

Summaries of articles

History of finance and problems in the analysis of public expenditures

Jean BOUVIER

It is necessary to reinsert the history of the State (which so far has been neglected) in the history of social and economic development in the 19th and 20th centuries, since the State is one of its regulating mechanisms. The analysis of the various aspects of public finances is a way to achieve this aim, because the State is the largest enterprise of all. Two types of approach must be followed concurrently: one will be more quantitative, and concerned with long-term development; the other more qualitative, and concerned with short-term development. The study of public expenditure over a long period is a means to become aware of the problems raised by the first type of approach.

The finances of the French Monarchy under the Ancien Régime

Alain GUÉRY

The study of the finances of the French monarchy of the Ancien Régime is hampered by a certain number of difficulties, including sources of mediocre quality, which, in addition, are not easy to consult, as well as an old historiography filled with prejudices. The present article attempts to diminish these difficulties by viewing the problems posed by the finances of the French monarchy, from the end of the Middle Ages to the Revolution, in the perspective of budgetary considerations. Although, strictly speaking, there was no 'budget' under the Ancien Régime, there did exist techniques that can only be called 'budgetary'. And these, in fact, became the leading budgetary principles that were given definite legal status beginning with the Revolution.

With this approach, it is possible to display the major tendencies and chief problems of the finances of the French monarchy: a growing deficit and violent crises; the permanent use of expedients rather than regular taxes, despite a constant effort to increase the latter; and the role of war in this regard. The investigation of the monarchy's finances from a budgetary angle is the first step in a quantitative study of the State in the Ancien Régime, a State whose role in the development of European civilization is less well known than one might think.

Government expenditure and problems related to the devaluation of capital

LOUIS FONTVIEILLE

In his study of the development and growth of the French state from 1815 to 1970, the author brought to light a twofold phenomenon: on the one hand, the growth of government expenditure, and, on the other, the fact that the latter is subject to a cyclic fluctuation whose period is identical to that posited by Kondratieff, with the difference that its phases are reversed with respect to the corresponding phases of the latter. Taking these two observations as his point of departure, the author here attempts to establish the relationships existing between the long-term development of public outlays and that of the economic structure.

He bases his argument on the Marxist theory of the surplus accumulation and devaluation of capital, explaining the Kondratieff movement by the periodic development of contradictions between the productives forces and the economic structure. The movement of government expenditure can then be explained by two related factors: its insertion in the process of devaluation which makes it possible to resolve the contradiction; and by the role played by government expenditure in the resorption of the disequilibria that these contradictions have engendered within the productive forces themselves.

A century of public expenditures in France

Christine ANDRÉ et Robert DELORME

This paper deals with the main aspects of the growth of public expenditures in France over a century (1872-1971). They include outlays of central and local governments, including for social security, all of which are financed mainly through tax resources. The growth of public expenditures has been irregular. Its internal structure has been profoundly transformed, with regard both to the areas in which expenditures are made and to resource use categories. We show that among explanatory theses concerned with the overall level of public spending, the so-called 'displacement effect' reduces to a simple threshold assumption with little explanatory power. On a disaggregated level, we show that the study of a specific field of application, i.e. expenditures on public education, provides a way to distinguish various influences on them, related to the 'supply' side on the one hand, to the 'demand' side on the other hand.

Ider and the Tricephalus

Joël H. GRISWARD

The medieval legend of Ider is rooted in the most ancient warrior mythology of the Indo-Europeans. First, the two basic traits of the hero's personality (a fight with a bear and victory over giants), such as these have come down to us in the Folie Tristan of Berne, the Vengeance Raguidel, and the Roman d'Yder, reflect very clearly two aspects of this mythology. Second, the famous anecdote from De antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiae of William of Malmesbury concerning the child of King Nuth recounts in detail an initiation rite of the type that G. Dumézil has studied for the specifically Indo-European domain. Above all, however, the novel which bears the hero's name has preserved for us a myth—inherited, most probably, from a common distant pre-history and presented here in a fanciful disguise—for which parallels can be found in India, in the murder of the Tricephalus and the episode of Indra and Namuci, and in Rome, in the victory of the young Horace over the three Curiatii and in the story of Tullus Hostilius and Mettius Fuffetius.

The Structure of Melusine Legends

Claude LECOUTEUX

The analysis of a corpus of medieval legends centered on an interdiction involving a mermaid enables us to bring to light a structure related to that of the folk tale as analyzed in the schemas proposed by Propp. At the same time, it allows us to demonstrate the existence of typological or genetic links between these legends. The variations offered by the texts reflect the mental outlook of the circles in which they originated, and they show clearly that the 'happy end' was grafted onto the medieval avatar of a myth that can be traced back as far as to Indian literature. We can see that a pagan theme has been taken over, adapted, and 'psychologized' by a society impregnated with Christianity—a process

which entailed certain distortions, for example in the denouement. All the same, though the structure underwent changes (death, mutilation, etc.), it remained the common denominator of all these legends.

**Chinese agriculture from Antiquity to the 14th century:
transformations of a pattern**

Michel CARTIER

The examination of the models elaborated by Chinese theoreticians from Antiquity to the pre-modern period allows us to distinguish three major phases. Antiquity witnessed the establishment of a system of cereal cultivation characterized by high yields (from 1000 to 1500 liters/hectare) and small family holdings (less than 2 hectares); the surplus was taxed or sold in commerce. The diffusion of the swing-plow, which occurred especially in the period of demographic stagnation from the third to the sixth century, corresponds to the development of farming on a much larger scale (5 hectares per couple); it was defined in the framework of the legislation on the equalization of landholdings (the 'equal field system') and combined cultivation of cereals with the production of textiles. A third model, characterized by an intensification of agriculture and an increasing financial burden (rent and land tax) became widespread during the pre-modern epoch (from the tenth century), in connection with the development of rice growing with the aid of irrigation. It is this process, still discernible in the twentieth century, which explains the quasi-unlimited growth of the agricultural population.

**The Economic Development of Eastern Europe
in the inter-war period**

Ivan T. BEREND, György RÁNKI

If we examine the traditional factors of production (labour force, capital, land and technology) in Eastern Europe in the inter-war period, we have to modify the previous approaches regarding manpower utilization. Extensive use of manpower is basically a negative factor in economic life, and this was so during that period too. On the other hand, this very excess made a more intensive economy possible in certain places under the conditions then prevailing in Eastern Europe, which were clearly not those conducive to capitalist development.

Little progress can be observed in the modernization of the structure of production, for example, in the cultivation of plants requiring intensive labour. In the area of industrial development, the authors examine mainly those factors in the world economy after world war one which determined its slow pace between the two world wars, particularly the economic and political factors which brought industrialization to the forefront of economic policy. This industrialization aimed at import-substitution, a policy which, however, proved detrimental to economic growth.

Traffic, transport, and the other social services developed very slowly in the inter-war period, owing partly to continual budgetary deficits, and partly to the smaller volume of foreign loans and their inefficient utilization. Foreign capital did not fulfill its role in stimulating development; indeed, its impact was less than in the years before 1914. And foreign trade was hampered by relatively serious difficulties owing to the terms of trade, the lack of markets, and the one-sidedness of the export structure. There were a few signs of modernization in economic life (for example, the greater share of industry in the national income); but, all things considered, backwardness became deeper in many respects, and the inner contradictions between the developing and the stagnating sectors became still sharper.