

Reviews of books

Antonio Acosta, *Los orígenes de la burguesía de El Salvador. El control sobre el café y el Estado. 1848-1890*, Sevilla, Taller de Estudios e Investigaciones Andino-Amazónicas de la Universidad de Barcelona - Instituto de Estudios sobre América Latina de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2013, XXVIII + 419 pp.

In the last three decades, historical studies on Central America witnessed very important advances as a consequence of a new interest in this region by US American, European and Mexican historians and also by the development of historical scholarship in most Central American countries. Economic history was the first field investigated in this new wave of historical research and as a result, now, we have a better understanding of the crucial period of rise and fall of the agro-export economies, mainly concentrated

on the production of coffee and bananas.

This new book written by Antonio Acosta, a historian from the Universidad de Sevilla, is another contribution to the critical study of the Central American economies during the nineteenth century. Acosta's work is not economic history, in a narrow sense, but rather a socioeconomic history that handles social and political phenomena, both as causes and consequences of economic mechanisms.

Acosta's book is divided in two parts, each one composed of five chapters. The first part analyses the 1848-1876 period in which the transition from an indigo export agriculture to coffee production starts in the Salvadoran economy, and the second part analyses the 1876-1890 phase, in which the coffee economy took-off and became the most important sector in the Salvadoran eco-

nomy. Chapters in both parts mirror each other because they share the same subject.

Indeed, chapters 1 and 6 deal with the political system, the government's actions and their principal results. Chapter 6 analyses the process of state expansion, where the main policies were the enhancement and protection of coffee interests. These policies are known as "liberal reforms" in Central American history, a term that Acosta avoids. Chapters 2 and 7 study the public policies for the development of infrastructure, roads, ports, telegraph, railways, aqueducts, and street lightning. Chapters 3 and 8 address the questions of credit and currency. Those are the most important in the book because they show how Salvadoran economy turned on chains of credit between the different social and economic actors and between these actors and the state. Indeed, the Salvadoran state was greatly dependent on credits and loans from the local owners of capital and finance. During the period in hand, El Salvador lacked a national currency, and the first banks were founded only in the 1880s.

Chapter 4 concerns the beginnings of coffee production and chapter 9 focuses on the coffee economy's consolidation, supported by the state and brought about by sweeping reforms in land tenure systems and patterns of labour supply. Coffee also changed the regional distribution of power and wealth in El Salvador with the decline of the Eastern region, dependent on indigo production, and the rise of the Central and Western regions where coffee agriculture took root. Both chapters show how credit was a key factor in every level of the coffee economy. Finally, chapters 5 and 10 study the fiscal system and the debt of Salvadoran state. Like any other Latin American state of those years, the Salvadoran state suffered severe problems of financing and constantly had to ask for voluntary or forced loans from the private sector. The main fiscal revenues came from the taxes on imports and the monopoly of sales of alcohol, and the principal expenses were the armed forces and the servicing of the debt. At the end of the period studied in this book, the Salvadoran state's financial

difficulties aggravated and the government was compelled to ask for a British loan, so an external debt was added to the traditional internal debt. This state relied strongly on the municipalities for its daily operation, a fact that raises the question of its degrees of "statehood". For the author, against a common view, the Salvadoran state was neither "weak", nor oriented by *laissez-faire* principles, in spite of its chronic financial problems.

Acosta's research is based upon an extensive use of governmental sources like official journals, annual reports of different ministries, annual addresses by the chief Executive to the Congress, legislation and other documents from the Salvadoran national archives. The notarial documents are particularly useful for the purposes of this study because these sources open a window on the real functioning of daily economic life and social relations.

Theoretically, Acosta's book is built on the concept of "oligarchy", a type of rule with colonial roots and dependent on pre-capitalist social relations of production. The

author rejects strongly the notion, very common nowadays, of "elites", mainly because he wants to highlight the exploitative basis of the economic success of this class and the dark side of this class wealth, the continuous worsening of living conditions of Salvadorans, particularly the rural population. The "oligarchy"'s economic success was grounded on control over the state, the monopolization of land, and the submission of labour to harsh conditions. Here, the author criticizes the Salvadoran historian, Héctor Lindo, who attributes the coffee economy boom to the entrepreneurial spirit of Salvadoran elite. Acosta emphasizes that the Salvadoran ruling classes never agreed to finance the state by paying taxes but; on the contrary, they took advantage of the state's permanent financial problems by lending it money.

The most important insight of this study is to highlight the key role of credit in the economy, and particularly in coffee production. All economic relations depended on loans and debts, from the top of the social structure to the bottom; for instance, in coffee production

“habilitaciones”, small loans taken by peasant and labourers from merchants and landowners were widespread and they locked peasantry and rural workers in a relationship of exploitation and dependency on the ruling groups. In fact, the “oligarchy” was essentially a class of merchants and moneylenders, and not simply a landowner class. In Marxist terms, they were a ruling class based upon commercial and usurer’s capital, not exclusively and principally on controlling land.

Acosta’s main contributions are to propose a deeper and more detailed picture of the operation of the Salvadoran economic system, to specify the modalities of accumulation by the ruling classes, and to give a new significance to the question of financing. Indeed, credit was instrumental in the ascent of the Salvadoran bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century. In this sense, this study is a welcome invitation to pursue research in this field, particularly by a broad

and systematic utilization of notarial documents.

It is necessary to point out that this research will appear for some historians “too classic” as socio-economic history because it did not address the questions of ethnicity and gender, considered unavoidable in other studies about Central American agro-export economies. Another limitation of this study is the absence of a more profound dialogue with the expanding field of Central American coffee history, an exchange that could eventually allow him to establish comparisons and detect connections between the coffee economies of these countries. Finally, the extent of formation, or the level of “stateness” of the Salvadoran state is overlooked in this study. Even so, Antonio Acosta has made a very useful and relevant contribution to Salvadoran and Central American historiography.

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Andrea Caffarelli, *Il leone ferito: Venezia, l'Adriatico e la navigazione sussidiata per le Indie e l'Estremo Oriente (1866-1914)*, Viella Editore, Rome, 2014, p. 275.

