
REVIEWS OF BOOKS

F. CARON, *Histoire économique de la France, XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris, A. Colin. Collection U, 1981, pp. 320.

Professor Caron's work is one of a rare breed: a textbook with a clearly defined, methodically pursued, thesis. To be sure, the author has not violated the canons of the genre and spared no effort to be exhaustive. The final result is nevertheless more than the sum of its parts, and the weaving of the myriad of specialized monographs into coherent chapters produces more than a simple summary. He is a unique author indeed who can successfully strike a balance between multi-faceted description and interpretative depth.

Professor Caron's themes are both methodological and substantive. The thrust of the author's approach is frankly directed against those who seek explanations for French economic history outside the realm of the economy, specifically those who are fond of sociological or psychological arguments. The patronat is no longer to be perceived as innately incapable of progress or wedded to outmoded "Malthusian" strategies of survival. Rather, French entrepreneurs adapted as best they could to a specific economic environment in which periods of stagnation were punctuated by powerful, yet short-lived, spurts of growth. Moreover, a priori norms setting out what the economy should have resembled at a particular time are rejected in favour of close scrutiny of the real situation and what contemporaries thought about it. This book has a wealth of data, charts, tables and graphs. Quantitative methods buttress broad interpretation, and the analysis of the various sectors of the economy takes precedence over the history of institutions and their policies. Periodization is subject to an economic rationale, thus replacing division according to political events.

Substantively, Professor Caron lays particular stress on the continuity of France's economic history. He sees no break between the pre-1945 goals and the postwar orientation toward continued growth. No individual or programme can be given credit for the relatively sustained expansion of the past three decades. These notions were all present in volumes III and IV of the *Histoire économique et sociale de la France* to which Professor Caron was a contributor. They are further underscored in this work. Finally, the author is unequivocally in favour of the continuance of industrialization and investment in capital-intensive production. He hopes no halt will be called to them on account of the dramatic rise in unemployment since 1974. Perhaps Professor Caron pleads too much. Zero-growth theories are not seriously heeded, least of all when absolute contraction has become a painful reality in entire branches of the economy.

Parts I and II deal with the XIXth and XXth centuries. Professor Caron seems to point to the demographic variable as the decisive element of growth in the XIXth century. Demographic pressure and relative "overpopulation" threatened the social order and induced the elites to bring about rapid change in the economic structure. Such was the case under the Second Empire, following the crisis of 1848-1852. The reversal of the trend, slow at first, gathering momentum after 1870, left France with a stagnant population by the 1890's and constituted a backdrop to the search for stability, moderation and equilibrium.

After 1875, a slackening in the growth of national revenue is noticeable, both in total and per capita amounts (1.5% to 0.8% and 1.6% p.a. respectively). The great divide in France's economic history in the last century occurs between the 1860's and the 1870's with the passage from growth to stagnation in agriculture, immediately after the golden age of the Second Empire. And yet the "agricultural crisis" was really a transition period. "La 'stagnation agricole' après les années 1870 résulte d'un jeu complexe de 'crisis' et de 'croissances' sectorielles et régionales, mais non pas de l'immobilisme général de cette activité comme trop d'auteurs ne cessent encore aujourd'hui de le répéter." (p. 29) Industrial growth was also slowed until the recovery of 1895-1896. The crisis of 1900-1905 turned into a prelude to the period of rapid industrialization lasting until 1929.

Scientific progress was hampered by the emphasis on teaching at the expense of research and by the prestige of the grandes écoles. When successful, inventions were individual exploits, reflecting the country's small units of production. Standardization and mass production could not take hold or give wide application to the various innovations.

Starting in 1874, the growth of the money supply was curtailed. Note issue by the Banque de France had leapt from 250 million francs in 1848 to 2.8 billion in 1873. It then fluctuated violently until 1888 in connection with the discount rate.

The fall in the price of property at the end of the century caused a transfer of savings toward securities, mostly government rentes and guaranteed railway stock. Investments tended to be concentrated in infrastructures until the 1880's. They were then relayed by investments in capital goods. The 1815-1831 cycle featured spending on roads and canals; railroads were the centrepiece of the 1831-1850 and 1861-1871 cycles. The years 1875-1882 and 1905-1913 witnessed feverish investment (up 60% and 62% respectively). Construction and municipal public works obeyed demand patterns related to population growth and mobility. As is to be expected, Professor Caron provides an especially adept section on railroads.

Prior to 1870, a favourable balance was struck between exports and imports, with both rising steadily. The balance was then reversed as the terms of trade turned against France's main exports, commodities and luxury products. From 1895 to 1913, capital exports averaged 1.1 billion a year, but the balance of payments was always positive.

