

SUMMARIES OF LECTURES in ECO 303Y1:
the Economic History of Modern Europe, to 1914
for the Academic Year: 2012 - 2013

XIVa. Week no. 14: Lecture Topic no. 17: on 16 January 2013:

Part IV: The Spread of Modern Industrialization: The ‘Slow Industrialization’ of France, 1789 - 1914.

1. Barriers to French Economic Development: for independent reading

2. The Debate about the Performance of the French Economy in the 19th century

a) **The debate about the supposedly ‘slow industrialization’ of 19th-century France** is one that necessarily must be conducted at greater depth after the end of this set of lectures on France

b) **We discussed two major but very common errors in this debate, about ‘homogenization:**

i) treating France as a one geographic entity, ignoring the very considerable regional variations, especially those north and south of the Loire River

ii) treating the 19th century as one unified time period, ignoring the several phases of economic growth and decline

c) **In summary, the preponderant opinion, but not universally accepted, is that:**

i) overall France did not experience the rate of economic growth and economic development especially that are to be found in Great Britain, Germany, and the United States.

ii) but French economic growth in the 19th century is still very impressive compared with French economic changes in previous centuries, and with much of the rest of the world in the 19th century.

d) **read the full lecture notes for the other issues involved in this debate**, to be more fully resolved at the end of the lectures on France.

3. The French Revolution, pro and con:

a) **We next dealt with the economic consequences of the French Revolution (1789-1792),**

- whose most beneficial positive contribution was national unification and market integration, whose importance was highlighted by a survey of French political and economic history from the later 12th century.

b) **Wars were indeed the worst curse for the French economy**, beginning with the many 18th century wars, but especially the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792-1815.

4. French Railways:

We continued that theme with the physical integration of the French national economy with the several railway booms of the 19th century, both before and after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, so disastrous for France.

5. **Agriculture:** The most important economic consequence, and probably the most negative consequence of the French Revolution, concerned Land Reform, Peasant Emancipation, and agrarian changes, which will be considered fully in the subsequent lecture no. 18, on 21 and the first half of 28 January 2009. This lecture will be vital for understanding the nature and consequences of agrarian changes in Germany, Poland, and Russia, from 1815 to 1914, in subsequent lectures.

XIVb. Week no. 14: Lecture Topic no. 18, part 1: on 16 January 2013:

The French Revolution and French Agriculture, 1789 - 1914:

1. **These two lectures on French agriculture (concluding on 23 January) concern the most important economic consequence, and probably the most negative consequence, of the French Revolution (1789-1795).**

2. **These lectures will be vital for understanding the nature and consequences of agrarian changes for modern industrialization not only in 19th century France,** but also in Germany, Poland, and Russia, from 1815 to 1914, as analyzed in several subsequent lectures.

a) **Thus the French Revolutionary Land Reforms constitute a paradigm** necessary for understanding the nature and forms of modern industrialization everywhere in 19th-century continental Europe.

b) We shall later have to see how Germany, Russia, and Poland resembled or differed from the French Revolutionary model.

3. **The first lecture of this set began with an analysis of the historic,** geographic, and climatic nature of medieval and early modern French agriculture, both south and north of the Loire River, forming the major agricultural and economic boundary, historically, in France.

a) **South of the Loire:**

(i) most of this region continued to practise Mediterranean 'Dry Farming', basically unchanged from Roman times. For arable grain agriculture, it meant basically a two field system: with winter wheat and fallow, and with very little livestock, because of inadequate pastures and fodder crops.

(ii) Having never been subjected to true feudalism and manorialism, there was virtually no Common Field (communal) farming; and grain agriculture was undertaken by individual small-scale peasants, most with inadequate resources and very low productivity.

(iii) But there three other forms of agriculture, practised separately from arable grain agriculture: viticulture (vineyards for wines), olive oil cultivation (olive groves), and livestock raising, which were all very capital intensive forms of farming.

iv) Share-cropping, known as *métayage*, evolved in later medieval Italy and southern France to resolve the problem of how to supply both land and capital to poor landless peasants to engage in this form of agriculture.

