

cation that the poor of the pre-industrial economy became the proletariat of the industrial period. There is a sidestepping of the role of capitalism in shaping social organization, opportunities, and the poor themselves. The state is seen largely as a collector of data on poverty; its own role, as an increasingly powerful factor in social and economic life, receives less attention than it deserves. Finally, amidst all the numbers, we receive little inkling of the cultural world of the poor: after the pessimistic portrait provided by the statistics, one is left wondering how any of these people managed to survive. Nonetheless, this is a valuable work that contributes much to our growing knowledge of the underside of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European society.

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HUBERT WATELET. — *Une industrialisation sans développement: Le bassin de Mons et le charbonnage du Grand-Hornu du milieu du XVIII^e au milieu du XIX^e siècle*. Ottawa, Les Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1980. 538 p.

This is a study of industrialization — “restructuring”, in the author’s terminology — of a region, the Mons coal basin (Hainaut, Belgium), and of entrepreneurship in a coal-mining firm in that region, the Grand-Hornu, during the period approximately 1750-1850. The evolution of the Grand-Hornu enters the study as a subplot in the larger drama of transition to industrial capitalism in the region as a whole, from the seigneurial period when coal merchants and Newcomen pump contractors dominated coal producers. Growth preceded industrialization during this period, in the sense that output increased largely in the traditional framework of largely parcellized mine ownership and extraction, close capital-labour relations, and subordination of producers to merchants. By the second decade of the 1800s, however, a significant reorientation of business outlook and industrial structure became apparent; the role of the producer was revalorized *vis-à-vis* the merchant, and investment in more advanced techniques and in more capitalized and functionally integrated enterprises materialized. The Grand-Hornu enters the scene as one of the more spectacular examples of this reorientation — exceptionally so, in fact, given its location on the geologically inauspicious periphery of the rich deposits of vieux Borinage. The successes of the enterprise from 1810, when it passed into the hands of the coal merchant Henri De Gorge, through the early 1830s set it apart as a model innovator in the Schumpeterian sense.

The second act of the drama climaxes, both for the regional economy and for the Grand-Hornu, in the severe price deflation of 1824-34, when intense intra-regional competition accentuated the malaise of falling profits. At this juncture of long-term cyclical downturn (a crisis of overproduction) and short-term political destabilization, centred around the 1830 revolution, the atypical nature of the Grand-Hornu was revealed. While its sister firms in the Mons basin succumbed to the domination of the bank, notably the Belgian *Société générale*, it continued to finance its innovating investments through retained earnings. Thus it preserved financial autonomy and family ownership while most other firms passed to the state of finance capitalism, becoming *sociétés anonymes*. It also maintained more intimate ties with its workers, at least under De Gorge’s direction, while relations between owners and workers became more distant in the other firms. The long

crisis of the 1820s-30s thus accelerated "restructuring" in the Mons coal basin, but this had different implications for the Grand-Hornu than for most other enterprises there. The author calls the exceptional achievement of the former a "Schumpeterian success in a privileged environment" to underline the favourable circumstances — rich deposits near the surface at the edge of the Grand-Hornu concessions and their proximity to water-routes — which gave De Gorge's entrepreneurship an especially fertile field to sow. The story of this exceptional achievement emerges as the main plot in the last third of the book.

This work is a meticulously researched and finely crafted empirical history of an economy, a firm and an exceptional entrepreneur. As Pierre Lebrun notes in his preface, the study is distinguished by its masterly combination of three types of economic history undertaken in unison. Its complexity goes further than this. For example, it analyses economic change as a multifactoral process from several perspectives — geo-lithologic, geographic, institutional, conjunctural, attitudinal and social. The author's interweaving of these several perspectives into a well-knit whole is commendable. Especially intriguing is the role of economic mentality as a barrier or agent of structural change. The shift from mercantile to industrial focus is central to the latter, and the interplays between this shift and the uncertainties of knowledge of coal deposits, on the one hand, and the pressures and opportunities of growing coal markets, on the other, are rich veins amply mined.