Agriculture and industrialization are admirably analyzed in two chapters which must be recommended to the attention of readers. The difficulties of the end of the century can be gauged from the fact that the decline in profits, combined with the rise in money wages, encouraged capital-intensive production at a time when prices were falling. "L'entrepreneur français était incité à substituer le capital à la main-d'oeuvre au moment où les défaillances du marché et l'intensité des concurrences rendaient problématique, et souvent impossible la pleine utilisation de ce capital... Au total la "disharmonie" qui s'est progressivement affirmée entre l'économie française et l'économie internationale ne peut s'expliquer que par cette sorte d'inachèvement des structures, qui résulte des bases sur lesquelles reposait la croissance industrielle antérieure." (p. 124) Expansion in the size of businesses was impeded by the extent of the market and the concomitant necessity of reducing risks. In the first decade of the XXth century, companies employing more than 500 workers numbered 574, for a total work force of 680,000.

Part. II approaches the study of the economy in the XXth century by concentrating on three questions: growth, chronological evolution and the role of the state and of firms.

Whereas the 1920's were a period of industrial growth, the 1950's and 1960's indicate both industrial and agricultural growth. The reason for the expansion of production since World War I is to be found mainly in the rise of the productivity of labour, due to greater investment per worker. Capital formation reached an average level of 5.3% from 1950 to 1970. The result, it appears, was a fall in the rate of return and, much to Professor Caron's chagrin, a drop in the growth of investment by 1974.

The industrialization of the 1920's represented an extension of the prewar trend toward production of durable industrial goods. With the metal, chemical and electrical sectors leading the way, the rate of investment in 1929

reached 20%, the same as during the 1950's. In fact, the 1930's and the war seem to have been an interlude in the advent of mass consumption resting on economies of scale in production. By the 1960's, the objective was the attainment of competitiveness on the world market.

It was not before the early fifties that public spending was used as a means of government intervention in the economy. Budget deficits first appeared in 1975 and remained low (2% of the GNP in 1978). Until the mid-1960's, variations in the discount rate were the main method for the central bank of altering the money supply. Subsequently, the Banque de France took to entering the money market directly.

In a most skilful chapter, the author delves into the history of business management. Increased competition and greater investment are the hallmark of the last three decades. From 1960 to 1972, the profitability of companies appears to have been stable. The net margin/fixed assets ratio, for example, stood at 9.5% in 1956-1958, 10.6% in 1959-1973 and 6.5% in 1974-1975. Although the level of internal financing remained high, it tended to diminish since the 1950's as firms adjusted investments to forecast revenues and increased their indebtedness. Professor Caron makes able use of a study by Delestre and Mairesse for the INSEE to present various measures of this phenomenon and pages 270 to 275 are particularly instructive.

The only disappointing aspect of this work is the brevity of the analysis of the postwar agricultural transformation. The French economy's transition from the large variety-low turnover model to uniform mass production implied the widening of the home market. That was only achieved through the increase in the number of consumers of industrial goods and the rise of their purchasing power related to a decline in the relative price of food. It was the performance of the agricultural sector — higher production coupled with a decrease of the agricultural population — which permitted the completion of industrialization, in contrast to the results of the 1920's. The integration of agriculture and industry, be it added, took place in the context of the gradual opening of both to European competition. Along with "internationalization", modern agriculture became, perhaps for the first time, a factor contributing to industrial growth.

No brief review can render justice to the richness of Professor Caron's book. It is not likely to be surpassed for some time. Instructors will peruse it more than once with profit, and refer their students to it.

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F. GILBERT, *The Pope, His Banker, and Venice*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. x + 157.

Felix Gilbert, one of the pre-eminent historians of the Italian Renaissance, has long been fascinated by the consequences upon Venice of the War of the

League of Cambrai (1509-1517). Despite its rather cryptic title, these consequences constitute the central theme of Gilbert's most recent work. In previous works he has already suggested that the war shaped the spiritual climate of Venice; exacerbated the traditional struggle of the young against the old, the poor against the rich, the old families against the parvenues; and resulted in the formation of a ruling group consisting of the traditional elite and new families of great wealth who seized the opportunity to purchase offices from a financially crippled government. This hegemonic group, separated from the remainder of the nobility, made the crucial political decisions of the Republic.

These suggestive theses are interwoven into Gilbert's latest study on the crisis undergone by Venice during the War of the League of Cambrai, whose focus is the triangular relationship among Pope Julius II, the banker Agostino Chigi and Venice. After Venice's disastrous defeat by the League at the battle of Agnadello (1509), she sought to woo Julius II away from the League and into an alliance with her. The pope, interested in Venice's offer, demanded that Venice increase its military efforts before he would enter into an alliance with the Republic. To satisfy that demand required great amounts of money, which Venice did not have, and worse, traditional avenues of taxation and the exaction of loans from her: citizenry failed to provide the necessary funds for the war effort. In this crisis, the Venetians turned to Chigi, an extraordinarily wealthy Roman banker and financier, former of the fabled papal alum mines at Tolfa, and confidant to Julius II.