The importance of the navy in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century is a given of history. However, we know little about the promotion of the growing national mercantile marine, of Italy in order to launch it into worldwide flourishing markets, which had already been a prerogative of the great European powers. In this context, we have a little knowledge of the role of Venice and its port, its men, and its navy.

Venice had been a great maritime power from the late Middle Ages down to the modern age and it had dominated the eastern Mediterranean and its trades towards the East. Many years later, although the subjects were the same – Venice and the East – the geopolitical and strategic contexts of Venice had changed. The new background was a world dominated by new nation states and growing imperialism.

The Italian seaward city of Venice had to deal with enemies both at home and abroad, and with new and old opponents, like Genoa. This city was a competitor of Venice in the past but also currently, together with Austria-Hungary: its weight in the Adriatic overshadowed the renaissance of Venice, which was to the advantage of the modern and prosperous port of Trieste.

The reconstruction of the Venetian economy at this stage is the focus of Andrea Caffarelli's volume, based on unpublished sources collected in the main national archives, both public and private. Among them, from the most important, are the papers belonging to the Luzzatti's archive and the papers of Pietro Foscari's private archive, both set in Venice, together with documents from the Municipal Archives of Venice, the Archives of the Chamber of Deputies and the Central State Archive of Rome. These archival sources exist with printed primary sources in various historical libraries of Italy.

The text is made up of seven chapters, and it deals with the period between 1866 and 1914 compre-

hensively, describing all the attempts made reintroduce Venice as a new national port. This process also involved the creation of a commercial company that would have opposed the Austrian Lloyd Adriatico, Line which was the uncontested ruler of the most profitable Adriatic routes.

This new competition would have happened also through the enhancement of the Adriatic Sea routes to Venice, as a melting pot of trades and passengers both to Italy and to Europe.

Each chapter deals with specific events, which are all well defined within the national and international context of that period. The author bypasses the great past of Venice and he introduces his readers to the post-unification period, with all its potential and contradictions, focusing with proficiency on the attempts made to reintroduce Italian trades.

In the first chapter (*Post nubila Phoebus*) the author describes the hopeful enthusiasm caused by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1867. He highlights the opportunities that Italy and Venice would have had by exploiting the opening of

the canal, as Venice could have become a port of trade in Europe, a natural bridge for the trades to and from the Eastern Mediterranean.

In another theme, he underlines the main obstacle for the fulfilment of this project: the awareness of the infrastructural weakness of Venice and that of the Italian navy, even if the new nation – in step with the other European countries – appeared ready to support the increase of trade through special economic aid.

A peculiar fact was that at first foreign companies, which were more modern and experienced than the Italian competitors, benefited from these aids. They would have had the initial opportunity of reintroducing the trades to and from Venice immediately, while waiting for the development of the Italian companies. In the second chapter (*La soluzione di compromesso*) the author describes a specific case of the relaunch of a Venetian shipping company in a project connecting Venice and Egypt, which was considered the bridgehead to the far East. The author underlines the infrastruc-

tural problems of united Italy, dealing with building of Adriatic railway, which had to take over the Mediterranean trades of Brindisi and then reach the centre of the European continent by rail. There was also the need to finance the national shipping lines, especially those in the Veneto region. Despite the efforts made the foreign companies, especially the British ones, offered much faster, more suitable and tested connections to the Indies.

In the third and fourth chapters (*Rule the waves, Britannia!* and *Dal'India all'Estremo Oriente*) the author describes the struggling of Venice while trying to define its own identity, testing its boundaries and limits in order to establish itself as a trading power, its role in the Mediterranean Sea and in the East. Trade in this region was considered a suitable place to set up the rebirth and new horizon of development of the Italian city. Throughout this difficult path in the search for an identity and a new role, Venice also faced the hostility of other shipping companies, which considered it as a dangerous competitor both abroad

and in Italy. This danger became real when Venice became free of a binding agreement with a British company, and decided to take charge of the management of a service, which offered a new, different route to the Indies.

The fulfillment of this new strategy, highlighted in chapter five (*La soluzione veneziana*), shows the opportunity that Venice had to play a leading role in the new commercial position sought by a united Italy. The author keeps his historical analysis, focusing on the idea that such a choice had a high symbolic value for the potential of a forward-looking city and young nation. However, there were many difficulties as well, caused by the lack of effective intervention by the government. The economic aids that it could give to the different shipping companies were very small. Even so, these aids could have been crucial for the prosperity of a local shipping company.

At the beginning of 1905, the Grimaldi Commission – a permanent district commission for navy and railway services of the Venice port – highlighted the differences in

the quality of the service offered by the different shipping companies. It especially focused on the infrastructural deficiencies of Venice and its hinterland. There was no will to invest in Venice and on its development. Indeed, Venice had to fight within the new national boundaries – the political dictates of Rome and the antagonism of Genoa – in order to promote the Adriatic Sea routes.

In chapters six (*L'incubo nazionale*) and seven (*Il fallimento della marina sovvenzionata*) the author describes the downward spiral of the grant-aided shipping lines and the process of relaunch of Venice as a maritime strategic port of united Italy. Indeed, at a governmental level, there had always been a special care and consid-

eration for Genoa and its businessmen, and its shipping lines – which were much stronger and closely connected with the great banking institutions in the country. This system was so powerful and developed that it always had good chances of success when important choices had to be made.

The completeness of the analysis conducted by the author and the rich and varied documentation and bibliography examined make this work an exemplary study for understanding the symbolic implications that the subject discussed had in the public consciousness in Veneto between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

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Giuseppe De Luca, Gaetano Sabatini (eds.), *Growing in the Shadow of an Empire. How Spanish Colonialism Affected Economic Development in Europe and in the World, XVIth-XVIIIth cc.*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2012, pp. 445.

This very important volume col-

lects twenty-one essays initially presented at the international seminar, "Economic Growth Genealogies in the Shadow of the Spanish Empire: Comparing Countries, Regions, Domains and Boundaries (16th to 19th Centuries)" held in Milan, Italy on April 14-17, 2007, and organized by Red

Columnaria, a network of scholars active in fourteen countries interested in studying the Spanish empire in a global perspective. All the essays included explore the economic development of different territories of the Spanish monarchy, and its interaction with local social, political and institutional systems.

