
REVIEWS OF BOOKS

R. BROWN, *Society and Economy in Modern Britain: 1700-1850*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp. XVI + 473.

Richard Brown belongs to the generation of English historians who, in addressing one of the most widely studied themes of contemporary and modern economic historiography, Great Britain from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, refuses the classical interpretation of the Industrial Revolution as a linear process which alone is able to explain every aspect of British history in this period.

Using the results reached by other historians who share this approach (like the studies on economic development by N. Crafts and on population by E. Wrigley and R. Schofield), Brown sets out to give a comprehensive view of the changes occurring in these 150 years, giving relevant weight to aspects which seem to be unrelated or even in contrast to the process of the Industrial Revolution. The result is a very complete analysis, structured in two volumes intended for secondary school or university; one is concerned with the study of the changes in economic and social life, the other with the evolution of the political system and religious institutions.

After having described the situation of the United Kingdom at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Author traces the phases of the subsequent demographic and economic development and their effects on the social structure and on culture, on the growth of towns and on life in the country. The nature of income, capital and wages and the role played by each social class are then reconstructed in three distinct chapters.

The breadth of Brown's analysis shows that such a process was far from being homogeneous, particularly from a territorial stand-point. A very clear example of this is the process of enclosure which reached its highest point in England in 1750-1780 and in 1795-1815, in Wales in 1801-1815, and in Scotland in 1750-1780, while in Ireland the transformation of landed property took on others forms.

Analogously, one can see how integrated Wales and Ireland were in the more advanced English commercial system already at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Scotland became so only in the course of the following century, although at least until 1826 its credit system was safer and more efficient than in other parts of the United Kingdom. And there are many other such examples.

Great discontinuity also characterises the process of the diffusion of industrial manufacturing. Technological innovations and the new organisation of work became established at different times and in different ways according to the type of production. Yet even within the same sector, the presence of protection constraints and of resistance to change could ensure the continuance of traditional systems.

New and old forms of production coexisted throughout the eighteenth century and for part of the nineteenth century. Moreover, as the author notes, there was not necessarily any continuity in the transition from production based on the putting-out system to that of industrial manufacturing. This was the case of Essex, for example, where the flourishing textile industry of the eighteenth century disappeared in the course of the following century without being replaced by an analogous activity carried out using new production techniques.

As a natural consequence of the adoption of this historical criterion, the volume contains a critical revision of all previous interpretations about the Industrial Revolution. To understand the author's methodological approach it is especially interesting to read the two chapters on the nature of historical studies and reviewing the historiography of economic revolutions.

Brown believes that it is now possible to get beyond the interpretations given by the schools of thought which have traditionally dealt with this subject. Each one of them has above all emphasised one aspect of the problem — social change, the organisation of industrial production, the stages of development and technological innovation — while a global approach to the study of the Industrial Revolution has yet to be attempted. While taking account of previous historiographical experience, such an approach returns to the definition of the timing, the ways and the meaning of this process of transformation, creating the necessary premise for finding answers to such questions as the consequences of the unequal industrialisation of the different parts of the United Kingdom and the relationship between the more developed and less developed productive sectors.

Brown's volume does not set out to resolve these problems, but its value lies in having contributed to bringing important questions back to the centre of the debate on the Industrial Revolution.

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M. COLLINS, *Money and Banking in the UK: a History*, London, Routledge, 1988, (Reprint 1990), pp. 640.

Contemporary historical research has given ample space to the study of the evolution of the British financial structure, particularly from a comparative view-point in relation to the countries of continental Europe and with regard to its ties with the Industrial Revolution. Collin's volume examines the history of the United Kingdom's banking system and domestic and international monetary policy in the last 170 years. It is clearly written and well documented, although perhaps more attention could have been paid to interpretation.