After months of protracted and complex negotiations, to which Gilbert devotes a whole chapter, Venice and Chigi finally reached an accord. Venice received an interest-free loan of 20,000 ducats, and guaranteed repayment by placing in Chigi's hands the jewels from the treasury of San Marco valued at 30,000 ducats and pledges from fifty prominent Venetians to the amount of 1000 ducats each. Chigi's profit would derive from a simultaneous arrangement with Venice. Six months after Venice received the loan, she could either repay it, which was highly unlikely given her financial straits, or purchase 7,000 cantaros of alum from Chigi at 18 ducats per cantaro. Chigi would designate someone — a person in reality acting on his behalf — to whom Venice would re-sell the alum at 17 ducats per cantaro. Beyond the profits Chigi would make from this fictitious sale, he also stood to garner handsome profits from the monopoly of selling alum in Venice at the artificially high price of 20 ducats a cantaro. This monopoly, which in the initial agreement (1511) was granted for the six months of the loan, was extended in 1512 until Venice fully repayed the loan. Relying on documents preserved in the archives of Venice, Rome and the Vatican, Gilbert has been able to delineate the political and diplomatic consequences arising from this affair, which finally ended after Chigi's death in 1520.

For Gilbert, Venice's affair with Chigi is historically significant because it reflects the tense complexities of Venetian political life during the period of

Cambrai. Also for Gilbert, Agostino Chigi, papal banker, patron of the arts and a quasi mythical figure, exemplifies Renaissance man. The elegant cameo of Chigi that is on display in this book reminds me of Machiavelli's *vir virtutis*, who, when presented with an opportunity (*occasione*) in Venice, exercises his cleverness, toughness and skill (*virtù*) in seizing it, and is favoured by fortune (*fortuna*).

In this suggestive monograph, Gilbert has touched several topics that require more thorough investigation: the political and diplomatic consequences of the War of the League of Cambrai for Venice; the moral context in which prominent Venetians voiced opposition to the arrangements concluded between Venice and Chigi on the grounds that they were usurious; and the political economy of Venice in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. And now that Gilbert has whetted our appetite, a comprehensive study of Chigi's career, especially the structure and operation of his many enterprises, would be most welcome.

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J. HARRISON, *An Economic History of Modern Spain*, New York, Holmer & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1978, pp. 187.

Joseph Harrison draws widely from recent historical writing to produce this survey of the economic history of Spain since the eighteenth century. The standard topics appear, like landholding patterns and land reform under the Old Regime, the lack of industrial takeoff in the nineteenth century, and the transition from autarky to economic liberalism under Franco, but also subjects that seem tangential, such as a long chapter on anarchist and socialist labour movements, fully covered in standard "political" histories. The availability of secondary sources produces a certain lack of balance, thus a 23-page chapter on the depression has only two pages on industry and eight on the agricultural reform of the Second Republic. I find most interesting the discussion of the displacement of industrial supremacy from the Catalans to the Basques as a result of the Spanish American War and the First World War, a clear victory for metallurgy over textiles and modern banking and corporate structure over family concerns. The ideas are not new, but the connections are made clearly. Although many of the data come from other historians, some tables draw on little known official reports and provide an addition to our general knowledge of Spain.

On the whole Harrison offers little overt interpretation, limiting himself to passing on the conclusions of others: Jordi Nadal's on the failure of the early industrial revolution, Edward Malefakis' on the aborted land reform of the Second Republic, and so on. Under this surface, however, an unstated premise underlies the book: mistaken government policies have caused one

missed opportunity after another and have largely been responsible for keeping Spain economically backward. Harrison argues that the disentail of church and public properties absorbed capital that should have gone into industry, and early railroad policy, by letting in foreign rails and rolling stock duty free, prevented the take off of the iron and steel industry. He denies General Primo de Rivera any credit for the prosperity of the 1920's, with its spurt in production of iron and electricity. Primo's "refusal to tackle the problem of agrarian reform condemned the manufacturing industry of Catalonia to a traditionally low level of internal consumption" (p. 103). Yet Harrison states later that the Second Republic, by "scrapping the public works projects inaugurated by the Dictatorship sent these prosperous sectors (metallurgy, textiles, and building) into recession" (p. 141). He condemns the two decades of Franco's autarky ("the subordination of economics to political ambitions had manifestly failed" (p. 153)), but he is doubtful that the indicative planning of the Opus Dei ministers that followed contributed to Spain's economic "miracle" of the sixties. Banks and foreign investors were more effective.

