
REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Y. M. BERCÉ (ed.), *History of Peasant Revolts. The Social Origins of Rebellion in Early Modern France*, Cambridge, Polity Press 1990, pp. X-359.

The republication in English of Yves-Marie Bercé's classic work on the *Croquants* almost twenty years after completion of the research in 1972 is extremely welcome. At a time when historians - especially Anglo-Saxon historians (Jack Goldstone, for example) - are renewing their interest in revolts and revolutions with new perspectives, this edition invites us to avoid repeating questions which have already been posed and to which extensive and exhaustive answers have already been given. At the same time the book is a measure of how much ground has been covered since its original publication and highlights the need for historians today to pose very different types of question in their treatment of such a complex subject. Bercé's book is a product of the renowned French school founded by Marc Bloch and Georges Lefebvre which has brought the history of the silent masses to the foreground, bestowing upon them dignity and a role in the formation of modern society. It examines the wave of peasant revolts in south-west France from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century.

In contrast to other parts of southern France, the south-west was subject to a large number of small and big revolts. The first one broke out in the Guyenne where villages in several provinces (like Angoumois and Saintoge) rebelled against the salt tax in 1548. The revolt lasted from May to September and involved the participation of tens of thousands of peasants who formed an authentic army; they elected their own leaders, killed the tax collectors and drew up petitions to send to the King. The following year their demands were satisfied and the whole of south-west France was exempted from payment of the salt tax.

Yet it was only at the end of the Wars of Religion, between 1593 and 1595, during the movement of the so-called *Tard Avisès* in Limousin and at Périgord (which forms the subject of the second chapter in Bercé's book) that the name of *Croquants* appeared for the first time. Subsequently there were revolts at

Quercy in 1624 and in the Guyenne in 1635, but the most serious revolt — the one which more than any other had a distinctly military characteristic — was the revolt which broke out at Périgord in 1637, which is fully examined by the author in the third chapter. In 1638 there were revolts in Gascony, while in 1643 the peasants of the Rouergue rebelled, but, in the period stretching from the Fronde to the beginning of the eighteenth century, armed peasant rebellion was much less organised and was far less widespread. The last big armed revolt took place at Quercy in 1707.

Bercè picks out four typologies of revolt which are analysed in the fourth chapter. These are: revolts against rises in bread prices, those against the billeting of soldiers, revolts against the collection of taxes and those against the land tax. Each typology greatly differed in form and procedure: the protests against high prices began in the markets and in the streets; those against the billeting of troops took place alongside the town walls while riots against tax collectors broke out in the tax offices. It was the protest against tax collectors, however, which constituted the main reason for rebellion in the sixteenth and seventeenth century: revolt was a strategy organised in exceptional circumstances to protect the community against fiscal aggression. A few years later Charles Tilly confirmed this characteristic of peasant revolt in France during the seventeenth century; collective protest in that period was mainly directed against taxes and tax collectors and it was only in the subsequent century that the target of rebellion shifted, when the object of revolt became the free trade in cereals, especially corn. Later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, social dissension was mainly transmuted into labour conflict and took on a national as opposed to a local dimension.

The history of the major revolts in France reflect the main phases of the country's military history: the Italian wars, the civil wars and the interminable Thirty Years' War all placed an enormous strain on the country's finances which could only be supported by increasing the fiscal burden. The building of the modern French state was accomplished through the enforcement of vigorous fiscal policies: in order to pay for military expenditure the state needed to extend its control over the provinces. The latter especially felt the onus of the wine tax, the salt tax and the tax on the authentication of documents which made it more difficult to bring appeals before the courts.

The dynamic of events was the same in each revolt. Charles Tilly describes it as *le répertoire*, a repertoire, that is, consisting of collective actions which each community possessed and acted out as if it were a kind of *commedia dell'arte*. The backdrop to action was the inn, where the peasants met to discuss arrangements and planned the protest which usually took place on Sundays or on a holiday. The church bell gave the signal for action: the peasants gathered from the surrounding villages, often covering very great distances, elected their captains and marched on towards the neighbouring town, demanding that the local authorities send away the tax collectors; at the same time they drew up a petition to present to the King or governor of the province. After their action had been completed the popular

army disbanded and the peasants returned to the fields for the harvest (which dictated the time of revolt), appeased by the promise of a royal commission.

Thus the revolts were not only against taxes or the state: they were also against towns which represented the intrusion of the state and the modern world into the countryside. The solidarity of the community, which the author describes so vividly in the first chapter, was very evident during the revolt as well, although certain groups had a predominant role. While women were the principal protagonists of the riots against price rises — since they were responsible for feeding the family — the innkeeper was often the leader of the rebels in the tax revolt: victim of fiscal oppression through the wine tax, the innkeeper was an ideal spokesman for the whole community. The main participants of the revolt, however, were peasants and small landowners, who were often joined and protected by members of the local nobility.

This theme of solidarity and unanimity, which is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Bercé's work, has been the object of much debate and contention in subsequent studies. The tendency to view the community as a compact and uniform entity was not only shared by French historians, but also by several Italian scholars with "leftist" leanings like Rosario Villari, Pasquale Villani and Aurelio Lepre, who in their writings on the *Mezzogiorno* in roughly the same period, sought to establish the existence of a peasant movement which struggled unanimously to defend its traditional rights and the status quo in southern Italy, almost as a *pendant* to the workers' movement in the north. Nonetheless, more recent studies of micro-history — particularly those by Giovanni Levi and Osvaldo Raggio — have shown that in practice conflict and solidarity were so closely intertwined that it is difficult to define any precise pattern. The peasant communities of the seventeenth century underwent various processes of disaggregation and reaggregation: while the idyllic picture of a united and tension-free society distorts reality, cultural homogeneity and the capacity for united action were especially evident in times of open conflict with the ruling classes and external forces.

