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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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J.H. COATSWORTH, *Growth Against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico*, Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981, pp. XIII, 249, Tables, figures, maps, bibliography, index.

The effort by historians in the last few decades to rehabilitate the Porfiriato (the period in Mexican history dominated by the dictator Porfirio Díaz, from 1876 to 1910) — to find in it the roots of Mexican modernization as well as of political authoritarianism — has concentrated heavily on industrialization and on the development of infrastructures. Chief among the latter has been the Mexican railway system, whose expansion and impact on the Mexican economy John Coatsworth analyzes in the present volume. Heavily econometric in its approach, the book usefully employs the theoretical concepts of social savings and linkage to disentangle the role of rail development from other possible variables affecting Porfirian economic growth.

Coatsworth's conclusions are in the main convincing and well laid out. He finds that the direct social savings on rail passenger travel in about 1910 — that is, the percentage of Mexican gross domestic product saved by rail travel as opposed to alternative means, and which theoretically was available for investment elsewhere in the economy — was low, chiefly because the economic value of people's time was low. On the other hand, he concludes that the availability of relatively inexpensive passenger travel facilitated internal migration which substantially benefited the national economy in observable but unmeasurable ways. Direct social savings on the movement of freight by rail, however, were high, especially in the export-oriented sector of the economy (agricultural and mineral products). On this point Coatsworth makes a particularly valuable methodological contribution, correcting his social savings estimates by introducing the factor of price elasticity of demand, a technique which has not generally been

employed in other railroad development studies. He concludes that rail freight transport theoretically freed the equivalent of about twenty per-cent of the gross domestic product for investment elsewhere in the Mexican economy. On the negative side, backward economic linkages were insignificant. There was, by the end of the Porfiriato, a high degree of leakage of railroad profits abroad in the form of direct remission of profits to foreign investors and purchase of inputs. Finally, rail development had a significant effect in further concentrating land ownership in a country where the traditional distribution of this most basic of productive resources was already highly skewed.

There are some problems with the book, as there would be with any other of such scope and ambition. These primarily relate to the assumptions involved in the counterfactual propositions, the Achilles heel of all counterfactual treatments, as the author himself implicitly acknowledges. This problem shows up particularly in the chapter on direct social savings from passenger transport, where some quite arbitrary assumptions are made (as Coatsworth mentions on page 79), and where non-economic factors involved in the choice of alternative modes of transportation are not considered. Furthermore, although the estimates on social savings, both for passengers and freight, are very carefully made, the author seldom questions the credibility of the basic statistical data themselves. Judging by modern Mexican experience (and that of other developing countries), in which attempts at long-range economic planning have been seriously compromised by highly inaccurate statistics, and in which the existence on paper of *any* statistics, sometimes of spurious accuracy despite their apparent precision, is more important to the gatherers than accuracy itself, much of Coatsworth's raw data is probably questionable. There is hardly any way to correct for this, however, and that is not the author's fault. Finally, the study is in some ways like a railroad itself. We see the impressive confluence of a great many gleaming tracks, but not beyond the town limits. What would have rounded the book out nicely would have been a case study, something on the order of a chapter or so, examining in detail one of the affected export industries which was presumably benefited by rail development, or a case of internal migration directly attributable to the availability of rail transport. The attempt to do something along this line with the chapter on increasing concentration of land ownership does not quite fill the bill, since it does not support Coatsworth's hypotheses directly and in the end seems tacked on to the rest of the study almost as an afterthought, interesting as it may be.

Despite these problems, the book's considerable virtues by far outweigh its faults. It has a basic credibility which grows directly out of the skillful integration of empirical data with a sophisticated theoretical framework, unusual in work on Latin America. The clarity and strength of the central hypotheses and argument and the elegance of the methodology are notable. The book has cohesiveness, rare enough in itself, and is well organized. It has an unadorned, workmanlike, but basically engaging style. The systematic comparative references to the larger literature on railroads in modern economic development,

particularly with regard to the United States and Britain, will make the book a find for those interested not only in Latin America and Mexico, but in the experience of modernization in general.

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R.P.I. DAVENPORT-HINES, *Dudley Docker. The Life and Times of a Trade Warrior*, Cambridge, University Press, 1984, pp. 295.

If all biographies of leading industrial, financial or banking figures were written in the same style and with the same skill as Dr Davenport-Hines' study of Dudley Docker, they would reach an audience much wider than the professional economic historian. While covering an extraordinary amount of research, it remains an extremely lively and readable book, in which the author not only attempts to depict the career of Dudley Docker but at the same time the economic, political and social world in which he moved. The first part of the study charts the rise of this irresistible Birmingham entrepreneur, who from a small varnish shop came to be chairman of one of the largest companies producing railway rolling stock (The Amalgamated Metropolitan Railway Carriage and Waggon Co), a leading figure in the Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA), as well as in the Midland Bank, and also one of the spokesmen of the growing discontent of the British industrialists with the policies imposed by governments and a parliament that seemed unaware of the country's industrial and commercial decline. The demand for measures to prevent the growing challenge of Germany on world markets was backed in 1910 by the formation of the Business League, which was open to both industrialists and to workers because, as Docker argued, the interests of workers and entrepreneurs were never hostile. The second part of the study is concerned with the period of the First World War, a period which in Docker's words was of 'immense importance' and during which the Birmingham industrialist developed fully the strategy that had already been delineated before 1914 and which was destined to introduce major changes in the relations between industry and politics. The political climate was one that proved particularly well suited for Docker's arguments, and his whole programme at first seemed to have been quickly and fully realized when in 1916 the Federation of British Industry (FBI) was established with Docker as its first chairman and with the aim of uniting the interests of British industry. At the same time the British Commonwealth Union (BCU) also took shape, which was to provide the basis for creating an industrial representation in parliament. Finally in 1917 the British Trade Corporation (BTC) also came into being: this was modelled on the example of the great German banks and its purpose was to guide Britain's full commercial reassertion abroad with direct diplomatic support after the war and once the victory over Germany had been won. In 1918 and 1919 Docker was also directly