The essays in the first section of the volume examine Spanish fiscal policy in Castile (José Ignacio Andrés Ucendo), northeastern Brasil (Leonor Freire Costa), Milan (Stefano Agnoletto), and Sicily (Simona Laudani), and in different ways debunk the traditional view of rapacious Spanish taxation responsible for raising wages and prices and inducing stagnation and crisis. The fiscal burden was not excessive and often benefited the extended circle of tax farmers, who invested their profits in important financial and entrepreneurial activities fostering economic growth.

The six essays in the second section shed light on different aspects of monetary policy and manufacturing activities in several provinces of the empire. While in his essay,

Germano Maifreda discusses the culture of the time, in her piece, Elena María García Guerra examines the penetration of a money economy in Castile, despite the often complex and confusing rules and regulations imposed by the central government. The contributions by Stefano D'Amico, Giorgio Monestarolo, Vittorio Beonio Brocchieri and Giuseppe Maria Longoni, all centred on the State of Milan, stress the overall vitality of Spanish Lombardy, fostered by a profitable interaction between the Spanish government and local elites.

Commercial strategies and networks are at the centre of the third section. Jean Philippe Priotti analyzes the dynamics of Franco-Spanish trade in the late sixteenth century, while the studies of Leonida Tedoldi on Malaga, of Rafael Guerrero Elecalde and Griselda Tarragó on the Tagle y Bracho family in Peru, and of Griselda Tarragó on the Argentinian city of Santa Fe, highlight the importance of negotiations between local elites and central powers, and the role played by interpersonal relations in determining the econo-

mic prosperity or decline of a specific locale. In the final essay, Daniele Pompejano argues that in the Realm of Guatemala in the first half of the 18th century, fiscal reforms triggered trade and a transition to a monetary economy.

The six contributions in the concluding section of the volume analyze a range of mediating powers and institutions in different territories of the empire, and their interaction with more general political and economic dynamics. Mafalda Soares da Cunha examines the social and political strategies characterizing the House of Braganza in Portugal. Katia Visconti, Emanuele Colombo and Cinzia Cremonini focus on the State of Milan in the seventeenth century, analyzing respectively the fragmentation of the large feudal estates in the interest of the local elites, the active mediating function of the larger rural communities (quasi-cities), and the important role played by the *Congregazione delle Stato* mediating among the different urban and rural components of the state, and between Milan and Madrid. In the remaining two essays, Marina

Cavallera studies the complex relations among the multiple centres of political and economic power active in an important transit area such as the Po basin, while Maurizio Sangalli examines the economic and educational strategies of the religious congregation of the Piarists, which settled in the 18th century in the border area between the Habsburg Empire and the Republic of Venice.

In conjunction with another collection of essays recently published within the network of Red Columnaria (Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, Gaetano Sabatini, eds., *Polycentric Monarchies. How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?*, Eastbourne, Sussex Academic Press, 2012), the contributions in this volume emphasize in different ways the interconnection of the different provinces of the Spanish Empire, and the primacy of negotiation rather than coercion in regulating the relations between centre and periphery. They also challenge the idea that the backward Spanish institutions negatively affected the economic growth

of the provinces of the Empire, stressing the large degree of political and economic integration of the different territories and the creation of profitable commercial networks and financial markets. At least until the beginning of the

eighteenth century most of the provinces of the empire blossomed, introducing effective and often innovative forms of economic activity.

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G. Maifreda, *I denari dell'inquisitore. Affari e giustizia di fede nell'Italia moderna*, Torino, Einaudi, 2014, pp. XX-364.

This book looks at the history of the Roman Inquisition in modern times from the viewpoint of its financial management, analysing the creation of its management model and the methods used to raise and collect the money needed to run the complex Holy Office. The author also maintains that the Holy Office's introduction of specific financial management techniques significantly contributed to establishing public approval, thus increasing the effectiveness of the fight against heresy. In the first chapter Maifreda offers a short reconstruction of the events that led to the foundation of the Holy Office. He then takes a closer

look at the institution's financial management, emphasising the traditional fiscal division of ordinary and extraordinary revenue. The former comprised a set part, usually the total amount of revenue obtained every year from ecclesiastical benefices and pensions obtained from bishops' revenues, and a variable part, resulting from income related above all to direct and indirect management of real estate assets and interest on loans and credit instruments. While extraordinary revenue comprised revenue related to confiscations and fines inflicted on offenders, donations from other Inquisitions or the Roman Congregation, bequests, sales of assets and securities and contributions from private individuals.

As the author points out, and as already been highlighted in hi-

storiography, the pontificate of Paul IV Carafa represents an all-important discontinuity in the history of the modern Inquisition because this pope made some important changes to the institution. Firstly, he imposed the seal of silence on all those taking part in the Congregation's activities under penalty of excommunication *latae sententiae*. Then, as regards the financial and organisational aspects, in 1558 it was proclaimed that no ordinary tribunal could intervene in the assignment of vacant ecclesiastical benefices due to heresy, reserving their collation to the Holy See. This occurred two years after the affirmation of the provision on the basis of which benefices were to be looked on as vacant from the day when, in the inquisitors' opinion, the crime of heresy had been committed. Therefore, the retroactivity provided for in this law allowed popes to revoke the assigned benefices, including those dating from decades prior to sentencing of the ecclesiastic holding said benefice, claiming them for themselves. In addition to this, there was the economic as well as jurisdictional rivalry bet-

ween inquisitors and bishops whose disputes were mediated by the Supreme Congregation that favoured the popes and the Congregation. In this way they could earn valuable sources of sustenance for their tribunals and keep a certain level of pressure on the leading players of Diocesan ecclesiastical life. The chapter ends with an analysis of the standard funding model of outlying tribunals that had a dual element of risk: on the one hand because the traditional benefice system made their most important sort of revenue susceptible to the variability of relations with the regional states' secular political authorities, whose actual use of benefices was subordinate; on the other because said model made the Inquisition's set revenue dependent on mainly land-related asset management, and hence affected by wars and famine.