The author divides his analysis into three periods — from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to 1913, the interwar period, and from 1939 to the present day — emphasising the importance of the 1825-26 crisis for the birth of Britain's modern banking system. In the three years 1822-1824 the English economy underwent a period of great expansion which was partly made possible by the banks' low interest rates. In 1825, when the phase of growth came to an end, a severe liquidity crisis occurred. The public lost confidence in the banknotes issued by small and country banks and rushed to the banks to change them for the safer banknotes of the Bank of England or for specie. Scores of banks went bankrupt in England and Wales and the reserves of many credit institutions sustained heavy losses. Many factors had helped bring about the crisis, but its main cause lay in the behaviour of the country bankers who had expanded credit virtually unconditionally in the previous decades to provide the loans and create the means necessary for financing the process of the Industrial Revolution.

Parliament intervened to give more stability to banking activity and the Co-Partnership Banking Act of May 1826 was passed, making it possible to set up banks in England and Wales outside a radius of 65 miles from London, with an unlimited number of partners who were jointly responsible and with capital deriving exclusively from shares. Moreover the new banks would be able to discount bills all over the country, although the banknotes and bills issued by them would be payable in the London area.

Territorial restrictions had been introduced partly to protect the privileged position of the Bank of England, whose activity was concentrated in the London area and which until then had been the only English bank allowed to have more than six partners. Overall, however, the new law increased the homogeneity of the United Kingdom's financial structure; the right to set up joint-stock banks had already been recognised in Scotland since 1716 and in Ireland since 1821.

The Co-Partnership Banking Act led to the creation of new commercial banks throughout the country. Banking services were placed on an increasingly competitive footing and deposits became the component of currency with the highest growth rates. Yet in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as a result of the growing number of mergers between banks, the de-

gree of concentration rose noticeably. In less than half a century a market in which a large number of small banks operated had been transformed into one dominated by big banks, a situation which up until then had characterised only the Scottish banking system. This process slowed down after 1918, when the Treasury Committee on Bank Amalgamations opposed further mergers between the five main commercial banks who controlled about 80% of bank credit in England and Wales. At that time, however, the British banking system was already established along oligopolistic lines and there was no real competition in the services offered. This transformation accelerated the growth of the role of non-banking financial intermediaries, a process which took place in all the most developed capitalist economies and which, particularly in the last decades, had brought about the fall in the growth rate of the volume of banking activities.

The author believes that the State had a crucial role in the change to an oligopolistic regime. In the course of the century the banks had become increasingly more involved in financing the public debt and the government had begun to pursue goals of political economy. Consequently the public operator could no longer ignore the influence of macroeconomic variables but favoured the stabilisation of the financial market.

The changing role of the State in the national economy is also related to the long-term changes in monetary policy. Up until the first world war, the British government had adhered to a policy of *laissez-faire*. The government's task was merely that of providing an appropriate legislative framework and of creating a system which in certain conditions required the automatic and not discretionary intervention of the authorities. As the Author notes, the fact that in this case the authorities were not a government body but the Bank of England — that is, a private bank — does not have any real relevance since the bank performed in practice an institutional act.

With the end of the gold standard and the expansion of the public debt which occurred after the outbreak of the first world war, the government abandoned definitively the system of non-intervention in national monetary policy. In this respect, the attempt to return to the gold standard between 1925-31 may seem irrelevant, but it is surprising that Collins hardly mentions the cost of such an attempt and that he does not point out that the attempt was above all the consequence of an ill-judged historical interpretation, of failing to understand that times had changed and with them the role of the public sector. This fact is borne out by British monetary policy from then onwards, from the commitment to keep down the cost of money in the 30s and 40s to the transformation of the Bank of England into an effective central bank (1946) and the policies pursued by the conservative government to reduce inflation in the 80s. The author appears more balanced when he describes the return to the gold standard as an episode in the decline of sterling's international role, a decline which has been taking place in the course of this century.

In conclusion, the volume's contribution lies in providing a comprehensive picture of the changes in the United Kingdom's financial system in the period under consideration which is also useful for interpreting under a historical perspective the changes which are to be introduced in the European banking and monetary structure after unification in 1993.

