XVth to the XVIIIth centuries. His basic thesis is that in the events involving the *Dogana*, the state — greatly conditioned by fiscal interests — assumed a role of mediation between the different economic actors implicated, thereby allaying the conflicts but also obstructing any dynamic of change and development.

The research is developed through five fields of enquiry which the author indicates as: human geography, social structure, economic policy, market and ideology. The first part of the book is dedicated to «works and days», that is, to the mechanisms of the geo-economic system regulated by the *Dogana*, whose dynamics depend on both exogenous and endogenous factors. The variables at stake are the climate, animal demography (for which Marino has coined the term «sheepography») and, of course, the market and the demand for livestock products. The distribution of the land between crop farming and sheep rearing and the responses to market stimuli are influenced by internal factors within the *Dogana*, by administrative variables like methods for taxing pastures, which effect economic advantages.

In the three central chapters, John Marino analyses with great perspicacity the interests, behaviour and interaction of the subjects involved in the pastoral economy of the Tavoliere — breeders, merchants, the state. The breeders registered with the *Dogana*, the «locati», from a well-stratified group within it, despite the egalitarianism which the publicists of the period attributed to the idealised society of shepherds. The inequalities in the distribution of wealth increase in times of crisis (greater disparity is in fact noticeable in the long crisis of the seventeenth century). The social divisions within the group of the *locati*, which depend on both the size of the flock and on the prestige and overall wealth of the family owning it, are reflected in the institutions of self government belonging to each group: a parliament and a governing body composed of «sindaci». A tendency to hegemony of medium-sized breeders can be observed at the apex of the organisation. The state intervenes with a moderate policy favouring the richest who are given the best pastures, while guaranteeing the economic survival of the large number of medium and small operators.

The interlocutor of this community of breeders is the state, which in the *Dogana* has one of the most important sources of revenue. In fact, the complex system of the *Dogana* is based on state management of the distribution of land to the shepherds in return for rent or a «fida, with the state paying a fixed sum to the dispossessed owners. Considerable profit is involved; moreover, the state is able to play upon the method of imposition, choosing between a fixed «fida» and a system of free bargaining among the competitors, which is more advantageous in the phases of expansion. Placing the stress on the corruption of Cus-

toms administrators, which caused a diminution in state profits (used, above all for ceremonial and military expenditure), John Marino draws attention to the motivations and even the economic rationality of bad administration and of practices like the sale of offices.

The merchants are the third subject involved in the Tavoliere's pastoral economy. The buyers have stronger bargaining power than the sellers, who depend on the former's credit in a ratio which is inversely proportional to their wealth. Marino criticises the tendency to overestimate foreign demand; significant — and less subject to oscillation — is internal demand for wool. The applicability of a model of colonial economy to the Kingdom of Naples thus loses its force. The pastoral system of the Tavoliere, moreover, is an established capitalistic phenomenon in the context of the *Ancien Regime*. Despite this, however, the profits are not enjoyed locally but rather they are appropriated by absentee landowners, by the state and by the merchants.

In this way, Marino depicts all the contrasting interests, painting a picture of many and powerful forces, compounded by the state's role of mediation. Far from being an actor *super partes*, the state is rather an economic subject and directly interested in the *Dogana's* destinies. Moreover it could count on the ideological apparatus provided by an extensive Arcadian literary tradition which justified its mediation policy as impartial «good government» and as paternal care which ensured equity among subjects.

As is well illustrated in the final part of the book through an examination of seventeenth and eighteenth century literature, the fortunes of the much celebrated system of the *Dogana* changed with the changing economy. Eighteenth-century expansion and the increase in demand for corn on the international market upset the centuries-long equilibrium between agriculture and stock-rearing. The Illuminists declare themselves overtly in favour of a more intensive exploitation of the Tavoliere's lands. If French rule decreed the end of the *Dogana*, the system of transhumance was to continue for some time to come, and this was a sign of the persistent difficulties the Mezzogiorno had in finding an internal autonomous drive for development.

The events of the *Dogana* and the Tavoliere give Marino the opportunity to pose once more the great interrogative about the southern question and its roots in the *Ancien Regime* in a complex analytical picture. We may attempt to distinguish different levels of analysis which are not always in harmony with one another. In the first place, Marino carries out a careful reconstruction of the system of agriculture and sheep farming regulated by the *Dogana* in its economic, sociological, juridico-institutional aspects, rather than from the stance of *histoire totale*. Here he brilliantly confutes the simplistic notions of many historiographic theses, both old and new; for example, the *topos* of Spanish misgovernment which anachronistically laments the absence of a culture of economic

growth and which above all transforms political value judgements into criticism of a more dubious economic irrationality; or again, the mechanical application to the Mezzogiorno of schemes — like that of its colonial condition — which are changed by the economy and the sociology of development, whose instruments the author himself uses in various parts of his work.

A second level of analysis and greater abstraction are reached in the reflection on the role of the state which mediates market impulses by influencing the allocation of land between agriculture and stock-raising and the benefits enjoyed by the economic actors, favouring stasis more than development. This is the theoretical centre of the study and is extremely interesting in that it requires a more robust and more complex theory of the state as mediator on a comparative level, as well as more sophisticated conceptual instruments.