Harrison is not the first to have made these points, but I find a certain perversity in this approach to Spanish economic history. Franco is condemned for seeking self-generated import substitution, precisely the policy the nineteenth-century governments are blamed for not pursuing. Catalan industrialists are admired for modernizing the textile industry with imported steam engines and looms while Madrid is denounced for modernizing transport with imported locomotives. The central government, seen as the agent of a self-serving backward agrarian oligarchy, is damned if it does and damned if it doesn't.

Harrison recognizes that by the end of the 1960's Spain "became the fifth industrial power in Europe" (p. 163), with industrial products replacing foodstuffs and raw materials as the major exports. This achievement, in the face of comparative economic and geographic disadvantages and the repeated destruction of wars fought on Spanish soil — Napoleonic, Carlist, Civil — does not justify the continual emphasis on the failures of Spain's governments. Antonio Gómez Mendoza has shown that if Spain had waited for its steel industry before building its railroads, the social savings would have been lower (in *Moneda y Crédito*, No. 155, Dec. 1980). Similarly, I have argued that given the resources available, the government carried out disentail about as beneficially as it could (in *ibid.*, No. 131, Dec. 1974). Rather than blaming Madrid, we need a new conceptual model to fit the Spanish case, a variant of Gerschenkron's three stages of developmental initiative. Spain would appear to fit somewhere between the bank-inspired growth of France and Germany and the state directed growth of Russia, lagged perhaps half a century. A place must be found for the role of foreign inventors, who provided railroads and mines in the nineteenth century and factories for automobiles and "electrodomesticos" in the late twentieth. Conversely, in view of their large

role, some explanation should be advanced for Spain's achievement in escaping complete dependency on its more advanced neighbours, to be found probably in the policies of both Spanish banks and government. If all the variables are properly weighed, including wars and regional conflicts, Spain's may be something of a success story instead of the manifestation of bureaucratic incompetence one is likely to perceive from Harrison's account.

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M.W. KIRBY, *The Decline of British Economic Power Since 1870*, George Allen & Unwin, London 1981.

M.W. Kirby's elegant little book surveys Great Britain's changing position in the world economy since 1870. The author aims to describe the forces undermining the preeminent position held by Britain at the middle of the XIXth century and to identify the historical origins of her current economic predicament. He presents a remarkably comprehensive yet concise account of the British economy's growth and fluctuation. Problems arise only when that account is used to evaluate policy recommendations.

In organization, the volume resembles a textbook, with chapters devoted to the late Victorian period, the 1920's, the 1930's, the Second World War, and the years since 1951. In his preface, Kirby warns the reader to expect an interpretative essay and not a text. No doubt few readers would expect the author to attempt an encyclopaedic history of the last century in a slim volume of less than 140 pages, and most will recognize the necessity of his decision to neglect certain important issues. The focus throughout is on macro-economic policy and performance and on international trade and payments. In his chapter on the late Victorian period, Kirby's central concern, as most readers of this *Journal* surely will anticipate, is whether, and if so why, Victorian Britain failed. He tends to discount traditional arguments that the exhaustion of the available technological opportunities in the staple trades and decelerating growth rates in Britain's traditional export markets served to constrain the economy's expansion. Instead, he emphasizes the implications of entrepreneurial decisions for resource allocation. The inference seems to be that concentration of a quarter of the working population and much of the capital stock in the production of textiles, coal, iron and steel, and ships may have represented "overcommitment" to the staple trades. The question of whether capital market imperfections or the idiosyncrasies of national temperament were responsible for the suboptimal degree of diversification in production is never adequately resolved. However, this is perhaps as much a failing of the literature Kirby surveys as of his own analysis of the controversy. Here as elsewhere, Kirby is most convincing when he documents his case with

evidence from the industries he has studied previously: coalmining and textiles. For instance, in assessing explanations for the relatively slow rate of productivity growth in British coalmining at the end of the XIXth century, he balances entrepreneurial behaviour and restrictive labour practices against the physical characteristics of British collieries before concluding that there was no obvious incentive for British operators to adopt highly mechanized mining techniques patterned after those prevalent in the United States.