involved in the reconversion of the leading British armaments company, Vickers, through the expansion of its electro-engineering capacity, since this was a sector in which Germany had enjoyed overwhelming supremacy.

However, all of these bodies had short and unsuccessful lives. The conflicting interests of different sectors of industry, the short-comings and jealousies of the civil service and the diplomatic corps, and the conservatism of the City conspired to undermine the projects that would transform England along corporatist lines domestically and give it a new commercial aggressiveness at an international level. This is certainly the most important section of the book, but while the efforts that Docker made to establish the FBI, the BCU and the BTC are described in great detail and in a way which makes an important contribution to this critical but unduly neglected period in British economic history, the blue-print for a corporate society along the lines advocated by Docker needs some closer examination. Relying rather schematically on the well known interpretation in Maier's *Recasting Bourgeois Europe*, the author puts together in a single group Germans like Rathenau and Moellendorf, Italians like Ettore Conti, the Spaniard Cambò, the Frenchman Loucheur, the Swede Wallenberg and the Englishman Docker, suggesting that they all shared a common interest in the great electrical trusts and a corporate vision of society. But it could be argued that the electrical industry in fact took many different forms, as did the 'corporate' visions to which these different figures subscribed. Rather than the monopolistic characteristics of the electrical industry, as the author suggests, it was the war that encouraged industrialists, financiers and senior civil servants, as well as politicians and trades unionists to think in corporate terms. Not only did the war bring about the explosion of internal political, social and economic contradictions within the belligerent countries, but it also left great uncertainties over the degree of state intervention in the economy that would be required once the war was over.

The final part of the book covers the years from 1920 to 1944 and describes the transformation of Docker from an industrialist obsessed with the increasingly unfavourable situation of the British economy to a cosmopolitan financier engaged almost exclusively in international projects and operations. Docker withdrew to the gilded seclusion of the Brussels-based finance company *Sofina*, which had investments in the electrical and railway sector across the world. However, the final chapter on the fortunes of the BSA between 1918 and 1944 is perhaps unduly long given the fairly limited role played by Docker himself in the company in these years, although it does provide the opportunity to introduce Bernard Docker, Dudley's son who, on his father's insistence, was made director of the company shortly before his father's death, but who had little talent other than an extraordinary ability to spend the fortunes amassed by his father. The appearance at the end of the study of the son whose fame in the 1950s for his wealth and extravagance is mentioned in the introduction gives the study a neat artistic unity. Although there might have been a case for a wider international framework of sources and references both on the development of the

electrical engineering industry and also on the problem of corporatism, this is not sufficient to lessen the value and merits of an outstanding piece of research.

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T. KOLZER (ed.) *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Siciliae*, 2nd series, Vol. 1: *Constance imperatricis et reginae Siciliae diplomata (1195-1198)*, Cologne-Vienna, Bohlau Verlag, 1983, XIX-438 pp.

To read the diplomas issued by Constance, the mother of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, which regulated the economic life and activities of a wide range of individuals, corporations and communities in the Kingdom of Sicily on both sides of the Straits of Messina, is to be filled with wonder and admiration. It is now possible, thanks to this superb edition which has been prepared by the Palermo Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, under the direction of C.R. Brühl and F. Giunta, to study 66 of these diplomas which had been preserved in the archives of Palermo in particular, but also at the Vatican and at Seville (the Archive of the Dukes of Medinaceli) and Simancas, together with a series of other documents and references which have been added to the text. This makes it possible to appreciate for the first time the very personal nature of the policies adopted by the queen-regent, and reveals that the Sicilian monarchy began to seriously challenge the anarchy of baronial power at least two decades earlier than the date that is normally given to that process when Frederick returned in 1220 from Germany.

What was the basis of the economic strategy followed by Constance? The starting point was the nullification of the decisions taken by Tancredi (1190-1194), whom the notaries began to portray as a persecutor of the Church (pp 43/116). The rights of the bishops that had been delegated by William II and Henry VIth were restored, while the monasteries received considerable new feofs, and both the Cistercians and the Basilian orders were beneficiaries of these gifts, while the Crusader Orders (Notre-Dame of Jehosophat and the Knights Hospitallers) were granted commercial privileges and in particular the freedom of the port of Messina (pp 50/149). The concern to preserve the possessions of the Crusading orders which had declined since 1187 was one of Constance's major concerns.