Although revolts stemmed from deep-seated economic and institutional changes (the growth of the modern state and a heavier fiscal regime), they were also cultural events. In these areas, popular protest was legitimated by a long revolutionary tradition and consequently attitudes towards taxation varied not so much according to specific impositions but according to the community's idea of what was lawful and rightful; the crucial factor here is the violation of what was considered "right", or that which Barrington Moore Jr. has defined as an "implicit social contract", an informal but widely-accepted convention which was at the origin of all social conflict, even its most violent manifestations. Various constraints existed which restricted the actions of rulers, on the one hand, and subjects — made up of both dominant groups and subordinate classes — on the other. At the same time ruler and subject were bound to each other by reciprocal obligations.

Four myths underlay collective action and fuelled the tradition of revolt: those regarding the king, the end of taxation, imaginary taxes and tax collectors.

According to the first, the king was cheated and robbed by his ministers who plundered the royal coffers as much as they pillaged from the people. The second myth regarded the conviction that taxes were an exceptional and temporary measure and that once they had served their purpose, a new era without taxes would set in. Hostility towards tax collectors and taxes, on the other hand, gave rise to wild rumours about presumed taxes on births, marriages and deaths. The aim of revolt therefore was to defend the established order and not to subvert it; revolts stemmed not from expectations about the future but from memories of a golden past.

Edward P. Thompson has also stressed the conservative and basically anti-innovatory nature of the peasants' social struggle. Yet, this thesis — like the one on solidarity and unanimity — has also come under criticism by historians studying peasant communities. According to Giovanni Levi, for example, these interpretations were marked by the principal intent of the authors to take issue with the school they claimed to oppose, that is, with the belief that economic growth could only be achieved in a world totally dominated by capitalism. On the contrary, Levi stresses the existence of strategies within the community aimed to defend the latter from uncertainties arising from the unpredictable nature of the agrarian cycle and the difficulties in social and political control. The intention was not to confront nature and society incurring as few risks as possible but rather to seek to improve the predictability of events, to free oneself from the fatality of a world made up of isolated families and individuals in order to adopt strategies in which relationships could provide relative security in a permanent way and could engender social and economic growth.

Bercé's book is not only a classic study of rebellion; it is also a study on the relationship between macro and micro phenomena, an enquiry into the interaction between major decisions of political economy and the lives of the subaltern classes, an analysis of the influence exercised by the remote and obscure periphery on the decisions of the centre. On the one hand it is a study of peasant communities — on their dynamics, principal protagonists and myths; on the other hand it is a reflection on the vital role that tradition has played in history as a basis for legitimising human action.

GABRIELLA CORONA

CNR Research Institute for the
South Italian Economy, Naples.

P. C. EMMER-M. MORNER(eds.), *European Expansion and Migration. Essays on the Intercontinental Migration from Africa, Asia and Europe*, New York-Oxford, Berg, 1992, pp. VIII-312.

Given the volume and wealth of studies on migration, there is a need for the

periodic publication of miscellaneous works which provide a general summary of all the work carried out on this subject by the various national schools.

Like the volumes edited by W. McNeill and R. S. Adams (*Human Migration: Patterns and Policies*, 1978) and by I. Glazier and L. De Rosa (*Migration Across Time and Nations*, 1986), this collection of essays edited by P. C. Emmer and M. Morner responds to the need for an updated appraisal and provides a complete overview of the history of intercontinental migration and recent methodological approaches to this phenomenon, with special focus on comparative studies.

The issues addressed in the book are discussed by the editors in the introduction and in the conclusion that bring together comments on a meeting in which several of the authors of the volume participated. Apart from the obvious specificity of the subject, what emerges are the great differences in methodological approach and in the definition of the phases and characteristics of intercontinental migration in the modern and contemporary eras. Indeed, there are very few points where the various interpretations seem to converge; we shall give a brief summary of such points here.

Before 1800, apart from the forced migration of about six million Africans, around two to three million Europeans emigrated to America and a similar number were employed in the armies, navies and merchant fleets which made possible the military and commercial conquest of the new world. Emigration to the colonies gave a boost to economic development in the countries of origin and kept down population pressure, contributing to the initial phases of the industrial revolution.

The role of overseas migration as a safety valve for population surplus became predominant at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is estimated that by the 1950s 61 million Europeans had emigrated; in this way economic growth was not absorbed by rises in the population. After the second World War, the number of repatriations has gradually compensated for the number of departing migrants and some European countries have benefited from the immigration of cheap labour from the ex-colonies.

Overall, there is general agreement that European emigration has prevailed over that of other continents; secondly, that African, American and Aboriginal populations have benefited much less from migration and have paid higher economic, demographic, cultural and human costs.

Leaving aside these general points of consensus, by highlighting different aspects of migration, the essays collected in this book dispense with the traditional analytical approach to emigration based on push-pull factors. On the one hand, such an approach ignores the effects of migratory chains, which can carry on stimulating emigration even when its original causes have ceased to exist. On the other hand it underestimates the role of transport which developed mainly in conjunction with trade and not necessarily in response to the needs of migration: the existence of certain conditions favouring emigration might not have been sufficient by themselves if there had been no adequate means of communication.