Alongside this is another extremely thought-provoking thesis which is outlined in the introduction and is more fully developed in the conclusions: that of the economic and anthropological specificity of the Mezzogiorno, where, as in *The Leopard*, everything changes in order not to change and where the permanent element of conflict (the time-worn one between farmers and shepherds) is played out with fatalism and through the system of mediation, compromise and patronage. It would seem that such reflections are not a synthesis of the study; rather they form an hypothesis for reinterpreting the history of the Mezzogiorno. Nevertheless, there appears to be disproportion between the punctual results of the enquiry and the final generalisations which alongside an anthropological explanation, insufficiently backed up by a reading of data centred on other variables, advances only a linguistical and rhetorical solution to the issues of the southern question through oxymoron and paradox («enlightenment without reform, unity without integration, industrialisation without development»). Thus there appears to be an imperfect fusion between data and theory; in particular, the anthropological factor stands on its own and risks becoming a residual explanation for the phenonema under study.

Much more tangible are the concept of southern specificity and the original relationship between permanence and change in the body of the enquiry. Through them Marino gives a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the modern Mezzogiorno, depicting a very rich and varied picture, exemplary for its precision of detail.

COSTANZA D'ELIA

CNR Institute on the South Italian Economy, Naples

W.E. Mosse *The German-Jewish economic élite; 1820-1935. A Sociocultural Profile.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, XI, p. 369

What constitutes an élite? Is it noble title, possession of an estate, rank in the officer corps, or membership in a professional organization like the bureaucracy? For the Jews of Central Europe it was none of the above. Their emancipation from the ghetto during the Napoleonic era provided them with opportunities but continued to deny them complete social acceptance and integration. Since traditional occupations remained habitually closed to them, the Jews often found advancement possible in new roles created by industrial development, large-scale retail trade, science, and communications.

Professor W.E. Mosse, the author of an earlier study on the Jewish élite's role in the German economy between 1882 and 1935, has now returned to this subject by drawing a socio-cultural profile of this select group. Its numbers are difficult to establish — one source used by Mosse mentions 60 families — but the basis of its exclusiveness is very clear: the accumulation of great wealth which conferred on its owners a prominence which even prejudice could not deny. The varying cycles of this prejudice and the changes in its make-up very much determined the course of German-Jewish relations in the nineteenth century.

In pre-1848 Berlin a tiny circle of Jewish salons (among which the descendants of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn predominated) offered a point of intellectual contact between Jew and Gentile. Admittedly, a number of this first generation of secularized Jews had chosen to convert to Christianity or had their children baptized. Between the 1850's and late 1870's — the years of Prussian liberalism, industrial development, and German unification — acceptance of Jews as Germans continued to make some progress, provided Jews were prepared to abandon their orthodox ways or their religion altogether. The economic collapse of the 1870's reversed this trend at the same time that religious anti-semitism was increasingly replaced by the racial variety.

The major share of this study is devoted to personal relations and social contacts: among Jews themselves, between Jews and Gentiles in daily life, in marriage patterns, and in public roles. The focus is on Germany's «golden years» — the Empire of the pre-1914 period. According to the author, «the touchstone of both the intra-Jewish and inter-ethnic relationship of the Jewish economic élite is to be found largely in its marriage pattern». (p. 161) But the picture that emerges is hardly a positive one. Male members of the Jewish élite found the availability of Gentile marriage partners among the nobility or *haute bourgeoisie* to be virtually nil. The chance for intermarriage by Jewish heiresses, always assuming conversion, was slightly better. Kinship ties, social networks, and Jewish social circles offered the best chance for finding a suitable partner, thereby ensuring continued endogamy.

In the public sector, the role of the Jewish economic élite remained similarly restricted. Its economic expertise was sought in financial matters, and it became the leading spokesman for the commercial interests. But the competitive claims of agriculture and heavy industry, where Jews played no role at all, retained their primacy with the political authorities. In the words of Professor Mosse: «though economic influence made some of them "public figures" almost in spite of themselves, their political importance never matched their economic weight». (p. 217)

This judgment is especially confirmed by the relationship between William II and such individuals as James Simon, Albert Ballin, or Walther Rathenau. Away from the Imperial court the Emperor might enjoy the company of these Jewish grandees, invite them to his table, or share a common interest in archeology or maritime activities. But when his Jewish company tried to extract political or social advantages from this relationship, they found the gates locked and their counsel spurned. Before World War I no member of this élite gained political prominence, and the only one who did after 1914, Walther Rathenau, eventually paid for it with his life.

Since Professor Mosse has chosen to delineate the profile of a very small group he is reduced to anecdotal data and geographical or auto-biographical sources. He is the first to admit that these are less than perfect, but the ravages of the Holocaust and war have destroyed much material. Despite these limitations, he has managed to convey the «limits of the possible or the attainable» for Jews in Imperial Germany. No professing Jew could ever hope to obtain an officer's commission, a tenured professorship, or an appointment in the civil service. And if the members of the Jewish economic élite found the path to full acceptance closed to them, how much harder must it have seemed to those Jews who lacked their economic resources.

ERNST L. PRESSEISEN  
Temple University