In general terms, these documents provide a wide range of information on the resources of the state which was generally in a position of control rather than monopoly. For example, the maritime tithe that was granted to the churches of Agrigento, Sciacca and Licata served to cover the wages of the port officers and became an annual charge. The royal grain keepers were not originally royal agents, but acted as overseers in private transactions (pp 124/222), while the use of forest land which remained as yet hardly damaged by livestock and enclosures

was strictly regulated. And although the citrus orchards were the basis of the urban economy on the island of Sicily, hardly any were controlled by the feudal lords: in the case of Palermo in the second half of the XIIth century, over two-thirds were owned by Saracens (p 318).

The particularly 'Sicilian' — or rather 'Norman-Sicilian' — character of the Regency was evident from the expulsion of the seneschal Markward of Annweiler 'and all the other Germans' in 1197 (p 275), while the restoration of the 'good customs' inherited from Robert Guiscard and Roger II was entrusted to a group of faithful supporters like William Malconvenant, who became Grand Justicier at Court (p 279). However, the reestablishment of control over the 'counts and barons' was not completed in legislation because there was not time, but Frederick II followed along the path already established by his mother and only significantly changed her policy in the matter of the regalian rights of the bishops. And in this troubled period Messina had no cause to regret the support that it gave to Henry VIth and to Constance, and it became the leading commercial centre of the Kingdom. The privileges it received (p 167) provided a model for those later granted to Trapani, and marked an important stage in the evolution of urban autonomies since the Aragonese rulers from James II to John I also used economic rewards as an instrument of government.

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P. MOSLEY, *The Settler Economies*, Cambridge, University Press, 1982.

A quarter of a century ago economic development issues and the political issues generated by the independence movements forged a kind of intellectual and political optimism, if not alliance, which suggested that at long last Africa would take charge of her own affairs.

Years later that optimism has been tempered, where it has not turned negative, in the wake of continuous and intermittent famine from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, the effects of oil embargoes, and multinational trade problems.

In setting out to review Peter Mosley's *The Settler Economies* one might initially pose several questions. What is the author setting out to do? What resources does he use to obtain the results? Of what benefit is the work? The book is an attempt to combine certain methodological approaches to the study of settler economies in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia with an unstated assumption, if not belief, that the historical underdevelopment of the non-settler, agricultural, indigenous economies was the result of exogenous factors, for which the settler economy cannot be held responsible.

The book is based on bibliographic work. The African and European record was studied by the author in the Rhodesian, Kenyan and British archives. The printed primary sources in Salisbury, Nairobi, and London were also consulted.

Initially two of the exogenous factors which guided the evolution of the economic systems in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia were land policy and infrastructure. Land policy was set by a combination of governmental actions and economic conditions. The policy of "possessory segregation" took on an identical philosophy, with differences of emphasis in implementation, until the mid 1950s. When it was recognized in Kenya that land values were being kept down, repeal took effect in 1961. However, in 1962, with the defeat of Garfield Todd's United Federal Party, intransigence set in, leading to UDI in 1965. While Kenya obtained independence in 1964, Rhodesia's UDI was to last half a generation.

Success in certain settler political-economic arrangements was related to the location of railroad trunk lines, rate structures, licensing of road competition to the railroads, the composition and structure of imports to exports. Mosley states that "African consumers certainly paid more than European producers at all times,... (which) reflects simply the practice of charging rail carriage according to the value of the article carried, and not,... discrimination intended to 'operationalise the commitment to the settler sector.'" (p. 38).

This view misses the point for those who argue that greater concern has been demonstrated for welfare, rather than profitability, in the economy. To those who argue that the benefits derived by the European settlers from the rail rate structure was "simply because they were responsible for most of the marketed production and only a small part of the marketed consumption", begs the question (p. 38).

In pointing out the political constraints on economic behaviour, Mosley notes first the internal conflicts within the "white agrarian capitalist group". The white settlers, (given different initial capital outlays and social/political positions), disagreed over land policy, export rates on rail transport, and prices as producers and consumers. Mosley maintains that these internal conflicts constrained white settler economic pressure on the African peasant economy, as a result of the "extramarket operations" of the government.

What Mosley basically is stating is that government "intervention", "manipulation", or "planning", was a response to a particular set of economic and political pressures which interacted over a period of some sixty years. Groups involved included the concessionaires, maize, tobacco, and coffee farmers, maize consumers, white ranchers, and the exporters of beef.

Mosley deals with "African agricultural development" in Chapter 3. He uses what aggregative data is available, admittedly unreliable, to make "firm inferences". But it is reliable enough to dispute if not rebut the claims of the "underdevelopment" school that the African peasantry disintegrated or was destroyed.

Mosley uses Ester Boserup's theory of population change and agrarian change, in an effort to explain changes which were economic in intent and result. As population pressure grew agricultural productivity increased. While making allowance for increases in population per acre, there was encouraging, but not

conclusive support for this hypothesis. However, in the Kenyan and Rhodesian districts with heavy land alienation to settlers, there was rejection of the teachings of those who sought to encourage increases in productivity to Africans. Greater population pressure led to inhibitions on the part of Africans toward greater risk and higher yields. Fears of future governmental confiscation of land or production played no small part in this reaction.

Rational economic man is portrayed as alive and well in these settler economies, in the form of the African maize and beef producer. This behaviour may have contradicted the colonialist administrator's view of the world, and for different reasons, that of the "underdevelopment" school. The "policy environment" to which Mosley refers may, however, only have strengthened the contention that the "hostile colonial government" made the African agriculturalist more rational.