The importance of the development of transoceanic links in the intense migratory movement from Iceland in the period 1873-1905 is stressed by H. Kjartanson, while W.J. Smyth in his essay on Ireland shows that the monopoly

enjoyed by the large shipping companies had a considerable influence on the choice of destination. In the same essay, Smyth carefully analyses the effects of Irish emigration on the population structure in the regions of origin.

In his study of the Swedish case, L. Ljungmark emphasises the role promotion campaigns in the United States had in the growth of Scandinavian emigration. These campaigns were organised by several states through a wide network of agents and using a wealth of means, especially by companies recruiting workers for railway construction, a sector in which Scandinavian workers were particularly sought after.

L. De Rosa's essay on Italian emigration and V. Magalhaes Godinho's study on Portugal both carefully reconstruct the distribution of emigrants according to the area of origin which reflected the unequal economic situation within each country. They also emphasise the role remittances had in providing capital in the mother country. In the case of Italy, the author stresses the importance of state intervention and the role of the main national banks in protecting emigrants' savings and in facilitating their transfer to Italy.

Still within the context of economic variables and emigration, K.J. Bade examines the relationship between German migration on the one hand and 1) trends in real wages in Germany, 2) economic cycles in the United States. Among the main features of German migratory movements Bade also stresses the importance of individual as opposed to collective initiative, especially after 1865, as well as the connection and interaction between internal and external migration.

M. Morner's essay on Latin American countries — in particular Argentina and Chile — examines voluntary emigration in the American sub-continent and how it has changed in the course of modern and contemporary history, including the massive migration from Europe in the last century.

The differences between British migration within the British Empire and Portuguese and Spanish emigration to Latin America are discussed by P.J. Marshall in his essay on emigration to India in the nineteenth century. In particular the author stresses the temporary nature of such migration, the scarce relations with the indigenous population and the numerical superiority of the military community compared to civilians.

Also related to the policy of British colonial expansion is an essay on emigration from western Africa. The author, W.G. Clarence-Smith, argues that the slave trade practised by British companies was carried on at least until 1850, despite the Abolition of Slavery Act passed by Parliament in 1807, and only completely disappeared just before the first world war. Therefore emigration from western Africa in the nineteenth century cannot really be considered voluntary. This is also shown by the fact that, since emigrants came from scarcely populated areas with abundant land and little capital, it is reasonable to assume that voluntary migration would have been temporary with the aim to obtain high wages abroad and the capital in order to return home at some future date, whereas such emigration was, in fact, permanent.

One of the destinations of west African migration was the Caribbean, the subject of an essay by P.C. Emmer who examines mainly Chinese and Indian emigration to this region in the period from 1837 to 1917. The study of this

movement, which was partly based on the constant need to replace workers on the plantations in view of the high mortality rate and was partly dependent on internal mobility within the British Empire — particularly as far as the arrival of Indians in the British Caribbean is concerned — is of great interest from the point of view of racial integration across three continents.

In this final essay, given the special nature of emigration, the focus is on the country of destination. However, generally speaking, the authors of the various contributions to the present volume look at migration mainly from the point of view of the emigrant's home country and much less attention is paid to issues more directly related to the countries of destination, such as population changes stemming from the establishment of immigrant colonies, the relationship between emigration and investment trends in the country of destination and, more generally, the question of cultural integration.

GAETANO SABATINI
University of Aquila

E. KERRIDGE (ed.), *The Common Fields of England*, Manchester & New York, Manchester University Press, 1992, pp.

In what way did the relationship between open and enclosed fields and common lands and private property influence the creation of agrarian systems in the mediaeval period and in what way did they contribute to shaping the main lines along which modern western economies developed? Eric Kerridge tries to answer these questions in his book which analyses the origins, characteristics and historical role of the common fields of England. The author's aim is to show the early appearance of common fields in England compared to other countries in western Europe: whereas in England there is evidence of the temporary existence of common fields as early as the eighth century and of their permanent existence in the tenth, they first appeared in the Low Countries, the Lower Rhineland and in parts of the Paris basin in the thirteenth century, while in northern France and in the German plains the expansion of common fields occurred only at the beginning of the modern era.

Kerridge does not, however, wish merely to emphasise England's primacy in relation to other European countries, but shows that such a fact had a crucial role in the process of England's development. Inventors of an agricultural system in which cereal-growing was heavily integrated with animal husbandry and depended on the permanent cultivation of common fields, the English managed to export large quantities of raw and finished wool at a very early period, a factor which was to form the basis of their remarkable wealth.

Concerned mainly with identifying the preconditions of capitalism and industrialisation, economic historians have nearly always analysed the subject from

a particular viewpoint; that is to say, on the basis of what Robert Allen has defined recently as "Agrarian Fundamentalism." Drawing from the works and ideas of Young and Marx, historians have analysed the issue of common lands within the context of the process of enclosure which began at the beginning of the sixteenth century and reached its height in the eighteenth century, leading to the creation of farms that were highly productive and economically rational. Seen as an obstacle to development and as an element of backwardness, detailed analyses of the characteristics and functioning of common fields have been largely carried out within the context of institutional history — with the obvious exception of Slicher Van Bath — which has tended to emphasise more the juridic nature of the problem than its economic significance. Robert Allen's thesis is quite exceptional in this respect: he considers the peasant economy largely responsible for the growth of agricultural productivity, at least between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.