This discussion of the late Victorian period serves as prologue to the pair of chapters on interwar Britain. If we use chapter length as a measure of how the author perceives the importance of different periods to the development of his argument, then the interwar years are when Britain can be said to have done most of its declining. A variety of factors is cited for contributing to that decline. For example, the structural transformation required of Britain by the emergence of increased foreign competition in the 'twenties undermined her position in the world economy by weakening her ability to compete in export markets. The return to gold in 1925 at a significantly overvalued exchange rate is seen as reinforcing this development. Neutralization of gold and foreign exchange flows by American and French central banks is said to have destabilized the international monetary system and threatened sterling's gold standard parity. However, the question of whether such neutralization was more frequent in the interwar period, the position with which Nurkse is associated, or no more common than in the XIXth century, as Bloomfield and Triffin attempted to show, is nowhere addressed. In any case, these are but several of a myriad of forces that are said to have undermined Britain's position in the world economy.

In the next chapter, Kirby surveys the major themes in the macroeconomic history of Britain in the 'thirties: the causes of depression and recovery, the effects of "cheap money", the role of the new industries as a distinct development block, and the boom in house-building. He raises the question of why Britain alone among the major industrial powers did not turn to a policy of concerted deflation at the beginning of the Great Depression. By phrasing the question in this way, he adopts a strikingly different perspective from Skidelsky and others who ask instead why Britain did not adopt a more expansionist policy. Kirby's explanation for the middle course pursued by the Labour Government of 1929-31 seems to be based on political exigencies. Britain was ruled during these years by a minority government caught between a Liberal Party calling for vigorous reflation and a Conservative Opposition demanding financial rectitude.

The chapter on World War II and its aftermath analyzes the depletion of Britain's reserves, the forced sale of dollar-denominated assets, the problem of the sterling balances, and the triumph of the American proposal for an International Monetary Fund over Keynes's more ambitious plan for an International Clearing Union. Each of these developments is blamed in turn for

weakening Britain's international position. The final chapter, on the performance of the British economy since 1951, is rather more speculative than the rest of the book. Instead of presenting a detailed history of macroeconomic fluctuations over the last three decades, Kirby adopts a journalistic stance, reviewing popular explanations for Britain's economic malaise. The slow expansion of traditional export markets, low investment rates in the private sector, and poor labour-management relations make their inevitable appearance, but places of honour are reserved for Bacon and Eltis's thesis that slow productivity growth can be attributed to the expansion of the tertiary sector, and for the New Cambridge hypothesis that recent difficulties reflect British manufacturers' increasing inability to compete with foreign producers. Kirby is sympathetic to the New Cambridge view that import controls may provide British industry with a much-needed "breathing space" by increasing profitability in manufacturing and promoting fixed capital formation. Some readers may have difficulty accepting the arguments for protection repeated by Kirby: e.g., that there is a binding balance of payments constraint on British growth despite the flexibility of the exchange rate, or that a relatively low income elasticity of demand for Britain's exports fetters the growth of the economy despite the endogeneity of the international terms of trade. Kirby appears to be convinced by the Balogh-Kaldor argument that the only occasions on which Britain's industrial structure was transformed for the better were during wartime and under the cover of tariff protection in the 1930's. He fails to question whether other measures might dominate import control as an efficient response to the domestic distortions which presumably impede the economy's expansion.

Such quibbles pertain exclusively to the final chapter of the book. Throughout the first four chapters, issues are treated in a thorough, evenhanded manner. Kirby maintains an agnostic viewpoint worthy of the author of a textbook. Copious footnotes contain references to nearly all of the most important secondary sources and principal government documents of the period. As a supplementary reading for a first course in British economic history, this book can be highly recommended.

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B. LAURIE, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980, xiii, 273 pp.

In this monograph, Bruce Laurie makes an important contribution to the steadily growing literature on American working-class culture. Examining the lives of white workingmen in Philadelphia in the first half of the nineteenth century, he explores the range of cultural groups and the ways these groupings evolved under the pressures of demographic and economic change.

An initial chapter delineates the diversity of industrial settings in antebellum

Philadelphia and succeeding chapters move from this material base to explore the cultural dynamics of the Philadelphia working class in these decades. Laurie defines three cultural strands — revivalists, traditionalists, and radicals — in terms very close to those used by Alan Dawley and Paul Faler in a seminal article.¹ He moves beyond this earlier analysis in several important respects, exploring more fully the impact of organized religion on these cultural groupings and analyzing their evolution over time. His study thus moves beyond a static categorization of the varieties of working-class responses and becomes a framework within which to understand the dynamics of working-class culture in one city.

Within this framework Laurie examines the Ten Hour Movement of the mid-1830s, the depression of 1837-1844, and the rebirth of a transformed labour radicalism after 1845. Throughout he links the working class to other groups and individuals, such as evangelical ministers, middle-class radicals, and immigrant political bosses, that helped shape working-class responses in these decades. Laurie draws heavily on the work of the English labour historian, E.P. Thompson, and understands that class is a relationship (not simply a category). Thus he casts a wide net to include the range of actors who influenced and shaped the variety of working-class cultures he identifies.