In the second chapter, the author outlines some mechanisms regarding money circulation, solidarity and financial compensation formulated in the Italian Inquisition network between the 16th and 17th centuries. Political-geographical

contiguity was the characteristic which was deemed to be of central importance in the local offices of the Roman Inquisition, and hence money almost always moved around between inquisitors working within the same state. The same criterion helped consolidate a process already in force from the second half of the 15th century, of putting the working of church tribunals in Italy «under state control». Moreover, Rome intervened in the financial affairs of its tribunals, forcing the wealthier inquisitors to make more or less sizeable donations to less well-off colleagues. These forms of cooperation crossed over the political borders of states, reinforcing the political-territorial logic behind the assignment of perpetual pensions. After having looked at the example of Naples, the author examines more closely the figure of the inquisitor within the Holy Office's financial framework. The Inquisitions' outlying tribunals were not offices manned by employees with specifically granted, regular resources. The inquisitor was an ecclesiastic who usually worked inside the walls of his Order's

convent, cooperating closely, at times with the support of the confraternities of St. Peter the Martyr that had sprung up throughout the peninsula at the end of the Middle Ages. Moreover, this chapter shows how the inquisitors ran their tribunals with great autonomy, including putting at risk their own personal wealth. This management model encouraged virtuous financial practices for two reasons. Firstly, because the inquisitor was obliged to personally contribute when accounts failed to tally, and secondly because it was very difficult for the ecclesiastical judge to regain credibility when this had been lost. In the third chapter, the author tackles the issue of pecuniary penalties in the creation and maintenance of the Inquisition system. The imposition of fines and other types of tariff penalties and the total or partial confiscation of heretics' assets actually played a role of primary importance in the history of the Church and medieval society. Unlike confiscations, which required complex procedures and involved a number of parties and institutions, fines were

at the inquisitor's discretion. It was the Roman organisation that asked inquisitors to obtain funding from repressive activities during the most difficult moments of the war against heresy, being waged by the local tribunals of the Inquisition that were virtually lacking any fixed ordinary revenue. At the same time, efforts were being made to create suitable structures for the ecclesiastical judge's activities, whose costs created a major incentive for looking for new revenue, together with the increase in the number of salaries paid to the inquisitors' assistants. It is no mere coincidence that, between the 16th and 17th centuries, when heresy had virtually been eradicated throughout the Italian peninsula, new objects of persecution such as witchcraft, sorcery, cursing, imprecation and breaking of bans by the Jews were subject to pecuniary penalties. It is not easy to establish to what extent the immediate need for money determined the inauguration of Inquisition proceedings and affected their outcome. For example, as Maifreda points out, in the lawsuits against Jews, some

trials and sentences would appear to be determined by the need for money in the office bringing the lawsuits.

In any case, the inquisitors' activities were set against a series of relations with monastic orders. During the Holy Office's first century of existence the almost total independence of ecclesiastical judges inside convents was acknowledged. On the other hand, the heads of the orders were asked by catholic leaders to acknowledge the priority of the needs of the war against heresy, and consequently to accept the prerogatives of the office of inquisitor in exchange for acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the hierarchy inside convents. Therefore, the relations of interest between the Inquisition and religious entities had to hinge on mutual reliability, not only for implementing the *officium fidei's* correct mission, but also with a view to safeguarding assets and income.

The author continues his analysis by dedicating a section to comparing the Roman, Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions from an economic viewpoint. He highlights

the differences between the various institutions and points out the action taken by secular rulers and sixteenth-century popes to change the financial set-up of Iberian ecclesiastical tribunals. To conclude this chapter, Maifreda seeks to widen his focus to take in an analysis of the Inquisition's financial management in local situations. At the end of the 16th century, when popes started to end deregulation and to assign benefice-related revenue to inquisitors, the assets and capital accumulated by local tribunals up to that time had become a fundamental part of the Inquisition's sustenance and activities. On the other hand, the inquisitors had to settle wherever they could cooperate with community representatives and their institutions, with tenants and labourers, with bankers that managed their savings and with traders that benefited from their loans. In the fourth chapter, which opens the second part of the book, the author focuses on the trials which led the Inquisition tribunals to confiscate assets belonging to offenders. Unlike the Italian situation, where knowledge in this re-

gard is still only partial, the historiography of the Spanish Inquisition has definitively established that confiscation played a key role in financing the institution. According to some scholars, it was decisive in the history of the repression of heterodoxy and ethnic-religious minorities in the Iberian peninsula. The Roman Inquisition confiscated the property of convicts a *die commissi criminis*, from the moment when the guilty party first committed the sin of heresy. Therefore, all the transactions performed by the offender since committing were automatically annulled. This was the cause of possible social and economic disintegration within the financial and merchant environment where the right of ownership and the daily exercise of trust were fundamental requisites. Moreover, confiscation of assets because of heresy almost inevitably resulted in disputes between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Relations between the Holy Office and secular governments with regard to pecuniary penalties, particularly confiscations, were never simple, especially as regards the

most politically-influential stakeholders. Relations inside the republics between ecclesiastical tribunals and the secular authorities were especially difficult, where there was more room for interference by civilian magistracies, both during trials and with regard to possible confiscations of assets. For example, lay magistrates in Venice and Genoa regularly attended plenary sessions of the Inquisition tribunal and heard the delivery of its sentences in order to keep a check on proceedings. While the Republic of Lucca was the only peninsular state to prevent the regular penetration of the Holy Office's tribunals, probably because its merchant class was widely influenced by reformist ideas. To conclude this chapter, the author pauses to consider the case of Ferrara where the inquisitors' lending activities, exercised directly by providing capital or indirectly through tax collection and ground rent agreements, equated the Holy Office with the various secular and ecclesiastical entities owning capital and real estate – confraternities, monasteries and convents – that started

to operate as institutions granting credit to the local populations during the 16th century.