While the first studies focused on economic development, the second were primarily influenced by the need to remove the last vestiges of the old systems of land ownership. For example, as far as Southern Italy is concerned, the question of common lands was widely treated in historico-juridic literature of the early twentieth century and arose out of the more general political situation of the 1920s when the issue was hotly debated, practically for the last time. In this phase, concern was mainly with defining the juridic origins, characteristics and basis of the common lands. Vincenzo Lauria, Manfredi Palumbo, Romualdo Trifone, to quote but a few of the principal proponents of this debate, focused their attention on the factors responsible for the breakdown of the feudal system with the purpose of accelerating the process of disintegration and clearing the ground for a proper functioning of government institutions.

A common field was a portion of land subject to common grazing rights except when it was cultivated and enclosed in order to prevent the entrance of stray animals. The peculiar feature of common fields, that which distinguished them from private property, lay exclusively in the existence of common rights. In the first chapter, which brings to mind the studies by Emilio Sereni on agrarian systems and those by Marc Bloch on the nature of French rural history, the countryside is examined with the aim to pick out the basic structural features of the common fields and to distinguish them from private property and enclosed fields. Grass balks separated private property from common fields and marked off individual common fields. The plots belonging to various occupants in the common fields were usually separated from one another by ridges locally known as "linches", "landshares", "meres", "acre rains" and so-forth and were often distinguished from the other balks with the adjectives "narrow" or "foot". These boundaries usually separated neighbouring properties. In the common fields they were essentially boundary balks. Yet these were not the only means of creating a boundary, for, on wetter soil, marshes and ditches were also used for this purpose. When the common fields were given over to private ownership, balks were often left temporarily before permanent walls were erected. The peasants at Fovant, for example, had to build enclosures for the cornfields before St. Martin's, for the fallow field before 25th March and for the barley fields before

3 May. In every season and in every locality there were enclosures to protect peas, beans, cultivated land and hay, accordingly.

"Gedelland" (deal-land), as the common fields were called in old documents, was not land to be divided up but rather land that had been occupied and distributed in portions. In this concept there was no implication of succession. "Gedal" meant division or occupation and "gedelland" signified occupied land or land that had been occupied. While it is true that the existence of common tillage systems, deforestation and population increase were all factors which accompanied the emergence of common fields, they were by no means the main cause for such a development. As the author explains in the second chapter, common fields arose out of the occupation and the division of land into very small portions and these were distributed in such a way as to guarantee their dispersion in the field as opposed to their concentration. At the same time, small flocks and herds were formed and were to be administered exclusively using common rights. The occupation of common fields was decided on by informal agreements among the occupants of adjacent land and was usually unregistered.

In the sixth chapter, common fields and severalty are compared. According to the author the roles and the effects of the two systems varied according to the purposes they were intended to serve: private property was better and more rational if the goal was to maximise profits, while common fields were more suited to subsistence. The former benefited capitalist farmers and landowners while the latter benefited peasant families and part-time farming.

In the third chapter, the author provides a detailed map of the distribution of field courses and the different methods of cultivation and rotation. In Wales, the Blackmoors, the North-western and the North-eastern Lowlands, the West, the North and the Peak Forest, for example, permanent common fields were extremely small, while temporary ones were bigger. Temporary common fields were more common in both the North and in Wales. In parts of Wales, Scotland and Ireland, common fields were made up of infields and outfields. Permanent common arable land was to be found on the coastal plains of the Moray Firth, Pale, Ulster and in other parts of Ireland, in Pembrokeshire, Gower, Lakam and Kidwelly.

Yet although there were notable differences in methods of cultivation and rotation, the system of common fields presented a certain uniformity throughout the country as a whole, compared to the great differences within the Italian peninsula, for example. The *participanze* in Emilia, the *comunanze* in communal Italy, the common fields on the latifundium in central and southern Italy and the Sardinian *remmu* which were all subject to common rights, differed from each other enormously as far as their origins and their features were concerned. Based on centralised exploitation, the *comunanze* in the Veronese *compagnea*, in the towns of Umbro-Latium like Todi and Orvieto and in the coastal towns which set aside marginal land for animal husbandry, fishing and wood-gathering, all responded primarily to the financial needs of the dominant town and its food requirements. An exceptional case was that of the *participanza* which was based largely on leasehold contracts with a group of farmers who agreed to rehabilitate a large portion of land in need of continual and thorough reclamation. The commons in

central and southern Italy, which were based on the exercise of various common rights, were much more tied to the feudal system from an institutional point of view and to transhumant grazing from an economic point of view. Lastly, the Sardinian *remmu* was not only destined to common use but was periodically divided up for improvement through plant and tree growing.

The common meadow grew alongside the common tillage land and the former was usually occupied by men in proportion to the amount of common arable land. Common fields and common folds were inseparable because, as the author explains in the fourth chapter, in order to cultivate the arable part of the land, small farmers needed to gather their sheep in a common flock for manuring. The first important change in the equilibrium between field-courses and fold-courses occurred in the second half of the sixteenth century when the price of wool shot up unexpectedly. The big landowners became big sheep-farmers and sheep invaded the field courses making it impossible to cultivate them. This gave rise to a vicious circle: fold-courses hindered the progress of field-courses but the latter were necessary since sheep depended on cereal-growing for their nourishment. This vicious circle was broken only through technical innovation and the introduction of rape-growing. Rape was much more nourishing than the summer fallow (summerleys) and the corn which fell after the harvest (shacks), and its introduction led the way to the closure and disappearance of field courses and common rights.

Common fields were normally included as part of the town's property and they were subject to by-laws issued by the local government. These by-laws were presented in baronial courts and if they received the lord's assent they were ratified, enacted and, at least in the late mediaeval period and the early modern era, registered in the court registers. The by-laws were displayed in churches and publicly announced by the town crier. They contained obligations and prohibitions aimed at safeguarding the proper functioning of the common fields: they protected them from pillage and from pests such as crows, sparrows, moles and other parasitical insects; they forbade the sale of straw and manure; they obliged users to get rid of weeds and to construct ditches and drains, ponds and hedges.