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A. KRAMER, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* New York, Oxford, Berg, 1991, pp. xiv-295, with tables and illustrations in the text and an appendix of documents.

The debate on the nature and periodisation of the West German economy, which is typically German for the maturity of the historiographical reflection on a still recent past and for the very strong ideological force that such a reflection has acquired, is becoming a product for exportation. This is borne out by the excellent book under consideration which, intended for a wider public, represents a good, well-documented and balanced synthesis of the many studies that have appeared in recent years on the first decade after the war in particular, undoubtedly aided by the increasing bulk of material which has become available now that the thirty years of secrecy binding administrative documents have elapsed. As we shall attempt to show in a review to be published soon, the interpretation of the history of the post-war German economy is a source of conflict between two different paradigms. Kramer seems to side without prejudice with Abelshausen, whose paradigm is based on a rich and solid store of data, helping to define a much sharper periodisation of the period of the reconstruction which is the corner-stone but also the stumbling-block to the post-war global interpretations.

In 1945, the year of defeat and of the zero hour, the German economy was less damaged than the general picture of desolation and destruction would have us believe. The Nazi war economy had promoted an accelerated modernisation of industry with 20% more fixed capital compared to 1936. More than the rubble this is the fact which must provide the back-drop to the subsequent recovery which has been defined as "miraculous".

Nevertheless at the time there were strong elements of dismay and uncertainty; in the various zones the Allies pursued different policies. The will to prevent any future *Machtpolitik* was reinforced by France for fear of German competition especially in the area of heavy industry and counterbalanced by Britain through the conviction, strongly expressed by Keynes, that Germany had to act as hub to the European economy, a position also shared by the U.S.A. in what was clearly a free-trade vision of international relations

(although it caused a stir at the time, the *Morgenthau Plan* turned out to be only an episode).

The control and planning effort of the Allies turned out to be only partially successful. The "Americanisation" of German industry was much more efficient at the level of decartelisation than it was at the level of deconcentration; on the other hand impetus was given to the building of the railway network which was vital for the recovery of trade. Certainly these were years of suffering (the role played by Allied-financed food imports was absolutely vital) and of uncertainty (doubts on the dismantling policy acted as a brake on an industrial recovery). A strange hybrid was taking shape in occupied Germany in the form of an economy which was formally planned, but without consensus, managed from the outside, with significant weak areas (the monetary factor, for example). In practice, alongside the official economy, a vigorous parallel economy was developing, with a low level of monetarisation, numerous elements of illegality or rather semi-illegality, in which the black market and bartering played an important role. In these anomalous forms industrial production began to grow, increasing above all after the recession of the winter of 1946-47.

In fact 1947 appears to be a significant turning point which has been overshadowed by the fateful year of 1948, the "year of the miracle" when the market-economy was restored, aided by the Marshall Plan and sustained by monetary reform. These were important changes in economic policy which certainly eliminated significant elements of uncertainty — the reliability of the national currency, the prospect of the nationalisation of industry — and gave a strong incentive to recovery. They were necessary conditions — above all the currency reform, which represented a fundamental turning point in the eyes of the liberals — but not sufficient for the realisation of the economic miracle. As Kramer himself points out, "three legends are associated with the currency reform: 1) that it was a German measure; 2) that the currency reform was the great leveller; 3) that the currency reform was the start of the economic miracle" (p. 136). In the same way, the dogmatic free-trade spirit of Erhard's "social market economy" soon turned to the advantage of big industry — which saw in it confirmation of the corporative character of the German economy in the long term or, as Kramer is inclined to argue together with Berghahn, a state-industry bilateralism — and neither was much progress made towards the realisation of the much propagandised *nivellierte Mittelsstandsgesellschaft* (levelled-out middle class society).