In the fifth chapter, Maifreda highlights the Holy Office's activities outside the walls of convents and bishops' and popes' palaces which were identified, for many years, as the locations of religious repression in modern Italy. Confiscation violated the secrecy of trial proceedings and brought the Inquisition to the centre of society. Therefore the formal rules of procedure *in causis fidei* had to be adapted and fitted to the conventions, traditions, languages, *ethos* and codes of conduct that stemmed from the family, education and professions. By way of a typical example of confiscation, the author cites the case, within Neapolitan and pontifical organisations, of various members of the rich and influential, Portuguese, converted Jewish Vaaz family. This case resembles the interlocking of politics and self interest that could be the point of departure for Inquisition action, especially as regards the criminal sin of crypto-Judaism. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on the

diffidence that surrounded foreign banking and commercial dynasties, especially when they had undergone religious conversion. The author continues with his analysis, stopping to consider the case of Milan where, in accordance with a custom established during the 16th century, the confiscated assets were split three ways between the ducal chamber, Episcopal revenue and local Inquisition while the actual enforcement of confiscation was performed by the secular authorities, through the Extraordinary Magistrate. Maifreda subsequently analysed the Inquisition's practice of confiscating assets, highlighting the model used to perform this action. The sentence convicting the offender was transmitted by the ecclesiastical court to the civil authorities who undertook to check the assets and the existence of any other claims on the offender's assets. The agency performing the confiscation subsequently seized the property, either taking ownership directly or selling it at auction. The state magistracy collected the money in question, with the ducal chamber being responsible for distributing the two-thirds chained

by the Episcopal authority and the Holy Office's coffers. In this context, the secular magistracy only had one instrument available to perform its task which was to start an investigation similar in part to that previously carried out by the inquisitor, questioning witnesses about the facts. In this way the confiscation procedure itself was an effective instrument of investigation.

In the sixth chapter, the author outlines the array of material tasks filling the daily life of inquisitors, forcing them to interact with a range of individuals such as labourers, tenants, merchants and nobles that could affect their activities in varying contexts and situations. Therefore, the Inquisition tribunals shared the characteristic of being open management systems where the financial-equity objective was affected by variables both inside and outside of the Inquisition's organisational structure. While the internal variables comprised the managerial activities of the individual inquisitors and the Congregation of the Holy Office, the external variables were environmental, climatic, social

and cultural and could influence the economic activities which each Inquisition office had to manage. In the last chapter, the author looks at the relations between Jews and the Inquisition which raises a number of issues because of the breadth of the Holy Office's jurisdictional prerogatives. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Holy Office's tribunals dealt with matters that were not strictly religious that concerned Jews such as the management of their universities, Israelite education, the regulation of movement within territories and economic and social activities. Without overlooking the fact that modern-day relations between Jews and Christians, and the Holy Office's actions as regards the Israelites, were set against a background of badly-resolved disputes and legislation aimed at separating the economic and social spheres, Maifreda attempts to reconstruct the material framework within which relations took place, also in order to offer more depth to categories, often considered in a too monolithic manner.

To conclude, Maifreda's work re-

presents a significant evolution historiography concerning the Inquisition and the activities of the inquisitors. Not only does it focus on the Holy Office's desire to eradicate heresy and heterodox religious practices, but it also, and above all, takes into account the economic and financial framework which this institution had to deal with. It considers how this context affected the work of the inquisitors who, in conditions of financial difficulty, were obliged to abandon trials considered to be non-remunerative, and on the other to issue pecuniary penalties that went to support the almost-empty coffers of the Inquisition and their own personal wealth. Lastly, the final set of problems raised by the author concern the forms and consequences of the Holy Office's role in regulating economic activities, freedom of trade and mobility within the peninsula. These factors made the Inquisition a key player in the institutionalisation of laws regulating the market in modern-day Italy.

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Peter Gurney, Paul Corthorn, Yann Béliard (eds.), "The Great Labour Unrest", in *Labour History Review*, Special Issue, vol. 79, no. 1, April 2014, pp. 136.

On the hundredth anniversary of its conclusion, the *Labour History Review* presents a monographic issue entirely dedicated to the "Great Labour Unrest". The term refers to the strikes that occurred in Great Britain between the autumn of 1910 and the summer of 1914, from the mines of Wales to the docks of Liverpool, London and Manchester and to the industrial areas of the Northeast and Durham.

Although it represents one of the most acute stages of industrial conflict in Great Britain since Chartism, it has never received much attention: even on the occasion of its centenary, the celebratory events were sparse¹. There are some theories to explain the poor

historiographical visibility of this period. Firstly, although the strikes were widespread and of great strength, they were quickly overshadowed by the post-war strikes of 1919-1923, and by the big general strike of 1926, both of which became symbols of the English class struggle for the remainder of the 20th century. Secondly, the lack of recognition, research, study and celebration of this time by the official bodies of the English working class movement is indicative of the intrinsic characteristics of the Great Labour Unrest: a grassroots movement promoted and organised without the support of the Labour Party or the Trades Union Congress.

Although the strikes set off a broad debate, their nature and causes were not understood at the time, and they were explained as a kind of illness intrinsic to the English

¹ The only events worth mentioning are two conferences that celebrated the two most remarkable episodes of the social conflict of those years, which are the general transport strike in Liverpool in 1911 and the seven-month lockout of Dublin in 1913: "Near to Revolution? The 1911 Liverpool General Transport Strike Centenary Conference", that took place on October 8th 2011 at John Moores University in Liverpool, and "The Dublin Lock Out Centenary Conference in London", of August 24th 2013.

working class². In the same way, the first historical analyses made during the 1930s were limited to highlighting the catastrophic effects of the strikes. These effects appeared from almost nowhere and grew apocalyptically until almost destroying liberal England³. This view was overturned only in the 1960s, when Henry Pelling stated that, in fact, Great Britain was never on the brink of revolution, only interrupted by the outbreak of the Great War, but the opposite, that the liberal government in office always had the situation under control⁴. These interpretations, polarised and subjective, were overtaken by the more detailed analyses of the 1911-1914 strikes, conducted from the 1970s: in particular, by

the work of Bob Holton, who was the first to analyse the characteristics, influences and consequences of the Great Labour Unrest⁵.

It is certainly not a coincidence that to have a more specific analysis of the pre-war labour movement, we have to wait until the resumption of the labour agitations, which took place in Great Britain between 1972 and 1979. The correlation between present awareness and historiographical research seems to come together in the initiative by the *Labour History Review*, analysed here, which follows a cue from one of the celebratory events for the Great Labour Unrest centenary, where one panel bore the significant title of "1911 and the Labour Movement

² H.G. Wells, for example, in his article dedicated to the Great Labour Unrest, refers to it mainly using the term "fever". Cf. H.G. Wells, *The Labour Unrest*, Associated Press, London 1912.