In his discussion of "European agriculture", Mosley sets out to question, if not dispel, the stereotype of the European settler, agricultural producer. This stereotype rested on several assumed characteristics. The white settler was inefficient, buttressed by a system of subsidies and restraints vis-à-vis his competition, which was under-capitalized, and labour intensive. The settler was viewed as no more than a victim of the economic system for which he had been the model. Mosley uses economic data extending back to the 1920's to portray exceptions of some substance to this view.

Mosley presents data with respect to the "labour market". This requires some economic background on the part of the reader. The author discusses wage levels, wage determination, labour availability and the locating of the labour force on industry and mining sites.

Mosley notes that there were three kinds of legislation which governed the quantity and price of labour supplied to the modern sector. The first of these, compulsory labour legislation, was no greater in issue and effect, between Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, and British West Africa, "being largely confined to government public works employment" between 1900 and 1940.

The distinctive aspect of labour legislation was "resident labour legislation". This was an effect of the land alienation policies wrought by the settler system. The land shortage on the African side, coupled with the "chronic labour shortage at a subsistence wage" on the European side required some administrative balancing. Land alienation established the labour-economy relationship which provided the basis for the underdevelopment critics' view of biases created by the settler economy.

For thirty years in Kenya (1916-1946) and for over a half century in Southern Rhodesia (1902-1958) the certification or "pass" policy was enforced. This kept African wages down in times of labour shortage and kept the worker's supply price constant. How "rational" or "irrational" an economic measure this was is probably beyond dispute.

Perhaps at this point it is fair to say that Mosley's approach is more economic than political. The argument with Arrighi and other 'underdevelopment' writers

is based, in part, upon method, due to a tendency to see the particular vs. the totality, cause rather than effect, and intent rather than result. If there is no way to subsume these two approaches into a more eclectic process and understanding, the intellectual battle for assessing the distributive gains of colonialism will continue, and the Africans today who have inherited that legacy may continue to be captured by its history. Insofar as Mosley points towards a development of this eclectic understanding in both academic and governmental circles this study is a contribution.

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R.E. MOUSNIER, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789*, Vol. II, *The Organs of State and Society*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 695.

Most of us face seeing our research efforts and lecture notes become relegated to more or less forgotten periodicals, little used library shelves, or closed file drawers; not so Roland Mousnier, professor emeritus of modern history at the University of Paris-Sorbonne, whose most recent books draw together a life's work of detailed findings and interpretations of France's Ancien Regime in a form which will remain the standard guide to this field well into the next century. The two massive volumes of his *Institutions of France* constitute an altogether awe-inspiring edifice, a veritable Versailles among works of history. (The work currently under review is a translation of the French version of 1980; vol. I was reviewed in the *Journal of European Economic History* volume 10, number 3, winter 1981). While the style and organization of the two volumes are much the same, there is a somewhat different perspective in each suggested by their subtitles: vol. I, subtitled "Society and the State", can be thought of as demonstrating how the structures of the French state meshed with and supported structures of society; vol. II, rather, explains the role of social structures in resisting the push for efficient government by the king. The main theme of vol. II can be expressed as follows: the key tension between the upper classes that was of significance for political development was *not* between "robe and sword" (the ennobled magistrates versus the old aristocracy) but between regular officials with property rights in their venal and usually inheritable positions (*officiers*) and the "king's men", the *commis*, including the intendants, appointed and terminated at royal pleasure.

Vol. I dealt with structures such as lineages, fealty, the social orders, the corporations, the communities, and the state's fiscal and human resources; vol. II treats the king, the officials, the *commis*, oversight of government by the Grand Conseil, the administrative and judicial courts, and tax farming. Those of

us interested in institutional history will find here detailed descriptions of the personal components of state organs: their jurisdiction, position in the hierarchy, and social status, together with some information on salaries and other sources of income. But Mousnier does not limit himself to a static blueprint of how things worked at some representative point in Ancien Regime time. He gives us, also, a discussion of the alternating trends toward and away from absolute monarchy. For example, there is a brilliant portrayal of changes in the expansion of the intendants' powers from their beginnings in the mid-XVIIth century to the Revolution; and each king is characterized according to his role in forcing increase in the centralization of government.

Another attractive feature of this work is that here and there Mousnier fleshes out his description of government at work with extensive accounts of individual careers. One of his main concerns is social mobility: how persons might indeed rise from the lowest to the highest ranks, how many generations this might require (four or five), and what sort of family resources were needed to travel all the way up. Salaries, surprisingly, were not munificent and the venal offices should not be thought of as investments, since much better returns were available from commerce and money lending. Offices were sought, rather, for the status they conveyed and the springboard they provided for further advancement. Other sources of income were needed - from farm and urban rents, sales of grain and wine, and from permissible rural enterprises such as forges (one had to be careful to be seen as "living nobly", and not engaging in the sort of commercial activity characterizing the Third Estate). This was hardly a caste society. Upward mobility required planning, persistence, and luck; but large portions of the middle and even the lower middle classes threw themselves into the effort, with some success.

The question of whether France was moving from a "society of orders" toward a "society of classes" is only one of a number of issues Mousnier treats that are of interest to social and economic historians. He shows us, for example, that some urban development was not at all dependent on economic growth but came rather from administrative proliferation: Besançon, which had practically no commercial life but thrived on its courts, is a case in point. We are also told that the cliché of middle class families deserting productive enterprise to live as petty but proud nobles ("*robins*") in rural chateaux is oversimplified, since many of the families that made it up the ladder started their careers as lower-echelon officials, not merchants or manufacturers.