The most important contribution of the book is the way Laurie demonstrates the subtle interplay of radical and revivalist strands within working-class thought and action in Philadelphia between 1830 and 1850. Initially the two strands stand in strong opposition — one rationalist and secular, the other emotional, expressive, and other-wordly. In the early 1830s, at least, the revivalist influence on working-class life in Philadelphia appears to have been quite limited. Radicals, through the work of the General Trades' Union and of the Ten Hour Movement, carry the day and have a profound influence on the working lives of the skilled and unskilled, native-born and immigrant, in Philadelphia. Evangelicalism, however, penetrates into the working class during the depression years of 1837-1844 and a new focus on morality and individualism undermines the unity of the labour movement. Finally, in the second half of the 1840s, we see a synthesis of these formerly opposed cultures in the emergence of a revivalist radicalism which combines elements of each strand. The new radicalism differs from the old in crucial respects, embraces the emergent nativism of the decade, and is limited to the skilled, craft branches of industry. Much of what labour historians understand to be the character of organized labour in the second half of the nineteenth century is prefigured in the evolution Laurie charts for workers in antebellum Philadelphia.

While there is much of value in this study, several limitations deserve brief mention. First, given the emphasis on the evolution of each of these

¹ "Working-Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution: Sources of Classism and Rebellion," *Journal of Social History* (1975), 9:466-80.

subcultures over time, there might well have been more consideration of the corresponding evolution of industrial structures and work settings. In chapter one Laurie explores this theme but this quantitative evidence is drawn exclusively from the 1850 manufacturing census. What discussion he presents on change over time is based entirely on secondary accounts, and one wonders whether or not comparable earlier data might not be available to buttress the argument. Much of the discussion of changes in the size of firms, the location of work, and the evolution of work settings is based more on assertion and plausibility than on solid evidence. Considering that the discussion of working class culture ends with 1850 it is striking that the consideration of work settings pretty much begins and ends with that date. We could hope for a tighter connection between these two aspects of the study.

Although the cultural picture of Philadelphia's working class which emerges here has a detail and subtlety which are exemplary, there are several points where the analysis could be more sharply focused. The traditionalists within Laurie's analysis strike me as a problematic group. There is a tendency in the analysis to attribute racial and anti-immigrant violence to traditionalists although much of the nativist violence of the 1840s undoubtedly drew strength from the revivalist resurgence of the depression era. In the initial discussion of responses to industrialization, "traditionalism" has a specific meaning — as a kind of backward-looking opposition to the work- and time-discipline associated with emergent industrial capitalism. In later chapter Laurie seems to use the term in a different way, without explicitly acknowledging the change. By the 1840s the term refers most often to inter-ethnic group conflict in neighbourhoods rather than to recalcitrant opposition at the workplace. Exactly how nativist attacks on Irish neighbourhoods or Irish attacks on Black homes and institutions are "traditionalist" is unclear. Evidently cultural identification takes precedence over purely economic considerations for some working-class groups in certain contexts, but how such behaviour fits within Laurie's framework seems problematic.

These comments should serve to point out that Laurie's study focuses on some of the thorniest interpretative problems facing labour historians today — the connection of material life and cultural formations and the interrelation of class, religion, and ethnicity. We cannot expect him to solve them in one swift thrust, but can be grateful that he has raised them so clearly and forcefully as to shift future discussion to a higher plane.

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E. LE ROY LADURIE, *The Mind and the Method of the Historian*, translated by Siân and Ben Reynolds, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp. 310.

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie is one of the most intelligent historians writing today; and how intelligently and how consistently *well* he writes! he is also among the most productive, imaginative and wide ranging of his ilk. He has written on peasants in Languedoc and beyond, on the history of climate, on manners and morals and demography and plagues, on land tenure and carnival festivities turning to riot and massacre and, of course, on Montaignou. In time, though a specialist of early modern Europe, his scholarly interests stretch from 1,000 A.D. to well beyond the French Revolution — indeed, with the publication of a recent autobiography, to the present day. In space, though his work focuses on France, his scope extends as far as fleas and lice and rats may range.

Most of these interests are represented in this collection, whose first essay, about "History that stands still" is about a time between 1300 and 1700 whose demography and economy did pretty much that, and whose last essay takes off from the oil crisis of 1973 to discuss the more general question of economic and demographic crises. In between we get essays on magic practices that induce impotence; on French peasants in the XVIth century; on technology and rural folklore — which takes off from Balzac's novel, *Le Médecin de campagne*; on the Versailles of Louis XIV, inspired by a passage in the memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon; on the rural Burgundy of the XVIIIth century, based on the autobiographical writings of Rétif de la Bretonne; and on the province of Rouergue through the ages. Most fascinating of all is an essay on the world's unification by plague: with rats, fleas and baccillae turning the world of 1300-1600 into a common market of disease.