This book is extremely valuable on account of the wealth of information and its general approach which aims to highlight the role common fields had in England's economic development, casting light on the mechanisms that characterised this particular kind of agrarian system. In treading on interdisciplinary ground where "environmental archaeology" links up with economic history and where the history of the agricultural landscape overlaps with the history of agriculture, the author re-establishes the role of the silent masses in the slow process of nation-making and economic growth, in the best tradition of European rural history.

GABRIELLA CORONA
CNR Research Institute for the
South Italian Economy, Naples.

A. L. L. OPEZ MARTINEZ *La economía de las ordenes religiosas en el antiguo régimen*, Seville, Deputation Provincial de Sevilla, pp. 376.

This valuable and detailed study by Antonio Luis Lopez Martinez on the economy of the religious orders shows just how much ground still needs to be covered by scholars on this subject. Despite the extant rich and complex documentation scattered in archives throughout Europe, this is an area which has yet to be fully explored and examined. The issue is far from being insignificant. The economic role of the religious orders in the Old Continent is well known: during the Old Regime, the Church, together with the nobility, enjoyed the privilege of fiscal exemption and over the centuries the Church's estate continued to grow through a constant and continuous flow of alms and property donations.

It is not that historians have completely neglected the subject up till now but rather that they have tended to provide ideas and suggestions for further research instead of exhaustive studies backed up by appropriate archival research. In his introduction, the author notes that there is a basic lack of rigorous, well-documented studies while there is a host of opinions and judgments about the subject, mostly arising from ideological bias and preconceptions rather than from serious, empirical investigation. The debate, which has often been heated and intense, seems to have been far too influenced and, indeed, distorted by the attacks European intellectuals launched against ecclesiastical property, especially during the Enlightenment. Naturally the opinions expressed in the juridical writings of the period have their own historical relevance, but they are not the only source on which to base studies and interpretations regarding monastic estates, considering the existence of a large number of archive sources. We are still awaiting a general survey of monastic settlements in Europe which will throw light on the main periods of growth of convents and monasteries, their capacity to expand and the different methods of management used in the administration of monastic estates.

The patient and steadfast work of Antonio Luis Lopez Martinez is notable in this respect. Setting aside clichés and anachronistic theories and interpretations and working principally in the archives, he has identified and demonstrated the type of settlement, the income and the administrative methods of the religious orders over a sufficiently vast and homogeneous territory and over a wide time span and has provided us with a convincing general picture, making a valuable contribution to research on this very important and controversial subject. By not restricting his field of enquiry to only one religious congregation or to one religious house, as several scholars have done recently in mainly monographic studies, and by extending his research to all the religious orders in the Kingdom of Seville, Lopez Martinez has been able to establish the quantity and quality of monastic estates, the capacity for growth and the various economic strategies adopted. Although the documentary sources are not always sufficiently exhaustive, the author has cleverly exploited all the material at his disposal in order to make a coherent historical reconstruction which has been enriched by the

inclusion of numerous diagrams and tables in illustration of the somewhat complex archival data. The result is a very complete and fertile study which offers many ideas and suggestions for analogous research in other parts of Europe.

From 1248, the year in which the first convent was founded in the Seville area, to 1768 when the last convent was opened, a total of 367 religious houses were set up. Lopez Martinez has examined and carefully reconstructed the dynamics of this constant process of expansion and has produced a comprehensive map of the institutions throughout the centuries. Initially the growth of convents was linked to the «Reconquista» crusade, with all the religious and devotional associations of the war against the Muslim infidels. However the period of major expansion was the sixteenth century, which can be explained by two basic factors: firstly, the gradual intensification of overseas trade, and secondly, the Reformation in Europe which was the main reason for the adoption of a much tighter disciplinary regime within the Catholic Church, the spread of existing religious congregations and the founding of new and more aggressive religious orders like the Jesuits and the Theatines.

All these factors led to a marked change in the characteristics of the monastic estate: while at the end of the fifteenth century it was almost exclusively made up of landed property — mainly destined for cereal growing —, in the sixteenth century it became diversified, with the constant growth of real estate in towns and much more investment of liquid capital through the use of private credit. At the same time the geographical location of convents and monasteries changed significantly: owing to increased social public safety and to the consequent growth of towns as trading and market centres, there was a large increase in the number of religious houses in the main urban centres, with the abandonment of the traditional areas of retreat in more isolated areas. At this point it would be very interesting to investigate how far the relocation of convents and monasteries in towns affected practices within the religious orders and modified the basic traits of monastic estates.

Another important change noted by the author concerns donations and purchases. While during the middle ages convents usually sprang from donations, at the beginning of the modern era the number of property purchases made by religious orders increased significantly. The author appropriately defines this process as the transition from dispersion to concentration: donations meant that property was scattered throughout the country and that it was difficult to manage it in a rational way, whereas through purchases the religious Corporations aimed to concentrate property in a few areas in order to increase their profits and revenue, as the author shows on the basis of a long perusal of the land registry. Thus the monastic estate was subject to a major process of reorganisation and planning: no longer content with administering donations as they had done in the past, religious orders pursued shrewd and clear-cut policies to make the administration of their estates more efficient and profitable.