While every student of Ancien Regime France, advanced as well as beginning, will gain much from this work, many of us will think (ungratefully!) of ways it might have been improved. There are virtually no references; the "guides to further reading" at the end of each section are not much help in tracking down the origins of entirely too many of Mousnier's key statements; and some discussions of state organs are dry lists of officials seemingly included for comprehensiveness not intrinsic interest. Here and there the flavour is of the old mimeographed "Cours de Sorbonne" students used to buy rather than attend-

ing lectures. There is an almost complete absence of comparisons with other states' socio-political evolutions. There is some repetition and some treatment of topics already dealt with in vol. I-but virtually no cross-references. The section on the general tax farms is dull and not well integrated into this work. The passages on how some *commis* shaded into true bureaucrats is thin and unconvincing. And especially disappointing for economic historians, there is only a short and unsubstantiated comment on relationships between France's structures of social mobility, the concentration of skills and capital on office-seeking, and the need for the government to initiate and proliferate mercantilist controls.

Scholars interested in the recent historiography of Ancien Regime society will find little evident in this work of Mousnier's quarrels with marxists-whom he treats here by silence. Not that this work is devoid of general interpretations. Essentially, Mousnier believes that the evolution of French society and government cannot be understood as the impact of economic change on political and social structures. He sees a certain autonomy of political action, especially because of crucial decisions concerning war and peace made by the king. It was the fearful expenses of war, time and again, that forced the king first to manipulate the cadres of *officers* and then to bypass them through *commis*. But to go to war or not, whether to thwart Hapsburg expansionism or to strengthen France's frontiers, was the king's choice. Thus there is nothing deterministic about Mousnier's approach. Even the French Revolution, he believes, might have been avoided - at least in the form it assumed-though of course great political changes would have had to be accomplished to save the monarchy. A weak king such as Louis XVI, however, was not capable of the sustained effort required to save "executive government" from campaigns to bring back the *officers*" "judicial government" (government through magistrates and councils). After some fumbling with the vexing problem of *officers* versus *commis*, the Revolution scrapped the entire system and opened the way to rule through bureaucracy and truly centralized government.

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F. PIOLA CASELLI, *Un Cantiere Navale del Trecento*, Milan, Giuffr , 1984, pp 189.

The subject of this study is the shipyard that was built at Narbonne in 1318 to construct five galleys which, together with others purchased at Marseilles, were to constitute the fleet with which the Avignon papacy and Philip V of France hoped to liberate the Holy Land. Subsequently John XXII decided to withdraw them from the crusade and to send them instead to the aid of Genoa which was besieged by Ghibelline forces, so that they were entrusted to Robert of Anjou who incorporated them into his own fleet.

The study is based on the analysis of the very detailed register of expenditures which has survived in the Vatican Secret Archive, and which was published in full in 1962 by J.P. Sosson. Piola Casselli has now analysed in detail the two thousand entries in the register in order to calculate the costs of raw materials, of building and equipping the ten vessels. Each different operation has been reconstructed in detail and explained, providing a comprehensive and lively account of ship-building techniques and costs, the value of which is greatly increased by the clarity of the exposition.

Since the sources are concerned primarily with costing and accounting they do not in themselves offer a great deal of information about the techniques employed, but the author has been able to draw widely on the valuable indications on contemporary building methods provided in the *Informationes* drafted by skilled Marseilles shipwrights who were probably themselves the nucleus of the skilled craftsmen engaged in building these vessels. One important finding is that models (*moduli*) were used, and although these were in my view almost certainly not scale models that reproduced the particular features of the frame and cladding, they served to provide the carpenters with a sort of visual image of the final construction.

The highest single item of expenditure was not on labour (36.3%) although the work force was large and included a range of different skilled trades, most of which had to be recruited from elsewhere since the local ship-building industry had virtually disappeared. The costs of raw materials (30.3%) and their transportation (13.3%) constituted the largest combined expenditure. The timber (mainly oak, but also beech and pine) was obtained from neighbouring forests, two thirds arriving already cut to size by the suppliers while the remaining third was worked in the yard. Nearly 500,000 nails were used, while the rope and sails required for each galley weighed between two and two and a half tons — an amazing figure for ships with a single mast which carried not only the main sail but also two smaller ones. The cost of rope amounted to a fifth of all the materials used. However we cannot entirely agree with the author that the decision to build with one rather than two masts — which were carried by many galleys in the same period — necessarily increased the number of oars that were needed, since there was no direct correlation between these two different means of propulsion.

The five galleys were built in ten months, which would seem to be very quick in view of the enormous problems of organization posed by the use of a shipyard that had been created from scratch no matter how efficient the overseers may have been. But the cost of the newly constructed vessels was much higher than those that were purchased, in fact nearly twice as high and the author rightly argues that this was a result of the high level of general expenses and also the high cost of the raw materials when combined with the transportation costs. This serves to demonstrate the high economic costs of a decision that was primarily political in its motivation.

Piola Casselli has used a series of sources which prove to be of great interest

and importance, and has put them to excellent use. The result is a study which makes an important contribution to our understanding of a subject which still remains in large part unexplored.