Kramer's rectifying effort seeks, therefore, to test the propaganda slogans of those years against the facts and to overcome the errors and inertia of the same historiographical vulgate. Glaring changes like the currency reform appear as more immediate factors of explanation for historical dynamics than structural data and less known realities. In line with Abelshauser, Kramer emphasises the role of the notable industrial capacity available just after the war, of the significant contribution of high quality human capital in the form

of refugees from the Russian zone, of low wages up until the time of full employment which was reached in 1955, sealing the end of the reconstruction phase. Low wages, high labour mobility and longer working hours with respect to the European average more aptly describe the recovery of the "re-gained pleasure in work", which was due to the restoring of free-market physiological conditions and to the same image of a "work society".

Through the concise style of this book not only the specialist but anyone having in mind the vague images of the economic miracle and of the rapid German recovery, that unattainable model of European affluence in the 1950s which have by now become the bright point in the collective imagination, may clearly grasp the way in which legends, as Kramer says, and ambiguous interpretations have grown up around the years of reconstruction, at times based on slogans like the Erhardian "social market economy" and sometimes heavily drawing on national stereotypes like that of the *Fleiss*, of German diligence and love of work. Above and beyond the debates among historians, Kramer's work is noteworthy as an exercise in patient testing of the facts and in its criticism of both old and new *clichés*.

COSTANZA D'ELIA

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C. O GRADA, *Ireland before and after the Famine. Explorations in Economic History*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988, pp. 179, with tables and diagrams.

This is a very comprehensive work by O Grada which will be of great use and interest to different types of readers. Although the author claims in the introduction that it is not an "attempt at writing *The (or even An) Economic History of Ireland*", he is very near to achieving precisely that. The book, organised according to phases and problems, is given overall cohesion by the central theme of the Great Famine of the 1840s. As far as method is concerned the book is an exercise in the application of economic theories to history, which is carried out in a rigorous and imaginative way and with moderation: O Grada's approach is an excellent lesson in cliometrics cleansed of dogmatism and enriched by the cross-links with other human sciences.

Moderation is the measure of the book: in addressing central and still delicate issues of Irish history, O Grada shows great objectivity, adopting a neo-revisionist or post-revisionist historiographical position. Compared to moralistic Malthusian-based theories on the inevitability of famine and the latter theory which emphasises the political responsibility for the scale of the disaster, O Grada underlines the role of imponderable factors — Irish bad luck — in a catastrophe which was certainly aggravated by human error. This

is the basic argument. O Grada contributes to dispelling the commonplaces with a wide number of studies on more specific issues of Irish socio-economic history, making intelligent and moderate comments on the economics of development.

In this way O Grada restores the physiognomy of a latercomer country, concentrating on the agricultural and demographic dynamics of what might be called the long nineteenth century and which lasted until the first world war. The analysis is divided into three phases, before the famine, the famine itself and after the famine; a separate chapter deals with models of hereditary transmission and their relationship with emigration and fertility. The periodisation, while following the traditional scheme pivoting upon the mid-century catastrophe, is as a test to prove its real influence: and although it is not explicitly stated, at the end of the book one is left with the idea that the famine was more an accidental occurrence — extremely costly in human terms — than the consequence of a structural breakdown. Before and after the famine, Irish agriculture was not characterised by undifferentiated backwardness but rather by tension in the face of innovation, albeit slow and limited, and seemed to have benefited from infrastructural improvements in the transport and credit sectors. Even before the famine, demographic movements showed a downward trend, albeit moderate, and the fluctuations in the standard of living can be explained not so much by a Malthusian increase in the population as by the crisis in cottage industry.

The last chapter, which at first appears to be a marginal contribution on specialist themes of demographic and social history — inheritance, dowries, fertility, migrations — provides almost unexpectedly the key to explaining the Irish case. Demographic factors turn out to be central after all; not according to the Malthusian scheme of endogenous adjustments of which the famine was to be a tragically exemplary expression, but through the variable of emigration at the end of the century, which eased demographic pressure and represented a succedaneum for development *in loco*.