In actual fact this restructuring process was to gain currency in other parts of Europe, such as on the mainland of southern Italy. Here, following the

Restoration and the reinstatement of the religious orders, a large portion of the revenue deriving from both movable wealth and real estate in the provinces was assigned to Neapolitan convents and monasteries which, owing to the remoteness of some of the provinces, found difficulty in administering such revenue. Thus, in the 1830s, Neapolitan religious houses began to take out frequent contracts for the purchase, exchange and settlement of property in order to make their administration more rational and more efficient.

Perhaps it is worth raising one last point. Given the multinational dimension of religious orders throughout history, the creation of an international centre for comparative studies regarding each European region would be very interesting. Such studies would probably highlight similarities in trends, strategies and economic policies which up till now have not been clearly defined, considering the limited regional context in which the studies have been carried out.

FRANCESCO CARLO DANDOLO

Faculty of Transport Economics and International Trade, Naples

W. NUGENT, *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870-1914*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press. 1992. Pp. xv, 225.

This is a well-researched, wide-ranging and serious study of migration from Europe to America (North and South). The author begins his narrative with a discussion of the Atlantic region in the late nineteenth century, evaluates theories of population growth, fertility and mortality and their role in migration, discusses general patterns of migration and repatriation with much valuable information on the origin and destination of migrants, ships, ports, travel conditions, etc. A second section offers expert case studies on the major countries of origins — Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany, the old Austrian and Russian Empires, including the migration of Jews and Poles — and concludes with an analysis of migration from Italy, Spain and Portugal. In each case the author presents aggregate data on age, sex, rural-urban origins, family structure, and occupation of migrants. A third section covers migration from Europe to Argentina, Brazil and Canada. A final section deals with revisionist historiography on migration since the seminal paper of Frank Thistlethwaite in 1960 and a discussion of U.S. exceptionalism relative to the other New World receivers. The U.S.A. uniqueness is compared to immigration to Canada, Argentina and Brazil and is found to be different but not unique or exceptional. The study emphasizes strong underlying similarities in immigration to North and South America in employment patterns, the effect of the expanding frontier and the demographic structure of the immigrant population.

The study emphasizes demographic factors (population pressure) as the causal agent in migration. The push came from the rising rate of natural increase in Europe which pushed people out of the countryside into towns and, where urban jobs were not increasing fast enough, into emigration. Death rates fell throughout the nineteenth century while birth rates declined only in the second half. The rate of natural increase therefore accelerated and then decelerated. Relatively rapid rates of population growth ended in Western Europe by the end of the century while rates in Eastern and Southern Europe continued to accelerate. Thus the big wave of emigration to the U.S. from Western Europe came in the mid-nineteenth century while it came after 1900 from Eastern and Southern Europe. The demographic effect was reinforced by a demonstration effect that followed migration-remittances and letters sent back by those who had already left.

Migration to the U.S.A., nevertheless, did differ in important ways from migration to other New World receivers. Successful migration depends on rapid urbanization which is costly, and which required high rates of capital formation. Of the 36 million who emigrated from Europe between 1571 and 1914, two thirds came to North America, the most successful of the new countries in converting a high growth rate into modernized industrial economy. The remainder (12.6 million) went to Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Brazil. The gap between net and gross migration in these countries, however, was very large (5.4 million) as their economic structure was quite different from the U.S.A. and growth depended on exports, foreign investment and the terms of trade. Migration was beyond their absorptive capacities and immigrants were forced to move on to other countries in Latin America, to New Zealand, the U.S.A. or return to Europe. The gap between net and gross migration was widest in Canada and Australia while Argentina held on to more of her immigrants than Brazil. It was hardly coincidence, therefore, that in neo-classical trade theory, free trade in commodities was deemed a better substitute for the mobility of labour. It was abundantly clear by the late nineteenth century that the favourable effects of migration were not automatic and could not be taken for granted. It was equally self-evident that a high standard of living was also possible in densely populated areas.

It is an oversimplification to say that one of the major difficulties in immigration history is the elusive character of the immigrant. Most of our knowledge about immigration is based on aggregate data collected by governments. But while the characteristics of migrants are available at the aggregate level, we are unable to study micro-structural aspects of migration — migration at the level of the individual. We have little information on the migrant's village, province or region of origin, a fact that could be important in understanding the motivation to migrate and the impact of prior urban experience. We also know little about social network linkages in the communities of origin and destination that influence the motivation for migration and the type of migration that may occur (permanent or temporary). Thus with traditional data sources we have not been able to answer some of the most interesting and important questions.

Professor Nugent, nevertheless, has given us a brilliant analysis of a critical chapter of migration history and all students in the field must be grateful for his work.

IRA A. GLAZIER

Temple-Balch Center for Immigration Research, Philadelphia

A. RANDALL, *Before the Luddites*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 348.

Resistance to mechanical innovation in the early industrial revolution was in many ways a curious phenomenon. Within the specific context of economic history, the destruction of machinery is given only marginal treatment and the reaction of workers to mechanisation has been considered a minor factor among the obstacles to technological innovation and as such neglected. Political and social historians are largely of the same opinion and have considered the issue as symptomatic of another broader problem related to economic depression, the rise in food prices and hunger, rather than as direct hostility towards technological and organisational change. Labour historians, while showing greater sympathy for Luddism, have never considered it within the context of orderly trade unionism and indeed have often interpreted it as the inability of the workers to organise themselves efficiently.

Following on in the school that E.P. Thompson inaugurated in 1963 with *The Making of the English Working Class*, Randall has set out to overcome these limits. He argues that popular protest was the main obstacle to change and that violence was not the desperate act of a group of people who had lost their means of livelihood but was used deliberately as part of a wider and organised reaction against a system of values which was breaking down even before the arrival of machinery.