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J.A. RAFTIS, *A Small Town in Late Medieval England: Godmanchester 1278-1400*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982, Studies and Texts 53.

Based essentially on court records, this useful and detailed study of Godmanchester (Huntingdon county, population about 3,000 in 1300) begins by describing arrangements about dower, inheritances, etc. — families and marriage, in short. One reads informative documents (English in the text, Latin in the notes) with brief comments. The evidence available provides no documentation on family size, leaving the author with the impression of a “whimsical pattern of family replacement rates”.

Lists of the clergy, the annually elected bailiffs and the clerks from whom future bailiffs were chosen describe government and the local church. Both were “under” Merton priory, the lord of the town. Specific information about the election of bailiffs is lacking, but most were economically well-off.

Names and maps list the origins of those whose surnames show that they or their parents came from outside Godmanchester. Lists of professions/occupations then follow. Occupational titles do not tell the actual trade individuals practised, unless they carried a surname in addition. This is more frequent after 1349, and a reader can then see that Godmanchester had enough arts and crafts to contradict those who claim that modest medieval communities were devoid of technicians.

Of the Godmanchester surnames, only about 16.6% derived from place or regional names, 10% from occupational, and slightly less than 10% from patro-/matronymics, the rest usually being ordinary Christian names used as surnames. Things were very different earlier on in the large southern French city of Toulouse. There, among 1028 males listed in 1243, a much higher percentage of surnames derived from places, some 35%, and only 4% came from parental names. Since more than twice as many men are listed in Godmanchester's documents as women, it at first seems natural that women's first names are relatively less varied than those of men. At Toulouse, however, in spite of a similar “neglect”, female names were far more numerous and fanciful than male ones. One wonders what caused the differences.

Ideologically, the author clearly intends to correct the (“secularist”) liberals and Marxists (hereafter L & M). He argues, for example, that Godmanchester does not “fit the classical model of institutional development. Whether this

model is expressed in the liberal economic terms of division of labour... or in the Marxist doctrine of exploitation of surplus labour, really does not matter. Both theories suggest an inevitability of institutional organization that is not to be found [there]". I am puzzled. What does the evidence from Godmanchester have to do with inevitability or even the division of labour?

Perhaps the L & M issue was introduced because Professor Raftis wants to show that man did not exploit man in his medieval town. Anent the "exploitation" of women, for example, the author argues that the "fact that we know the family names of relatively few wives must not be construed as a sign of female inferiority... Quite to the contrary, it would seem that dower and dowry arrangements along with the right to bestow property on children gave the wife an adequately defined area of rights so that it was usually enough to identify her by her first name only". Maybe, but how about developing the argument a trifle?

Again, although the author shows that there was class differentiation between the well-to-do and the economically really modest in his community, he urges us not to "allow our investigations to be straight-jacketed by such hide-bound heritages of nineteenth-century thought as theories of exploitation. The continual development of flexible forms of wealth today is causing some historians to question whether the distinction between ownership of private property and its use have not been overdrawn in the past". His argument is based on a estimate (necessarily non-quantitative) that Godmanchester property showed marked mobility. It seems to me, however, that the always useful attack on the L & M vision of static rural society does not necessarily mean that mobility or flexibility prevent exploitation. However mobile, and they are often intensely so, plutocracies were and are often very exploitative. I also hope that the author does not believe that economically successful individuals were "quite simply [the] more fortunate and talented townsmen". True, many moneymakers are lucky, but the rest are not necessarily "talented". They may merely be aggressively exploitative.

Lastly, the author states that the "small and middle sized country towns have not enjoyed much of a press among medieval historians". L & M historians, he opines, do not see them as natural expressions of medieval economic growth, and generally separate town from country very sharply.

Agreed about the L & Ms! But, I think, Professor Raftis should recall that the marked, even vehement separation of rural life from urban was not invented by modern man. That idea and bias came from the ancients and was transmitted by medieval men. Vegetius remarks in the prologue to Book IV of the *Epitoma rei militaris*: "Agrestem incultamque hominum in initio saeculi vitam a comunione mutorum animalium vel ferarum urbium constitutio prima discrevit". The idea that building cities differentiated men from beasts was conjugated curiously. In his *De regimine principum* 2, 3, 15, Giles of Rome wrote about countryfolk: "Barbari enim dicuntur illi, qui sunt quasi sylvestres, et nesciunt seipsos dirigere, propter quod tales contingit esse naturaliter servos". A bit

earlier [2, 3, 7], also, this divine, doctor of the Austin friars and cardinal who served both Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII, remarked that the intelligent are supposed to rule the stupid, and gave as an example the fact that townsmen, "qui magis vident prudentia et intellectu, iustum habent bellum contra rusticos, si recusent subijci illis". Poor Bentham and Marx, blamed for everything, even urbanism's "just war" against "backward" rural folk!

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X-CRISE, CENTRE POLYTECHNICIEN D'ÉTUDES ÉCONOMIQUES, *De la récurrence des crises. Son cinquantenaire 1931-1981*, presentation by Gerard BRUN, Paris Editions Economica, 1982 300 p.

I cannot remember which French politician recently claimed that political problems were more important than economic problems. Faced with a crisis whose importance has now for eight years been continually denied but which now has to be revealed to the elector-consumer, one can of course carry on dreaming. Nor can there be any doubt that the caviar of ideology has a more attractive taste than the stuff of day to day subsistence.

