

king, there is no mention of ‘vintage’, and the annual impact of weather and vine-disease on grape and wine quality. Until very recently, knowledge of the vintage was as important as that of the winery when selecting a fine wine. A run of poor vintages could ruin the producer, as they faced the dilemma of having to choose between risking bankruptcy, but maintaining their reputation for excellence by not selling poor wines, or losing the winery’s reputation for quality, perhaps built up over many decades, by selling them.

Mees has written an excellent history of Rioja wine before the Civil War, making it an essential starting point for historians who want to understand the development of one of Spain’s leading wine producing regions. Indirectly, he has also shown why small growers across Spain could not become fine wine producers in this period.

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Gérard Béaur & Francesco Chiapparino (Eds.)
**Agriculture and the Great Depression. The Rural Crisis of the
 1930s in Europe and the Americas**

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In the last decades, as a result of sessions in ESSHC and EUHRO (or other conferences), volumes with articles devoted to a specific theme within agricultural history have been published. This is a good development, because it takes (agricultural) history out of the context of national history, and situates it in an international context. In this way we ask new questions and get new ideas about processes of change, because we see more clearly that often these national histories are variants of larger developments. This volume is a successful example of this trend. Its theme is the impact of the Great Depression on agriculture, and the role of agriculture in the 1930s crisis compared with what happened in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The volume contains four general articles and eleven national case studies, all of these on economic development and government policies, but it is divided over two parts with six studies with an emphasis on economic development and five on government policies. The general articles are the introduction by the editors and a concluding article by Price V. Fishback, who summarizes the contents of the volume against the background of the USA history with regard to this topic. The other two are by Ernst Langthaler, who pays attention to long-term developments by using the theme of transition of international food regimes from Friedmann and McMichael, and an article by Vicente Pinilla who highlights the development of agricultural crises in time (applied to Spain).

In their introduction the editors elaborate their goals, perspectives and results. They want to move beyond the focus on the USA and the Great Depression, and also beyond the New Deal. Instead, they attach importance to the long-term approach, the different experiences of national economies, the role of the state and the labour market. The main results are that analysing the impact of the Great Depression we should take into account the process of maturation of the primary sector in the different countries; that, in general, agriculture did not trigger the depression, but could deepen and prolonging it; and finally, that workers were often trapped in agriculture and not ready to move to the manufacturing sector. In their conclusion they also consider the development of agricultural crises in time (which is the theme of Pinilla's contribution). Like him they stress the different character of the early modern crises and the ones after 1870s. The former were food crises, the latter were market crises.

In his concluding and summarizing essay, Price V. Fishback points out that from the last quarter of the nineteenth century higher prices no longer compensated bad harvests because the agricultural prices were determined by the global market, something that changed completely the context of farming. He comes back to the heterogeneity between and within countries due to specific and contextual circumstances, and then concentrates on five themes: issues with unemployed labour; trade policy; debt relief; policies directed to the control of prices and output; and finally

land reform. As the editors do, he also underlines "the rich range of experiences within the larger backdrop of the Atlantic agricultural network" (p. 272), and the transition to regulatory policies with regard to agriculture as a consequence of the Great Depression (something that will continue after WWII).

What then were these experiences? The countries discussed in the book are the UK (Paul Brassley), Italy (Francesco Chiapparino and Gabriele Morettini), Argentina (Julio Djenderedjian and Juan Luis Martiren), Greece compared with Bulgaria and Turkey (Socrates Petmezas), Hungary (Zsuzsanna Varga), Poland (Tadeusz Janicki), Sweden (Mats Morell), Spain (Juan Pan-Montojo and James Simpson), Mexico (Alejandro Tortolero), France (Alain Chatriot) and Switzerland (Anne-Lise Head-König), in this order. The common experience consisted of the ups and downs of agricultural prices, and the increasing regulation by governments. The national experiences have a lot to do with the political consequences of WWI (Hungary, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey); the dual structure of agricultural holdings (Italy, Hungary, Spain and Mexico); politics (the rise of Fascism in Italy, the Civil War in Spain, the social democracy in Sweden).