Since Thompson, historians who have studied Luddism have mainly concentrated on short-term factors and have examined the period before and after 1811-12, analysing the economic background of Luddism, its relations with the nascent trade union movement, radicalism and the development of the concept of class. They have paid less attention to examining why certain regions and industries were prone to Luddism while others were not touched by it at all, or to the question as to why in some areas resistance turned into physical conflict while in others it was carried on as a legislative and institutional dispute. These are the problems that Randall focuses on in his study.

From a chronological point of view his work spans the thirty years preceding the Luddite revolts (1776-1809), that is, the early phase of the industrial revolution characterised by the introduction of the Spinning Jenny in the textile industry. Although Luddism affected three kinds of industry, Randall

is concerned solely with the textile industry, especially the woollen textile industry, the oldest-established and the most traditional of textile industries which played a vital role in the British economy up until the end of the eighteenth century. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that woollen cloth was Britain's main export and that the industry was protected by a large number of regulations and statutory restrictions which were abolished in 1809. While the woollen industry was scattered throughout the country, it was preponderant in two regions: the West Riding of Yorkshire and the West of England, consisting of Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire. Both regions produced woollen cloths using the same techniques and methods, although production was organised in different ways.

The book consists of eight chapters, some of which develop ideas already treated by the author in previous essays, and is subdivided into three parts. It concentrates on issues relating to practices and customs, the community and machines, and gives the reader a different perspective from which to view the resistance to industrial change.

In the first part (chapters one and two) the cultural and economic context in which mechanical innovation appeared is discussed. Since the reaction to the introduction of machinery varied from region to region and from place to place, the author examines the two main reasons for such diversity. The first is related to labour organisation and the type of community within which work was performed; the second concerns the impact of machinery on the production process itself. The West of England and the West Riding developed different kinds of industrial organisation which in turn engendered different types of community and culture. In the West Riding, where industry was based on the "Kaufsstem", production remained in the hands of small producers, ties with the land were still economically and socially important, class interests were less well defined and economic attrition was mitigated through the establishment of cloth halls which provided benefits for all. In the West of England industry was based on the "Verlagsystem": production was increasingly more specialised, the division between capital and labour became more and more evident, generating greater class consciousness and conflict.

The reaction to the introduction of machinery was multifaceted and only partly related to the economic impact of labour-saving technology; an important factor was also the kind of community where machines were introduced. In some places the reaction was one of resignation and reluctant acceptance, in others resistance did not go beyond an initial protest, while in some areas opposition became markedly belligerent.

The second part of the book — chapters three to five — seeks to explain the reasons for these "differences". In his approach to the subject, the author follows in the wake of revisionist historiography which views Britain's Industrial Revolution no longer within a national framework but within a regional context in order to show the differentiated impact of the Revolution across the country. In areas where there was violent resistance to machinery, the movement received the support of the whole productive community. Yet such solidarity subsided as soon as the more wealthy entrepreneurs introduced machinery into

peripheral areas of the woollen district and demonstrated to some groups of workers the economic benefits deriving from innovation, causing a split in the workers' movement.

The struggle of the woollen-cloth workers has contributed to the debate on the relationship between trade-unionism and industrial violence. Most labour historians have always kept these two issues separate, viewing violence as an indication of the failure of workers to organise themselves efficiently and trade-union action as the result of coherent and planned policies. Randall challenges this approach and shows that the woollen-cloth workers used both conventional trade-union sanctions as well as physical resistance through actions such as strikes and boycotting. This emerges very clearly from Randall's analysis of the Wiltshire revolt in 1802, the precursor of the Luddite revolts ten years later. The cloth workers deliberately and constantly resorted to violence, firstly in order to intimidate the innovators and then with the intention to destroy the machines.

The third part, made up of the last three chapters, focuses mainly on the attempts of the workers to enforce observance of the old wool industry laws and to create new ones to stem the rise of the textile factory and loomshops. Quite apart from the issue of machinery, the factory itself was seen as a powerful organisational force, which destroyed traditional artisan skills and employed unskilled workers with no technical background, and was therefore an effective weapon for sweeping away traditional industry.

The debate on the old laws emerging from the various reports and petitions presented in Parliament in the early years of the nineteenth century did not simply concern the removal of obsolete impediments to economic development; it also reflected the deep ideological contrast between the old economic regime based on order, stability and feudal-type rules deriving from custom and convention and the new economic regime based on the invisible hand of the market and capital.

The author's conclusions about these events are mainly centred on the question as to what extent the social context of manufacturing influenced its capacity for transformation, without there being any explicit defence of the positive role of Luddism, which can only be inferred indirectly from the book. Besides being mere economic systems, factories were — and still are — systems based on human cooperation and economic and social relations. In the case of relations which were deep-rooted in the past, it is clear that there would be major difficulties in adjusting to any structural change, especially changes effected within a short period. The community's reaction may vary considerably and reach the point of militant action, although the latter should not be interpreted as unplanned and unorganised resistance. In their struggle against the teazlers, and later against the shearers, the cloth workers used a combination of orthodox trade-unionism together with the non-conventional methods of intimidation, violence and revolt. The author's conclusion in this connection is explicit: there should be no distinction or contradiction between trade-unionism and luddism.