If the *phitosphora infestans*, which caused potato production to plummet, had occurred a few decades later, it would have found a country with fewer men and richer in resources owing to transfers from emigration as well as a more intelligent free-trade economic policy. While undoing the idea of an anti-interventionism in the pure form as it was to be practised in England (the government was far from passive), the Irish famine is a laboratory test for the dogmatic faith of the free-traders in the market which on this occasion was to be undermined precisely by the reaction of public opinion. The famine occurred at the most delicate moment of Ireland's integration as a latercomer with the world economy, that is, the phase when the stimuli from the more advanced countries had been received and translated into economic and demographic dynamism but when the tactics of survival in the market (emigration, government aid for the weaker elements) had not yet been clearly established.

In the author's examination of backwardness and the dynamism of innovation and of self-defence there is no room for considerations in which structure is opposed to superstructure in a Manichean way. The Malthusian insistence on moral factors and the improper use of anthropology as a scapegoat for development are criticised and brilliantly disproved by the author who illustrates the complexity of the economic dynamics, portraying a moderately rational *homo oeconomicus*, an Irish peasant who, in conditions which were far from being optimum, tended nevertheless to optimise, but always with moderation.

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L. PALERMO, *Mercati di grano a Roma tra Medioevo e Rinascimento. Vol. I. Il mercato distrettuale del grano in età comunale.* Rome, Istituto Nazionale di studi Romani, 1990, pp. 1-406.

The volume opens with an ample introduction in which Palermo addresses in general terms the theme of the trade in cereals in Rome from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, drawing from his own research on the corn market in Rome from the communal period to the Renaissance.

Although an analytical discussion of these sixty pages is not possible here, we should say immediately that they contain a synthesis of great methodological and conceptual interest. It would therefore be a great shame if only scholars of Roman or Latium history undertook to read or, more appropriately, to study the book which, despite its having been written with great clarity, is very demanding on account of the concentrated depth of the author. Nevertheless I shall briefly try to outline the basic ideas contained in Palermo's thought.

Government and operators followed very closely the corn harvest cycle, since it was the latter which ultimately determined the characteristics of the economic conjuncture. The price of corn decided the cost of living and consequently wage levels in the towns as well as the contents of agricultural agreements; a harvest failure — the much-feared *famine* — made it necessary to concentrate resources in indispensable purchases.

Since there were very few possibilities for pursuing an "agricultural policy" which could bring about an increase in production, given the well-known limits of medieval agriculture, governments concentrated instead on "food policy", intervening in the market by sustaining supply and controlling prices, so as to guarantee the maximum satisfaction of consumption. In fact the squeezing of corn prices made it possible to keep wage levels down

and competitiveness of products high, other than guaranteeing social and political order; that is to say, it was possible to maintain high profit levels (the author really speaks of increasing rather than maintaining profit levels).

This gave rise to a Mediterranean market of cereals which was characterised by the movement of a great quantity of goods, often involving long-distance trade, as Saponi had already noted. At the same time, it also gave rise to conflict between the constant intervention of public authorities who sought to keep exports under their control and the commercial advantages of trading corn on distant markets which were occasionally or permanently under-stocked. The trade in cereals was in this way often excluded from the logic of the free movement of goods.

These early experiences of the communes in the thirteenth century gave way to a centralised management of the corn trade in the following century, in the wake of persistent scarcity, which did not exclude, however, private initiative. Nonetheless, in the fifteenth century the tendency towards greater intervention eventually brought the corn trade under total government control in all Italian cities and regions, even though the process was not simultaneous in all areas, and led to the rapid growth of public provisioning bodies. There was increasingly less opportunity for free initiative, therefore, although the system undoubtedly made it possible to deal with scarcities which were compensated by the organisation of supplies.

In practice, there were three levels to the corn trade: firstly there was the local market, with prices kept at the lowest possible level; secondly there were the exchanges between the food bodies and the internal producers who were obliged to sell to the government authorities at equally low prices; lastly there was the interregional and international trade which was characterised, instead, by generally high prices. These three levels of exchange and relative price levels were, moreover, directly interrelated: the local "microcircuits" (Tangheroni), the basic cells of an "alveolar" structure (Aymard), intersected with the exchanges of large-scale international trade.