Such an approach, in the style of Alfred Sauvy, seems to me closest to the overall tone of this remarkably lucid and intelligent study. Author of an extremely important thesis — *Les techniciens et la technocratie en France de 1918 à 1945*<sup>1</sup> — he has now put together the first major document of general reflections by the founders of X-Crise (November 1931 to May 1932) and the 19 lectures delivered at the centre by members of the institute as well as by public figures who were not directly responsible for the political, economic, financial and trades union decisions of the day. By virtue of their perception in the face of the decline of the European nations, Marc Bloch and Paul Valéry participated as representatives of the social sciences. A multiform crisis called for multi-disciplinary approaches. The second part of the study is entitled "Teaching" and contains a study by A. Sauvy ('Conjuncture and Population') and by Jean Ullmo ('The role of X-Crise and the 'polytechniciens' in the economic history of the last forty years'). An introduction by René Brouillet, the French Ambassador, describes the beginnings of this initiative, begun by three former students of the rue Descartes, who had been horrified by the failure of any salutary shock to occur in a country that had been emaciated by the effects of the Great War, but knowing at the same time that they could rely on the support of a wide body of intellectuals: Gérard Bardet, André Loizillon and John Nicoletis. Fifty years

<sup>1</sup> Université de Droit, d'Economie et de Sciences Sociales de Paris, Doctorat d'Etat 1977.

later Thierry de Montbrial, head of Economic Science at the Ecole Polytechnique and Director of the French Institute for International Relations has provided a postscript for the volume which explicitly emphasises the concept of recurrence which G. Brun also rightly places at the centre of his historical commentary: 'The price of the Great Depression was misery, in the true sense of the word. The costs of the present crisis are more attenuated. *Les raisons de la colère* cannot be written a second time. But the softening effects which are due in part to our better understanding of economics have in turn to be paid for by new disorders' (p. 296). And so the links are made between the 1930s and the 1980s. But the historian is right to underline that the turning point in the attitudes of leading economic thinkers lies in the years of the Popular Front, seen as it must be not in terms of its immediate vicissitudes but of its international context (most obviously the New Deal) and its incorporation into Laval's reforms — it was Laval who created the Welfare State (*Securité Sociale*) and it can hardly be said that Bismark who had imposed a similar system on the propertied classes of Germany fifty years earlier was his accomplice! — and in the period 1940-47 taken as a whole with all its contradictions and dynamic, for the France that is now in front of us has moved on from there (pp 26 ff).

What a mass of individuals move across these pages, the majority quite unknown alike to students and biographers like J. Lacouture. And there is, it is true, much evidence that policy — particularly that taboo subject social policy — was concocted in the dark, although there is always the risk of identifying that tendency with Leon Blum alone, who for all his humanity and humane instinct had, in the words of A. Sauvy, 'an ignorance of economics which came close to the sublime'.

First of all G. Brun's critical analysis demonstrates that *X-Crise* was not an appendage of the *Amicale des Anciens de Polytechnique*, nor a closed brotherhood, nor a ministerial ante-chamber. Its members were not the 'petits messieurs' studied by R. Remond, A. Coutrot and I. Boussard,<sup>2</sup> nor indeed were they conspirators — the term was fashionable at the time of the Cagoule — who held their first meetings in the rooms of the 'Le Bûcheron' shop and later welcomed their guests in the lecture halls of the X. The Centre was 'an almost unique oasis of calm in inter-war France' and its doors were open to anyone, whether members of a militant organization or adherents of a particular set of ideas, who was interested in the principles of a 'planned economy' and was prepared to develop their own ideas through discussion and debate with individuals of different persuasion. *X-Crise* embraced a neo-liberal tendency, for which Jacques Rueff was spokesman (title of his lecture: 'Why despite everything I remain a liberal'), a collectivist tendency with Marxist leanings, which

<sup>2</sup> From the title of the review article by P. Birnbaum, Professor of the University of Paris I, published in *Le Monde* 29.12.82 of the volume *Quarante ans de cabinet ministériels*, Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, Paris 1982.

formed around Jules Moch and the *Centre Polytechnicien d'Etudes Collectives* from which developed the Union of Socialist Technicians, as well as an economic humanist tendency led by Coutrot and whose aim was to create counters to what was accepted as a necessary interventionist state. With reference to the second of these tendencies I would point out, however, that even when Charles Spinasse found himself under the Popular Front the first separate minister of the national economy that France had ever had, he was certainly not 'a moderate economist of the SFIO' (p. 22): it needed some courage to attempt to avoid the complete destruction of free enterprise which the left wing of the Party was hoping to bring about (led by Marceau Pivert) and which in the event was dropped from the programme of the new government.

The other merit of these men was to see themselves as economic observers. The author is again right not to judge them by their later actions and involvements. In one way or another they all attempted to provide more effective management for the national economy, some under Vichy, others in Free France or through the institutions set up by the National Council of the Resistance. But at this level it was political history which set the divisions, leaving no room for appeal: but in any case what meaning did the term 'national economy' have in an occupied country?