Innovation in the woollen industry was delayed, partly due to the

widespread sense of community based on the history of the past and custom, but also because of centuries-old protective legislation. It is not surprising, therefore, that when such laws were abolished in 1809, the traditional forces of unity started to break down and were ultimately defeated with the failure of the Luddite revolts. Economic change was much easier in those areas where industries had only recently been established and where labour culture was not heavily rooted in social culture. In these regions, as John Stuart Mill remarks in «de Tocqueville on Democracy in America» (in the *Edinburgh Review*, October 1840) the most evident fruits of scientific progress, the improvements in mechanical technology, the steam engine and railways all aroused a sense of admiration for what was modern and at the same time generated a sense of contempt for the past, even among the uneducated classes. This was clearly not the case of the woollen-cloth workers, as Randall shows us in his study.

PAOLA AVALLONE

CNR Research Institute for the South
Italian Economy, Naples

H. TEUTEBERG, (ed.), *European Food History: A Research Review*, Leicester, University Press, 1992 pp. 297.

Adopting a superficial approach, European food history can be likened to the extremely hard struggle which men and women of all ages and from every part of Europe have been forced to undertake for many centuries as they attempted to find an answer to their pressing primary needs. Once this widely-recognised and obvious statement has been made, we are still left with the problem of a deeper, more detailed knowledge and analysis of European food habits, and of the many influences and variations they have been subject to over the centuries. Historians, not without reason, often justify the substantial lack of research on European food history, referring to a complete lack or, at least, a dearth of reliable and varied sources to accompany such research.

The book under review is concerned with the problems of European food history and both summarises existing research on the subject as well as presenting many interesting ideas and methodological issues for possible future research. It brings together the proceedings of a conference held in May 1989 at the University of Munster which without doubt has contributed towards filling the all-too-evident gaps in European economic and social historiography concerning these important issues. In fact for the first time an international conference was entirely devoted to analysing and debating European food history issues. In just under 300 pages, there are papers on food history and food traditions in Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Hungary. This is a wide-ranging, differentiated survey of the origin and development of food habits in most European countries, although it lacks a comparative analysis which would probably have further enriched the monographs on individual countries.

However, this symposium not only marks an important step forward in a field of historical research which has hitherto been somewhat neglected; it also offers the opportunity for setting up interesting, effective international interdisciplinary research. In particular, the interdisciplinary element is strongly emphasised, although we are more in the realm of intentions, here, rather than being presented with concrete and satisfactory results.

In his introduction, which puts the other research papers into a general context, Hans J. Teuteberg argues in several places that the ways in which human beings procure and prepare their daily food reflect faithfully how society as a whole is organised and the technology at its disposal. And so, in a developed, industrialised society, food preparation methods are vastly different to those in a backward, rural society.

However, if we accept this distinction in a generalised, over-simplified way, we run the risk of making an analysis which does not take due account of human choice and behaviour. Therefore, as Teuteberg himself points out, it is indispensable to link the reconstruction of the historical processes of food acquisition and preparation with other fields — some of which are not strictly historical — so that we can throw light on the internal and external mechanisms that dominate human behaviour. There is, therefore, a central difficulty in Teuteberg's analysis related to methodological criteria which in the past have directed the little research that has been done on these issues, narrowing it too much: namely the very widespread conviction that the food choices of human beings have always been dictated, by a regime of great necessity and mere sustenance.

This interpretation is hardly borne out by the articles in this study; the emergence and diffusion of precise options and the subsequent development of food habits should not be considered the product of certain rigid conditions of subsistence but should be placed in and assessed within a wider context. Despite conditions of hardship and necessity, man always has a certain margin of choice and autonomy and, using both rudimentary and more sophisticated tools, is able to transform and personalise what nature offers him.

Thus food history is a more complex subject than it seems and cannot be explored using reductive and facile schematisations because it is closely interwoven with other fields of scientific research which focus on man's behaviour, on the physiological, cultural, social and economic factors that determine it and modify it and on the not always straightforward sociological and psychological changes reoccurring in the course of centuries. Of course when dealing with common scientific research, it is not easy to link up such apparently different sectors: if sociological and economic research tends to concentrate on external elements of change and breakdown, a purely physiological analysis runs the risk of being too static and rigid since it is firmly anchored to exploring only man's biological mechanisms. And so it is vital (and Teuteberg's great merit is in pointing this out clearly) to establish an interface and to strike a balance among scientific disciplines which up till now have had almost nothing in common but which, in the case of food history, can contribute to analysing the procedures of food acquisition and preparation in a much more

complete and detailed way than in the past. It is by no means coincidental that subsequent papers — especially those on the Netherlands, France and Belgium — have as their compulsory reference the *Annales*, which (first with F. Braudel and then with M. Aymard) has opened up a new era of food history research within the context of general interest for so-called material history, thereby widening the parameters within which such research is undertaken. However, in the various papers, interdisciplinary collaboration and frequent references to the school remain in the background, and this is probably the most evident sign that there is still a long way to go in this direction. Nevertheless, it is important to have shown forcefully and clearly at a scientific conference the need for future close interdisciplinary collaboration.

The limited documentary sources, however, have a negative influence and penalise from the outset research on these important issues. D.J. Oddy and J. Burnett, two British historians, in their bibliographical reconstruction of food history in Great Britain note that when we speak of food history we must distinguish one food from another and study their various fortunes in documentary sources and the literature of the time.

For example, cheese, which in English food history has been only slightly less important than bread, has left few traces in documentary sources. It seems an arduous, if not impossible task, to examine the doubtless considerable role that cheese has played in English food history. This is an important aspect which limits research of this kind and to which there is no easy solution.

FRANCESCO CARLO DANDOLO.

Faculty of Transport Economics and
International Trade, Naples