In this general picture Palermo studies the progressive development of the Roman regional market which he describes as a "district" market with reference to the city's *districtus*. This development was slow and difficult like the development of the Roman regional state itself, conditioned as it was by the initial and persistent limits to city control over the *districtus* as a result of the weakness of the Roman artisan and mercantile classes, and the "massive and overbearing presence of traditional forms of landed property". Not surprisingly, in the long run the control of sea routes turned out to be much easier than control of overland routes.

These issues are studied by Palermo who has skilfully exploited the various surviving records in relation to the problems concerning the growth of the commune, the struggle against the magnates, and the relations between Rome and the smaller urban communities such as the port communities of Montalto, Corneto and Terracina, and Viterbo and Tivoli. After the reorga-

nisation of the Papal state, began by Albornaz and culminating in the *coup d'état* by Boniface VIII in 1398 and the end of the free Roman commune — studied by Esch — this relationship turned into one between the Papal government and the community. Like the other city magistratures, the food authority was placed under direct papal control. Nevertheless, according to the author, for the creation of an “organic regional market it was necessary to wait for the further reorganisation of the state in the fifteenth century”.

The sources do not make it possible to carry out quantitative analyses about the operations involved in the transition from private to public management. There are, however, documents of the curia and fiscal records which have enabled Palermo to construct tables, for certain years, on the monthly trends of the *lacrum gracie* and others on internal commercialisation. For Montalto and Corneto he has also been able for certain years to indicate exports outside the Dominions to Avignon and in Liguria, to Florence and Lucca.

In an interesting chapter (pp. 317-339) the author also includes an analysis of a model of corn management, namely that of the microsystem of the *Badia ad Pontem*.

The final fifty pages of the book deal with a study of corn prices in the district market, with reflections on problems which give rise to difficult but not insoluble issues such as determining the monetary value of corn, money demand and the differences in monetary circulation from area to area. Figures are provided for the area of *denaro provisino* (segments of the market directly controlled by Capitoline authority) and for the area of *denaro paparino* (corn sold on the home market and corn exported).

These final pages provide a contribution to one of the most impervious and abandoned areas of medieval economic history, the study of prices, understood not as a mere and often, indiscriminate collection of figures. Yet here it is precisely the lack of literature and elements for comparison which may explain why the author is a little cautious in his conclusions. On the other hand, these are the pages that most need to be read in the light of the second volume, which we trust to be imminent.

Summarising I can say that this book is exemplary for various reasons. The author is at home both in his analysis of the general situation and in his study of local realities, in the medium and long term. He is equally on firm ground as far as both qualitative and quantitative history is concerned.

I would only add that as a general picture of late medieval Italy he accepts a context of very grave crisis and of total diversification between two Italies, the one importer and the other producer of corn. In this respect we ought to mention both past diffidence and recent attempts (contemporary or subsequent to Palermo's work) at revising these historiographical perspectives. In relation to the first point, I am thinking, for example, about the papers given at a conference held in Pistoia specifically on the alternative “crisis or transformation?” for Italy between 1350 and 1450; regarding the second point I

refer to the radical criticism levelled by Epstein and Mineo at the underlying assumptions in Bresc's imposing work on Sicily.

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M. PETRUSEWICZ, *Latifondo: Economia morale e vita materiale in una periferia dell'Ottocento*. Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1989.

Marta Petruszewicz's fine, meticulously researched, study of the Calabrian latifundium of the Baracco family from the Napoleonic era to the end of the nineteenth century challenges much of the conventional wisdom about the role of these great estates in the decline of the Italian South. The latifundia have long been the target of historians, sociologists and economists in search of a cause for the "southern problem". But Petruszewicz argues that reformers latched on to the latifundia in crisis in the 1890s and assumed that the system in decline was the economic and social reality throughout its existence. The author argues persuasively that this was not the case. In fact, the latifundium was an extremely rational and stable social and economic system with great capacity to modernize in response to changing conditions. She also makes it clear that the latifundia did not represent a remnant of feudalism, but grew up out of the dissolution of the feudal system during the Napoleonic era. It combined full participation in national and international markets with older forms of social stability and hierarchy.