Le Roy Ladurie's specialty is continuity: *la longue durée* — in demographic trends, or family feuds, or the way people lived, laboured, ate, courted, procreated, sickened, suffered, died — during periods when the major fluctuations of the economy were determined less by political decisions than by biological factors and the rhythm of outbreaks of disease. Not that political decisions were absent from the apocalyptic quartet — war, pestilence, epidemic and famine — that long ruled the world. War spread epidemics, carried by the typhus-infected lice or fleas attached to soldiers and refugees. Thus one small army of 8,000 sent by Richelieu to subdue the Protestants in 1627-28, caused the death by plague of over a million people. But the *pax mongolica* and the Eurasiatic trade that it permitted did worse than that, and the famed Chinese silk route, not limited to the East-West transfer of pasta and other goodies, soon turned into a plague-trail of contagion.

Only the XVIIth century would shake the hold of this *histoire immobile*, begin to replace the long-lasting culture of poverty with one of slow improvements (see the take-off of an early-XIXth century peasant economy analyzed through Balzac's *The Country Doctor*), accelerating through the second half

of the XIXth century. The essay on the Rouergue, now the department of Aveyron, emancipated, in the latter part of the XIXth century by fertilizers, selective breeding, roads and rails, notes the comparative efficiency of the family-based system of agriculture and domestic activity, more responsible for economic advancement than any capitalist stimulus. These surveys of a humankind caught in the grip of very elemental forces — and of the elements themselves — suggest historic norms of suffering and want in whose context modest aspirations make good sense. Le Roy Ladurie concludes that, for our planet, most of whose people are still poor peasants, a twenty-first century looking like the Aveyron of 1925 would not be a bad utopia.

How nice it is to read an historian who writes as well as he thinks, served by translators who do justice to his lively style.

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P.J. MÜLLER, ed., *Die Analyse prozess-produzierter Daten*; H. BEST, R. MANN, eds., *Quantitative Methoden in der historisch-sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung* (Historisch-Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen, Vols. 2, 3) Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977, 254 pp. and 226 pp.

Anyone wishing to inform himself on the state of social science history in Germany and, in particular, on the application of quantitative methods to interesting, hitherto unexploited, mainly micro-data sources in this field should start by referring to the by now numerous HSF volumes as well as the new journal, *Historical Social Research*. Both are publishing organs of Quantum e.V., an interdisciplinary association for the spread of quantitative methods. Because this form of analysis has penetrated German historical practice only recently (see J. Kocka in HSF 3 for reasons), the interdisciplinary form of the diffusion of these methods has been crucial.

Although a number of the investigations surveyed in these volumes — e.g., those by Best, Spree, Borscheid, Schomerus — have since appeared as monographs, HSF 2 and 3 are still worth pointing out to readers of this journal because they are something of a milestone in the diffusion process of new methods in Germany. In volume 2 interest is centred on the peculiarities and possibilities inherent in what Stein Rokkan has called "process produced data" resulting from the normal business of government and other organizations, i.e., administrative bookkeeping as a social science data base. This is also the title of an article by W. Bick and R. Mueller. The paradigm change lying behind the switch in data base in modern sociology — away from the interview towards administrative data — is ably discussed by E.K. Scheuch. He shows that a sociologist who analyzes and deals with the problems of the latter data base, in particular, its selectivity and the use of categories different from the ones in which the researcher is interested, is like the historian study-

ing his sources, engaged in "Quellenkritik". (Quellenkritik by economists and sociologists of modern data bases is also the theme of three further articles). Moreover, the sociologist and the quantitative historian have more than method in common; Scheuch stresses that nowadays both are interested in similar paradigms: collective histories, biographies, mentalities. The contribution of P. Borscheid and H. Schomerus is noteworthy in this regard. By linking personnel books of large firms with government household inventories at marriage and death, they obtain collective biographies, especially life cycle income and wealth profiles, of different occupations (textile and metal workers) as well as information on social mobility in a number of XIXth century towns in Wuerttemberg. E. Weyrauch's analysis of the tax records of two late medieval towns in Southern Germany has an important methodological point: even large random samples of the tax books provide very biased estimates of the shape of the distribution of tax payers by income and wealth class because of the non-homogeneity of the population. Stratified sampling procedures are necessary to overcome this problem. However, since the latter procedures presuppose knowledge of the overall distribution, one wonders how sampling of such records can ever result in reliable estimates of an unknown overall distribution.