The Grand-Hornu stands in this context as more than the example of a dynamic firm. Under De Gorge's direction, the author suggests, it served as the creative destroyer of old mental patterns, significantly altering the attitudinal milieu, as well as the economic space, within which other firms of the basin industrialized (pp. 363-4). Despite its singularity in other respects, then, its initiative in refocussing economic goals had region-wide impact. The sources of the former coal-merchant De Gorge's interest in coal production and his perception of the milieu of his firm, especially its geological and geographical possibilities, are thus central issues in the drama of "restructuring", to which the author duly gives close attention. However, this same innovator's ambition to "construct a 'private kingdom'", a *seigneurie industrielle*, in effect, instead of seeking "profit for himself" (p. 429), suggests ironically a very different orientation in the social sphere. De Gorge emerges socially as a defender, nay as a renovator of traditional values. The book's descriptions of his social aims, policies, enterprise and politics, especially his response to the riots of 1830, are sparkling, extending the interest of this study from economic and business historians to historians of labour and society.

This book is accessible to non-specialists as well as to specialists, but the former will need to expend uncommon effort to extract its richer lodes. The detail, while informative and dispensed in clearly-defined casing, is occasionally belaboured, as in the discussion of the architecture of the Grand-Hornu complex (pp. 336-38). The lack of a sufficiently clear guide to the ever-shifting names of locales — bassin de Mons, Couchant de Mons, vieux Borinage, Ouest de Mons, etc. — is also disconcerting; a schematic chart or more simplified nomenclature could easily relieve this burden on the lay reader. More substantive concerns involve the treatment of the region's economic history. The precise contribution of the French Revolution and French annexation demands further investigation, as the author readily admits (p. 438), and indeed the role of institutional change more generally, especially the impact of the frequently changing political milieu, needs more specification and analytical clarification. Moreover, the relationship between regional demography and labour supply in coal mining is inadequately developed; the conjunction of rapid growth of population with labour scarcity is explained away too easily by the "isolation" of the basin and by traditional work/leisure habits of

Borinage miners (pp. 270-76). Furthermore, the study focusses on production but gives technology surprisingly scarce attention, at least relative to industrial organization; whether this reflects the actual situation or the author's choice and limitations of research is unclear. Finally, the author judges De Gorge's labour policies moderately but with ambiguous second thoughts, largely negative, about De Gorge's concern for his workers. The author notes appropriately De Gorge's conformity to the Marxian type of capitalist, financing expansion and innovation out of surplus-value, and therefore holding down wages of workers more than was necessary for him. De Gorge still provided an exceptionally generous social enterprise and paid his workers above the norm; proletarianization in his firm was a less brutal process than in his neighbours'. To expect more from an entrepreneur whose whole career went against the current, at the service of innovation and advance, may be excessive. Notwithstanding these reservations and questions, this is a remarkable study which could serve as a model of its kind.

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MICHAEL L. KENNEDY. — *The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution. The First Years*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. XII, 381.

The study of the Jacobin clubs in the French Revolution is hardly new. Besides the well-known general histories of Brinton, De Cardenal and Walter, there are, as Michael Kennedy's formidable bibliography shows, an enormous number of local studies of particular clubs and a mass of untapped archival material. Yet simply because no one has attempted a general study for over thirty-five years and methodology has changed considerably since, another synthesis is welcome. Kennedy intends this to be the first volume of at least four and since this period in Jacobin history is relatively neglected, there is much here that is new. The existence of women's and young people's societies, the clubs' role in promoting local economic interests or lobbying for their towns as the site of the many new administrative organs in 1790, and their minimal role in the dozens of military mutinies of 1790-91 are all quite original or unfamiliar. Most illuminating of all are the concluding chapters on the crisis following the king's flight to Varennes and the subsequent schism of the Paris club into Jacobins and moderate Feuillants. Most historians believed that this split the provincial clubs seriously as well, but Kennedy's careful count shows that only seventy-two clubs (out of over nine hundred) followed the Feuillants and most of these drifted back to the fold shortly thereafter. The mother society was able to retain or reassert its influence over the provincial clubs so easily because of the energetic propaganda of Pétion and Robespierre (whose growing popularity in the provinces before the schism is one of the more interesting findings) and because most of the newspapers most popular in the provinces stayed with the Jacobins.

Yet the fact that more deputies to the Legislative Assembly adhered to the Feuillants than to the Jacobins in October 1791 underscores a theme which is only implicit in the book, namely, the Jacobins' lack of influence at the local or national levels up to the summer of 1791. It would be difficult to prove that the provincial societies, as opposed to the Paris club, had much influence on the major pieces of legislation of the Constituent Assembly. Their successes at the local level were