But the contributions differ also due to the perspective of the different authors. Chiapparino and Morettini take a geographical comparative point of view to analyse the consequences of the grain-policy in Italy, and conclude that it was successful in some regions and not in others, and why this was the case. Chatriot handles

a similar topic – the regulation of the grain market in France – more explicitly from the point of view of political history. In the twenties several measures had been tried but failed. In the thirties the Popular Front created a Grain Bureau in which producers, wholesalers, handlers, consumers and administrators were united. This appeared to work. Head-König pays some attention to the intervention in agricultural production by the Swiss government after the WWI. The Swiss government favoured an increase in cereal production in order to become less dependent from imports. However, most of the author's contribution then moves on to dairy production and the issue of indebtedness.

Djenderedjian and Martiren analyse the Argentinean agriculture by comparing its development and strength with industry, and by looking at the role of (immigrant) labour. Like Chiapparino and Morettini, Petmezas takes a comparative approach, but in his case it is an international one. He compares Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, which is interesting because of their shared history and their role in tobacco production. He situates part of the differences in responding to the challenge of the Great Depression: the different financial policies these countries choose, and the different opportunities that the agricultural sector and ecological situation provided them.

Several countries had to cope with huge inequalities in land property. This is addressed in the papers on Mexico, Hungary and Spain. Pan-Montojo and Simpson (as well as Pinilla) tell the reader that this was one of Spain's main challenges in

answering the problems of the Great Depression. On the one hand the rural labourers needed land reform; on the other the small farmers needed price support. The tense political situation and the quick succession of governments ending in a civil war, prevented to follow a sustained agricultural policy. Varga explains that in Hungary, before the WWII, the land reform was addressed; but that in the end this structural problem was never solved due to the power of the large landowners. In Mexico the land reform after the revolution of 1915 was put into practice and continued in the 1920s. The Great Depression helped to expand it to the *haciendas* of the large landowners, which before 1929 were hardly touched. All these authors stress that land reform without sustained financial, technical and institutional aid to small farmers did not increase agricultural productivity.

I want to raise two main points of discussion with the book. Although the contributions in this volume do pay attention to the coming into existence of all kind of agricultural organisations in the period since 1870, they call what happened in the 1930s increased state intervention. In this way they do not acknowledge enough that the increased governance of agriculture in this period was just possible thanks to the increased organisation of agriculture, and that the outcome of the intervention was also due to this increased organisation. Further by mainly addressing intervention, they underplay the continued and increased involvement of the governments in agricultural research, education and extension.

My second point is that the individual contributions pay attention to political developments in the specific country, but the general political situation and cultural developments are seldom addressed. The editor's introduction and Fishback's conclusion limit themselves to economic historical literature and, therefore, they do not discuss for example the themes of corporatism and agrarianism. This narrow economic view is something that can easily be redressed, because recent edited volumes have been published that have a more political and social approach to the same topic: for example, Fernández-Prieto, Pan-Montojo, and Cabo (2014), Van de Grift and Ribi Forclaz (2017), and Regan and Smith (2019), especially the article by Daniel Brett (2019).

The volume by Béaur and Chiapparino fits well in what we know from the well-known monographs written by Tracy, Sheingate, Federico, and Koning, as well as the edited volume by Pinilla and Lains. Agriculture was not doing well in the Interwar Years and the Great Depression has as a consequence that governments engaged heavily with agriculture. But it clearly adds to this. What it elaborates and makes it worth using, are the differences between countries and, what I consider its main value, the importance of the longer-term view. The interaction between the Great Depression and agriculture becomes clearer, better understood and seen by analysing it from a historical perspective—in this case from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Moreover, it applies the historical approach also to the development of agri-

culture itself and, therefore, it brings to the forefront the role of the maturation of agriculture and its declining profitability, as well as its importance for the nation-state, something that became clear during the WWI, a similar geo-political wake-up call from the globalisation of the markets at the turn of the nineteenth century as our generation got with the COVID-crisis.

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