The Baracco family estate developed during and just after the French occupation through acquisition of debt-ridden feudal properties, purchase of confiscated church lands, marriage, and expropriation of communal and peasant rights. Its various components were forged into a new, centrally managed estate system which stretched from the Calabrian mountain and plateau regions to the coast. Grains, livestock, oranges, olive oil, silk, wool, hides, and liquorice were among the products marketed. The Baracco interests extended even to the distribution of the products through warehouses in Naples. The diversity of the latifundium and an emphasis on stability of markets over speculative profits insulated the family from temporary depression. Unlike fully capitalist entrepreneurs, great proprietors like the Baracco sought not to maximize profits, but rather to maintain a certain level of consumption. Production was regarded as something to be exchanged for other desired goods. Extremely low production costs allowed the Baracco to overcome periods of economic crisis without upsetting the social stability of the latifundium. Thus, they were as likely to increase production in times of low prices as they were to cut back. Up to the 1860s the Baracco estates were able to retard the formation of an agricultural proletariat through guaranteed employment for local families. The Baracco family was also somewhat unusual

in its commitment to both direct management and administrative unity of the estates over several generations. Only at the end of the century with the complete reorganization of the latifundium did the Baracco become absentee landlords.

What precipitated the crisis of the latifundia? First, there was an increased need for revenue. Luigi Baracco, the sole heir of the founding generation, had six daughters and six sons. The cost of marrying the daughters into the Italian aristocracy and of maintaining multiple family residences, especially after the shift of the political axis from Naples to Rome, was enormous. Second, the system was undone by the very process of modernization encouraged by the Baracco. Up to 1850 the family could increase production by enlarging the land under cultivation. After mid-century the process was reversed in favour of more specialized and intensive forms of agriculture. Modernization reduced the number of stable dependents and increased reliance on a temporary work force. Finally, the great agricultural depression, that hit the Baracco lands during the 1880s and 1890s, led to precipitous declines in production of all commodities, as the latifundia retrenched in the face of rising costs and declining markets. Modernization had made the Baracco estates more dependent on world markets at the same time as commercial outlets began to close. No longer could production be increased to compensate for declining prices.

Until the imposition of protective tariffs in 1887 the great estates managed to keep their equilibrium in the face of the general European agricultural crisis, but these tariffs marked a fundamental shift in grain production from South to North between 1885 and 1898. Petruszewicz contends that the end of the century did not produce the much discussed alliance between northern industry and inefficient southern landlords, but rather an alliance between northern industry and agriculture at the expense of a relatively efficient South. Southern mainland agrarians yielded on tariffs in exchange for concessions on tax reform and railroads, and in response to a general call for solidarity against the growing socialist movement on the land.

Petruszewicz sets her study of the Baracco latifundium in the context of the new literature on the estates and plantations of North and South America and eastern Europe that point to the efficiency of these large holdings. But we do not know if the degree of direct management, the inclination toward technological innovation and the extensive marketing system made the Baracco estates exceptional among southern latifundia. If Petruszewicz's conclusions are supported by other regional studies, she will have significantly altered the debate on the southern agrarian problem and revealed the formation of a conservative industrial-agrarian bloc in a new light.

Petruszewicz does not discuss the rise of popular movements, electoral corruption, or political violence. No indication is given of how the Baracco and other great Calabrian families might have reacted to challenges to their absolute control of local and national political life. Although the social disintegration of the Calabrian countryside seemed to follow the decomposition

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of the latifundia, Petruszewicz offers evidence that the basis of the paternalistic society was being undermined by modernization even before the introduction of protective tariffs in 1887. The response of the landowners to new market conditions and national political structures inevitably undermined the paternalistic foundations on which their world was constructed. Petruszewicz has offered a provocatively argued and smoothly written study of the twilight of an economic and social system.

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