- Through individual contracts (non-feudal), landowners -- often urban merchants -leased land with such capital to poor peasants who supplied the landlord with half the harvest as payment of both rent and interest.-

- Further details on its important functions will be found in the published online lecture, and in subsequent lectures.

b) France north of the Loire:

- i) in the zone of classic medieval feudalism, from the Loire to the Rhine Rivers -- most peasants lived and worked their tenancy lands in a feudal-seigniorial regime of communal farming, with Open Fields (or Common Fields),
- ii) much like those already seen in England, with an integrated and symbiotic system of mixed farming:
 - (1) i.e., combining livestock raising with arable farming, generally with a three-field system.
 - (2) But while northern agriculture, especially in having so much more livestock, was more productive than most of southern agriculture, it was historically less productive (generally) than that found in the Midlands of England.

4. The various classes of French peasantry: in the 17th and 18th centuries (to the French Revolution)

a) villeins: dependent peasant tenants of French manorial or seigneurial estates:

- with the continuation of Common Field farming,
- and hence the virtual absence of both enclosures and Convertible Husbandry in northern France until the Revolution,
- descendants of former serfs, who, with the virtual extinction of serfdom by the 15th or 16th centuries had the securest property rights of any peasants in France
- role of the Parlement de Paris in guaranteeing such property rights to undermine the feudal aristocracy (in favour of the king) was explained

b) leasehold peasants:

- peasants who rented or leased lands, on fixed written contracts, from landlords, feudal and non-feudal:
- lands that were leased out from the lord's domains (and thus not a permanent loss), held by both free and villeins

c) métayers or share-croppers, chiefly found in France south of the Loire River:

- free landless peasants who received land, capital (working and fixed), and protection from landowners (often urban landowners) in return for half of their harvest: as both rent and interest
- non feudal: freely engaged written contracts
- explanation of why the scattered nature of share-cropping holdings prevented enclosures

d) allodial or freehold peasants: very few, and not considered in this lecture

5. From Grundherrschaft to Gutsherrschaft, 1480 - 1789: Reconstitution of the large domains

a) To set the consequences of the French Revolution in proper historic perspective, the lecture then concerned the remarkable changes in French agriculture from the 1480s to the 1780s, which witnessed the reconstitution of large centralized estates in many parts of France, estates left largely unimpaired by the Revolution.

b) To facilitate this analysis, comparisons were made between two types of feudal estate regimes, using the German terms: *Gutsherrschaft* (estates based on the sale of agricultural commodities, using servile labour) and *Grundherrschaft* (estates based on rental incomes from free peasant tenants).

c) the 'embourgeoisement' of French agriculture: the reconstitution of large estates in much of France

from the 1480s to the 1780s:

i) **was not the achievement of the old feudal aristocracy but of bourgeois-based newcomers:** wealth merchants, financiers, government officials, lawyers and other professional who purchased feudal lands from traditional aristocrats facing hard times:

- the old aristocrats were known as the *noblesse d'épée* (nobility of the sword – descendants of military knights);
- and the newcomers were disdainfully known as the *noblesse de robe* (nobility by dress, alone)

ii) **we discussed in this last part of the lecture how the newcomers acquired lands** from both poor and lesser feudal nobility and from peasants to recreate large estates

iii) **As in Tudor-Stuart England, the inflationary forces of the Price Revolution era (1520-1650) hastened this process:** by undermining the economic status of traditional nobles living on fixed feudal incomes (so that their costs of noble living soared beyond their mean), while increasing the economic rent on agricultural lands, thereby providing the profit incentive for bourgeois entrepreneurs (with commercial capital) to buy up noble lands – and also to take lands from their peasant tenants

iv) **problem:** inability to engaged in enclosure as did their bourgeois counterparts in Tudor-Stuart England – for reasons to be explained in the next lecture

v) **Marc Bloch:** French historian who (in 1931) first called attention to this ‘embourgeoisment’ of formerly feudal lands in France during these three centuries: noting that the French Revolution (1789 - 1793) left these reconstituted large estates largely intact, so that Revolutionary France was not – as traditional myths state – a land of just of a multitude of small peasant proprietors