³ Cf. G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, Capricorn Books, New York, 1935; E. Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, VI. *The Rule of Democracy, 1905-1914*, Benn, London, 1952, first French edition *Histoire du peuple anglais au dix-neuvième siècle. Epilogue (1895-1914)*, II. *Vers la démocratie sociale et vers la guerre (1905-1914)*, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1932.

⁴ Cf. H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late-Victorian Britain*, Macmillan, London, 1968.

⁵ B. Holton, *British Syndicalism, 1900-1914: Myths and Realities*, Pluto Press, London, 1976.

Today". The on-going European socio-economic and political crisis creates important analogies with a past that dramatically becomes topical again, such as the deepening of the gap between the poor and the rich, the lack of credibility of the labour and social-democratic parties and the decrease in the purchasing power of the less well-to-do classes.

As already discussed, the attention of historians to the labourers pre-war movement has been poor and discontinuous: the main objective of the *Labour History Review* special issue is precisely "to help rescue the 1911-1914 strike wave, that invisible mountain, from oblivion"⁶, as put by Yann Béliard in the introduction, giving historiographical dignity to a strike wave that for its intrinsic characteristics, becomes fundamental to the overview of the labour movement and the English, and wider-than-English, industrial conflict. All five essays present in the issue have as a common denominator the desire to re-examine the "Great

Labour Unrest" from different perspectives, looking at the events from a transnational point of view and using modern and sophisticated using new historiographical tools, which are essential for reaching new results.

The opening article by Emmet O'Connor, *Old Wine in New Bottles? Syndicalism and 'Fakirism' in the Great Labour Unrest, 1911-1914*, rejects the interpretation given by Dangerfield of a syndicalist agitation appearing from nowhere and without notice. Instead, it places emphasis on the continuities between the industrial conflict of 1911-1914 and that of two decades earlier, highlighting the institutional tendencies of the English trade unions, who instead of supporting the spontaneous strikes, preferred to find compromise solutions within the existing system.

In the second contribution, by James Thompson entitled *The Great Labour Unrest and Political Thought in Britain, 1911-1914*, the author focuses on the multiple and varied intellectual debate that took place

⁶ Y. Béliard, "Introduction: Revisiting the Great Labour Unrest, 1911-1914", in *Labour History Review*, vol. 79, no. 1, April 2014, p. 4.

in the United Kingdom to try and explain the causes, characteristics and possible solutions to the strikes of the time. The author highlights the central role of the three-year period of agitation in 1911-1914 in the genesis of heterodox political and socio-economic thought, which originated from both left and right, and from both Catholic and Protestant traditions, all characterised by a strong anti-statist tendency, such as, for example, the Guild Socialism of G.D.H. Cole and S.G. Hobson or the Distributism of the Catholics Hilaire Belloc and Gilbert K. Chesterton. In their article entitled *The rank-and-file in the 1911 Liverpool General Transport Strike*, Sam Davies and Ron Noon propose a socio-economic analysis of the participants in the Liverpool strikes in the week after what has been known as *Bloody Sunday*, on August 13th 1911, with the aim of trying to break down the monolithic representation of the crowd on strike, by studying the various and different parts it

was composed of. Attention is not given to the leaders of the trade union actions, but on the crowd of citizens that participated, making this a sociological study of the composition of the strikers. Thanks to a careful search of the local archives and relying in particular on the data about the injured and the arrested, the two authors managed to reconstruct a general prospectus of the people participating in the demonstrations, sorting the crowd according to gender, age, occupation and residence. The conclusions reached allow us to draw up a varied picture of the strikers: indeed, the crowd in the street did not belong to a single occupational group, with a single status or a defined religious confession; on the contrary it was characterised by a diverse range of individuals, by occupation, religion, gender and age.

Constance Bentman, in the essay *The Franco-British Syndicalist Connection and the Great Labour Unrest, 1880s-1914*, resuming a theme already dealt with in her research⁷,

⁷ Please see the following essential works: C. BANTMAN, "From Trade Unionism to Syndacalisme Revolutionaire to Syndicalism: the British Origins of Franch Syndicalism", in D. Barry, C. Bantman (eds.), *New Perspectives on Anarchism*,

highlights instead the transnational continuities between France and Great Britain in the field of Syndicalist thought and the practice of the violent strike with revolutionary aims. The French scholar interprets this period not as a complete break with the past, but as the peak of a workers' movement that developed in the first ten years of the century, in a *continuum* of cultural exchanges between France and Great Britain. The author spends time highlighting the dual direction of these exchanges of syndicalist ideas and practices, stressing the importance of the continuous link between the two countries. Finally, Jonathan Hyslop devotes his contribution – entitled *The Strange Death of Liberal England and the Strange Birth of Illiberal South Africa: British Trade Unionists, Indian Labourers and Afrikaner Rebels, 1910-1914* – to a very fascinating historiographical experiment, which links the English strike wave to other workers' protests taking place in South Africa, a

Labour and Syndicalism: the Individual, the National and the Transnational, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle, 2010, pp. 126-140; Id., *The French Anarchists*

country that was still very much tied to the United Kingdom. The author examines the English workers strikes of the Witwatersrand hills in 1913 and 1914, the Indian workers protest lead by Gandhi in Natal province at the end of 1913 and lastly the Afrikaners revolt between 1914 and 1915. The most interesting part of Hyslop's work is certainly the precise mapping of the influences of the syndicalist practices developed in Britain and then spread in the world of the migrants of South Africa, showing how the strong anti-capitalistic and pro-violent opposition spirit, imported by English immigrants, was taken as a model for more protests in South Africa. This special issue, as specified by the editors, does not have any pretence of being exhaustive. This initiative is to be praised mainly because, being the Great Labour Unrest story still to be written, the different essays collected show numerous potential research directions, suggesting the most in-

in London, 1880-1914. Exile and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2013.