Volume 3, as the title states, concerns itself exclusively with historical themes. Each essay is an illustration of the use of more or less sophisticated quantitative methods and the use of the computer in historical research. A.E. Imhoff and T. Kuehn illustrate the use of parish registers and the "Ortssippenbuecher", national-socialist family reconstitutions, to obtain historical time series of vital statistics and other demographic variables for a number of towns in North-Hessia (Giessen and environment) from the XVIIth century to 1900. Interesting findings concerning the XVIIIth century are: that the yearly work rhythm in agriculture was a prime determinant of marriage and conception timing and that fertility declined in response to the agrarian depression, 1720-50. D. Saalfeld examines complete population censuses available for Goettingen in 1763, 1829 and 1861 (unusual sources for XIXth century Germany) and links them with tax lists to analyze changes in Goettingen's social structure during the phase of early industrialization in Germany. Saalfeld finds that the household structure remained stable over most of these hundred years (although his definition of what is stable is unclear) and that there occurred a discernible rise of the lower strata since 1829. An ingenious device to help provide data on occupational social ranks in 1829, when tax lists are incomplete, is his index of servants per household in different occupations. This index seems fairly robust over time and appears to be strongly correlated with the tax rankings of the occupations, although no formal test of the suitability of this proxy is offered. W.H. Schroeder presents a collective biography of the Social Democratic candidates to the Reichstag elections (1898-1912) and discusses the difficulties encountered in identifying the occupations of the candidates

and of their fathers. Thus information on career patterns and social mobility of the candidates remains incomplete. H.J. Schwippe's methodological commentary about the relative usefulness of different stochastic models developed by geographers, esp. by Dacey, to explain localization patterns of occupations and trades in the small Westphalian town of Ahlen in 1830 will interest historical geographers.

More substantial historical generalizations derive from the work of H. Best and R. Spree. Spree analyzes 18 business indicator time series from 1820 to 1913 — of output, prices, population, productivity — to ascertain trends and cycles in the German economy according to the latest methods of business cycle research. Particularly interesting and unusual is his argument that polynomial functions should be admitted to identify trends in the time series. Some of the trend cycles so identified, e.g., in the private discount rate and in wholesale prices of cereals, corroborate, Spree believes, the 'take-off' hypothesis for Germany in the latter case, and the hypothesis of a Kondratieff cycle, in the former. Best analyzes 3,775 petitions, signed by 397,000 persons, on tariffs and trade to the Frankfurt Parliament, 1848/49, to obtain information about the social, regional, and economic background of free trade and protectionist movements in Germany. His major finding is that different interest groups — factory owners, small-scale handicraftsmen and workers — increasingly co-operated in signing protectionist petitions. This result questions an important thesis about the Revolution in 1848/49, namely the argument that increasing class conflicts precluded any effective and unified action among members of the bourgeoisie, labour and the handicrafts.

The work in these volumes, then, is an indicator that styles of German historical research have been enriched by a new methodological variant. Increasingly it will pay to take cognizance of that fact.

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Prosopographie des élites françaises (XVIe-XXe siècles). Guide de recherche, Paris, CHRS, 1980, 178 p. (Publications de l'institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine).

The decision to publish this outstanding research guide is to be warmly welcomed and it well merits its title. The programme for this massive research project is very clearly defined: 'It is a question of encouraging and comparing researches which, by means of collective biographies, will enable us to understand better how these élites were composed as well as the ways in which they evolved, disintegrated and were reformed in each of the periods and sectors examined'.

The work is divided into five clearly distinguished sections: 1. The prin-

cial instruments of research; 2. The élites: a collective approach (nobility, bourgeoisie, notables, identification, national elites and local elites); 3. State and administration (governmental and administrative elites, political elites, military, naval and colonial elites); 4. Business (sources, 'grand capitalism', merchants, financiers, entrepreneurs); 5. Religion, education and culture (religious élites, universities, cultural and artistic élites).

Each chapter and sub-section begins with a methodological introduction describing the approaches used, with a brief summary of existing research and selected bibliographies which list studies in order of their value for the particular topic under consideration. Short commentaries indicate the principal guide-lines for researchers to follow.

The élites are studied from two perspectives — their cohesiveness and the functions which determine their élite status, in relation to politics, business, education, religion or culture. The bibliography is organised in relation to the definition of each group and follows the criteria and processes of selection, the forms of internal hierarchy and types of activity. The regional typography and the numerous subtitles facilitate easy consultation and the index of names makes it possible to follow references quickly. This work will provide an excellent guide for social historians who wish to obtain a quick summary of research on the individual topics, and one might mention in passing that guides of this quality are sadly lacking for Swiss historians.

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