But if on the other hand one goes back to the texts published in the *Bulletin* which appeared from 1933 onwards it becomes clear that men with sympathies to the Left like Robert Lacoste and others like Paul Reynaud who incarnated the ideology of capitalism (it is well worth reading his two essays of 1937 and 1934 together), were essentially in agreement on the need to examine closely the Rooseveltian example and to learn from it the means to inspire confidence throughout society for the effort to reorganize the economy. This explains the econometric references that recur in the texts: to Rathenau, to Henri de Man, to Roosevelt (whom R. Lacoste somewhat remarkably used in order to justify the 'trades union formula for nationalization'), to the USSR (analysed with much greater lucidity by Georges Mercier than by André Gide), to currency devaluations (on which Paul Reynaud demonstrated their utility), and also to the leading French economists of the day — Francois Simiand, Professor at the Collège de France and Charles Rist, Assistant Governor of the Bank of France and Member of The Institute. Searching for clarity, these great economic figures of their day set in motion the outstanding tradition of economic thought in France which stretches from Francois Simiand to Alfred Sauvy, from Poincaré to Paul Reynaud and Raymond Barre. And this also reveals the other tendency that lay behind the speculations of these 'pedagogues of action': economic planning, which General de Gaulle was to implant on the Liberation but which was not the result of the simple adoption of a model or even the product of some law of the natural sciences, but the conscious and carefully studied fruit of previous experience (pp 25, 34-35, 134).

All this, it might be said, smacks of élitism. But why not? Was it better to know the importance of the forty-hour week — at a moment when the Nazis

were rearming at full pelt and many German economists who had been driven into exile were already warning where the policy of autarchy must lead — or not to know, as was the case of the Labour Minister Pomarede, even what his own Inspectors who had been instructed to measure its monthly impact on industry, thought of it?.<sup>3</sup> Was it reactionary to be wary of any measure which might weaken or slacken effort at a time when the problem of production received all too little attention and the anxieties that it gave rise to bore no relation to the severity of the crisis, and at a time when it was still the practice to refer to 'consumption' in the singular when increasingly and imperatively attention should have been directed to consumption in the plural and above all in the national sense? Did recognition of the need to devalue early and adequately, as the Louvain *Institut de Conjoncture* had been preaching and the Belgian government had understood, mean being 'on the Right'? Our recognition should go instead to those financial administrators like the liberal Jacques Rueff who did everything in his power to rescue the monetary situation while he was Director of the *Mouvement General des Fonds* under Vincent Auriol, or like Wilfrid Baumgarten the former director of Paul Reynaud's secretariat (in 1930) who made every effort to give credibility to the Auriol-franc which had been born amidst the panic (at least of Public Finance, otherwise it was holiday time!) during the summer of 1936.

Is it possible in a few words to give an overall assessment of *X-Crise*, as A. Sauvy and J. Ullmo have attempted to do in this volume? In terms of method, the Centre's aim was not to accumulate theories (which was useless of Simiand) but rather to look for ways of synthesizing the different problematics and to emphasize the functional character of economic inquiry. The Centre had 372 Polytechniciens, 307 non-Polytechniciens and 75 associated members — according to the research by Desaunay — making it a marvellous training ground for senior administrators and by 1939 it had about 2000 members. A second aspect of the Centre's work was the interest in public welfare and population, and A. Sauvy draws attention both to its humanistic activities (the publication of economic classics from the XVIIIth century onwards) and to the creation of an organization for measuring and predicting demographic developments: the *Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques*. More generally, and in spite of their inevitable imperfections, a whole series of institutions that were created during the post-war reforms were inspired by the *X-Crise*: the *Ecole Nationale d'Organisation Economique et Sociale*, *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) as well as the *Grandes Ecoles Economiques et Sociales* which were reorganized to bring them into line with the needs of public administration. National planning and accounting also found their principal means of imple-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Sauvy's preface to J.-P. Cuvillier, *Vincent Auriol et les Finances Publiques du Front Populaire ou l'alternative du contrôle et de la liberté (1933-1939)*, Publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse 1978.

mentation in the programmes of inter-industrial exchange and economic exchange (Claude Gruson) and in other ideas first put forward by the men who had received their training either through *X-Crise* or through the Polytechnique. In the field of trades union activity, André Bergerou remains very much within the tradition of Robert Lacoste.

One question that has yet to be answered is the use that has been made of their recommendations by the State and by entrepreneurs who have not always understood the remark made by Robert Lacoste who as a member of the CGT in 1937 stated, with direct reference to Roosevelt: 'Economic reconstruction depends on the adoption of social values more noble than the simple pursuit of profit: the trades union formula of nationalisation is a compromise between the need to bring the economy under the cloak of the general interest while allowing the flag of Liberty to fly freely' (p. 163).

G. Brun's study presents the more constructive achievements of *X-Crise*, but where is there mention of the debate on falling birth rates, on private cars, on nuclear power stations, on the investment of savings in industry, on industrial relations? If we are to believe Machiavelli, politics is the art of seduction, and condemns itself to failure if it attempts to predict too seriously or if it fails to predict at all. At least in a democracy, since dictatorships do not keep registers of souls.

This is an important book which will serve to remind both historians and politicians that it is not possible to build with sand and wind. Gerard Brun's work brings to life, amidst those who are concerned only with political debates and a France whose silence is often mistaken for 'depth', serious France, a sense not only of preparation but also of responsibility, to which in the years between 1931 and 1939 *X-Crise* gave a voice that one would like to hear more often.

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