teresting subject matters to be studied and offering a contextual overview of the most suitable historiographical tools. Among the topics of highest interest, the ones that stand out are the internal composition of the labouring class on strike and its diversity in gender, age and occupation; the role of public opinion and the consequences in the socio-economic thought of the following years; the international influences and the cosmopolitan nature of the pre-war syndicalism; the connections with previous and subsequent stages of industrial conflict, refusing the historiographical interpretation of an apocalyptic period of labour violence which appeared from nowhere; and finally, the connections and transfers that took place in other parts of the world economically linked to the United Kingdom, where the ideas and practices of anti-capitalistic opposition are imported and then changed to suit the specific subject matters of the receiving countries. These essays also have an important methodological value. As stated in the introductory piece, the glocal approach seems to be the most promising to understand both

the reality of the local and particular conditions of the single strikes and their connections and consequences on a global scale. This lesson can be useful for those who approach or practice the history of labour, but can also have positive results when applied to other fields of historiographical research. The local, particular analysis, micro-stories of single places, events or people, in fact, seem to show their full potential when connected to a global vision of history. At the same time, this global vision has to be built necessarily on microstudies of local history, that give it a deep historical sense.

However, the glocal point of view alone is not enough. To this dimension we also need to apply an eclectic historiographical approach. The history of labour, like all disciplines that study human societies, has to be based on tools that come from different disciplines, from social and economic history, and from the history of thought to institutional history, that reflects the diversity of historical experience.

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Alberto Guenzi, *Cutlery Trade. Le origini corporative dei distretti industriali in Europa (secoli XV-XX)*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, 2014, pp. 234.

The history of European industrialisation is a key feature in the field of the historical studies. Recently, a large and growing body of literature has shown an increased interest in a long term historical perspective that allows to overcome the traditional barriers represented by the 18th century English industrial revolution, highlighting similarities and continuities in the productive process forms between modern and contemporary period¹.

Applying this historiographical long-term perspective, Alberto Guenzi locates the origins of industrial districts in an historical process that has its roots in the pre-capitalist manufacturing system centred on trade guilds². Throughout this volume, the term industrial district, applying Alfred Marshall's definition, refers to a particular socio-economic environment characterised by the following elements: a great multiplicity of little enterprises locating close to each other and specialised in a single production field; a division of labour based on production processes; a high and frequent social mobility; and an extremely cohesive social environ-

¹ This idea refers to the concept of industrious revolution introduced by Jan De Vries that characterises Europe between 1600 and 1800, anticipating the productive forms of the industrial revolution in a significant historical continuum. Cfr. J. De Vries, "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution", in *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 54, n. 2, June 1994, pp. 249-270.

² The author discussed similar themes in his past research. Cfr. A. Guenzi, "Le origini corporative del distretto industriale marshalliano. Primi risultati di una ricerca in corso", in *Storia economica*; n. 1-2, 2010, pp. 187-203; Id., *La storia economica e i distretti industriali marshalliani: qualche considerazione su approcci e risultati*, in M. Belfanti, T. Maccabelli (a cura di), *Un paradigma per i distretti industriali. Radici storiche, attualità e sfide future*, Grafo, Brescia, 1997, pp. 19-29; Id., "Alle origini del distretto. L'industria serica bolognese fra XVI e XVIII secolo", in *Metronomie. Ricerche e studi sul sistema urbano bolognese*, n. 2-3, 1995, pp. 183-193.

ment³. According to the author, the guild-like organisational forms of production, originally created during the pre-capitalist era, have shaped a particular type of economic environment that, surviving to the advent of capitalism, characterised contemporary industrial district.

One of the key aspects of Guenzi's research is the attention given to the whole geographical space in which manufacturing and industrial agglomerations were realised. In fact, the author does not restrict the analysis to the economic or organisational aspects, but rather focuses on the entire socio-economic and cultural environment that takes place within this particular industrial systems. Therefore, using the Marshallian

concept of industrial atmosphere⁴, the author is able to give a complete account of the whole body of "istituzioni e organizzazioni, visioni e valori"⁵, common to the entire social community.

In order to prove his hypothesis, Guenzi's work deals with four European cutlery-trade districts: Sheffield in the United Kingdom, Thiers in France, Solingen in Germany and Pavlovo in Russia. All these centres – with the exception of Pavlovo, whose history is partially different – show remarkably similar characteristics, that make a fruitful comparative analysis feasible. Sheffield, Thiers and Solingen exhibit, in fact, a very similar institutional and industrial background. During the medieval period all these districts arose as

³ Cfr. G. Becattini, "Dal distretto industriale alla distrettualizzazione: alcune considerazioni", in G.L. Fontana (a cura di), *Le vie dell'industrializzazione europea. Sistemi a confronto*, il Mulino, Bologna, 1997, pp. 65-76.

⁴ As pointed out by Alfred Marshall, the term industrial atmosphere refers to the whole conjunction labour skills, business spirit, technical competences and social identity that characterised those centres highly specialised in the production of a single product where, paraphrasing Marshall's own words, the secrets of industry lies in the air. Cfr. A. Marshall, *Industry and Trade*, Macmillan, London, 1919.

⁵ A. Guenzi, *Cutlery Trade. Le origini corporative dei distretti industriali in Europa (secoli XV-XX)*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, 2014, p. 9.

important centres for the production of cutlery material, where trade guilds, founded in the second half of the 16th century, played a fundamental role in shaping an institutional, social and economic system based on several typical elements, that deserve to be recalled: the development of an horizontal system of highly interconnected micro-enterprises, each one specialised in a very specific production process; a mandatory and extensively regulated apprenticeship system; and a detailed control of quality standards. At the beginning of the 19th century, in the footsteps of the French revolution and the widespread success of liberal economic ideas, the guilds faced a severe crisis, mainly because of their rigidity in the management of the productive system, especially regarding access to the labour market. Therefore, cutlery trade guilds were abolished in Sheffield in 1814, in Thiers with the revolutionary legislation of 1791 and in Solingen after the French occupation between 1806 and 1809. Nevertheless, Alberto Guenzi originally suggests that the guild

model, although formally abolished, survived following actions by the producers, who formed professional associations and mutual aid societies inspired by the traditional guild values. The consequent economic system, characterised by widespread micro-enterprises, collective wage agreement, high quality standards and regulated apprenticeship, lasted until the present day in the form of the industrial districts.

As previously mentioned, Pavlovo presents a slightly different history, mainly because of the socio-economic and institutional Russian background characterised by its delayed and peculiar industrial development. Nevertheless, several factors make the Russian case similar to the other three, allowing an historical comparison: firstly, from 1745 the feudal counts Shermetev actively promoted the manufacturing development of the zone, playing a role similar to the Talbot dukes in Sheffield during the 16th century; similarly, in Pavlovo a manufacturing industrial system evolved, based on micro-enterprises run by highly specialised craftsmen, who employ

several workers. A particular element of the Russian district was the figure of the serf-entrepreneur, who was responsible for the production organisation. The position of the serf-entrepreneur is of major interest for its similarities with Western European entrepreneurs, both for the competences and abilities required and for capital accumulation, albeit formally remaining in a servile condition.

Alberto Guenzi's fascinating research achieves several goals. Demonstrating the fundamental significance of corporatist institutions, both in the early phase of pre-capitalist manufacturing development and as an ideal reference model during the capitalist age in the 19th and 20th centuries, is the first important objective reached by this study. In fact, although the guilds disappear at the beginning of the 19th century, the producers consciously relaunch an industrial organisational form based on the corporatist traditional model in order to preserve its socio-economic benefits: professional continuity guaranteed by apprenticeship; stabilisation of the labour market through regu-

lating the access to work and the wage system. A similar process takes place in Pavlovo: after the 1861 Russian Emancipation Reform, the serfs, though no more dependent on the serf-entrepreneur or the feudatory, preserve a horizontal manufacturing system of highly integrated micro-enterprises, called *kustar*.

One of the most important features of the corporatist continuities is the cohesive and cooperative social environment evolved between employees and employers within the industrial districts. A harmonious social environment is certainly produced by the fluid class boundaries existing between workers and entrepreneurs, allowing a highly and diffused social mobility within a community that share common economic interests. In fact, within the industrial clusters, changing socio-economic status represents a systemic physiological characteristic: every worker, after the long mandatory training period, could start his own productive enterprise; but the benefit could be reversed because every employer was a spe-

cialised worker as well, in the case of bankruptcy everyone could be reintegrated in the labour market as a highly qualified skilled worker. This practice shaped a highly functional network of social protection that guaranteed both the stability and longevity of the whole socio-economic system. Traditionally, it has been emphasised that the survival of a guild-like model during the contemporary age represents a heritage of the *ancien régime*, a liability that prevented the modernisation of the system of production and a free market environment, allowing a restricted élite to maintain its socio-economic and political power⁶. However, this interpretation has a number of limitations and

fails to take into account, as recalled by the author⁷, the complexity of the question of European industrialisation. In fact, capitalist development based on big companies and giant industries, albeit quantitatively dominant in the European landscape, was not the only possible modernisation pattern. Applying this historiographical perspective allows the author to affirm that the survival of guild-like organisational forms cannot be explained just as the obstinate resistance of traditional socio-economic élites, but constitutes indeed an alternative model of capitalistic development. Furthermore, Alberto Guenzi emphasises that this different economic system arises following a bottom-

⁶ However, much of the current literature contested this rigid historiographical interpretation, arguing that, especially during the late modern age, the guilds adopted a more modern organisational form, in particular concerning raw materials, production processes and energy sources in order to improve the whole industrial system. Lucassen, T. De Moor, J.L. Van Zanden (eds.), *The Return of the Guilds*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008; A. Guenzi, P. Massa, F. Piola Caselli (eds.), *Guilds, Markets and Work Regulation in Italy, 16th-19th Centuries*, Algate, Aldershot 1998.

⁷ Intriguingly, the author states: “ho considerato l’industrializzazione come processo storico prima ancora che economico. Il mio intento era quello di mettere in luce anche in minima parte la complessità della costruzione di un progetto di sviluppo”. Cfr. A. Guenzi, *Cutlery Trade*, cit., p. 225.

up process through the dedication of the workers directly employed in the production.

The relationship between mechanisation and manual work perfectly underlines the hybrid productive form formed by the specific industrialisation pattern analysed. As is demonstrated by the cases studied, the scarcity of machine used in the cutlery trade districts is not the outcome of a blind opposition by traditional élites, but rather the result of conscious political choices to meet precise socio-economic needs. In fact, technological innovation basically failed to replace highly qualified manual work because it cannot reproduce the skills required. Therefore, the mechanisation of the entire productive system would have led to the abandonment of those factors – production variety and high quality standards – that only can guarantee the economic success of the districts. Moreover, a massive use of technologies would break up the traditional social balance leading to the loss of the fundamental element of the whole system: the craftsman with specialist knowledge.

Another element that supports the author's thesis is the fact that technological modernisation is not refused *a priori*, but it is introduced solely where it could be used to ameliorate the economic system without destroying it. In fact, remarkable improvements regarding raw materials, energy sources and the use of space can be detected. A good example is represented by the so-called *tenement factories*, that developed in Sheffield as well as in other European cities during the 19th century. That kind of industrial architecture physically symbolises the survival of the old productive model within the new pattern triggered by the industrial revolution. *Tenement factories* were large, multilevel buildings with several independent units, each one sharing the same energy source – firstly steam and then electricity – but preserving their traditional business relationship. Thus, in this way, the system remained centred on the horizontal integration of independent micro-enterprises, harmonising the modernisation process according to the industrial district identity and districts nature.

Hence, a corporatist model survives from the 15th to the 20th century meeting the necessities of producer communities which show a remarkable capacity to creatively deal with technological industrial development. Integrating technological mechanisation with the traditional production organisation produced a hybrid system. Therefore, Guenzi's research interestingly suggests to read the historical process that led from the pre-capitalist manufacturing system to the contemporary industrial district as an alternative pattern of

capitalist development. This development model that preserves traditional corporatist values and forms, projecting them into the contemporary age and adapting 19th and 20th centuries technological revolution to the characteristics, necessities and objectives of the whole community. Thus the corporatist heritage can be interpreted as a cultural background of social values that has its roots in the guild system of the medieval and early modern age.

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