

## Editors' Notes

IN MEMORIAM: MANCUR OLSON 1932–1998

Mancur Olson, Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland at College Park, and Principal Investigator at the Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS), died on 19 February 1998, from a sudden heart attack. After his undergraduate work at Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, Olson received his Ph.D from Harvard in 1963. From 1963 to 1967 he taught at Princeton and from 1967 to 1969 he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, after which he moved to the University of Maryland.

Describing his work and career, Mancur Olson once told me that he “specialized in not being specialized.” This was not quite right; there was in fact a set of ideas which remained at the core of his thinking throughout his career. But the comment does hint at the breadth of his intellectual interests: every paper, every seminar, indeed, every lunch-time conversation was an opportunity for him to learn more about how the world worked and see if he could understand and explain it. Often his argument would derive from unique insights into the functioning and impact of interest groups, which were first presented in his highly influential 1965 book *The Logic of Collective Action*. Mancur argued that it was easier for small groups to organize and promote their interests; typically they would demand policies which imposed a disproportionate cost on the rest of society and slowed economic growth.

Mancur did not merely look to test his theories against historical evidence; rather, his objective was no less than to explain *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, the title of his landmark 1982 book. Contrasting the economic performance of Britain after World War II with that of Germany and Japan, Mancur argued that a long period of stability and security in Britain had led to “institutional sclerosis,” or the proliferation of growth-retarding interest groups; in Germany and Japan, on the other hand, the slate had been wiped clean, so to speak, after the defeat of fascism. Mancur also ventured into U.S. macro-economic history: he argued that over time an increasing proportion of any reduction in aggregate demand was translated into a fall in output because, as interest groups multiplied, wages and prices became more sticky. And there were many other applications of his theories, from marriage norms among Indian castes, to the evolution of apartheid in South Africa.

While Mancur's ideas were original and powerful, his influence also derived from other sources. Literally till the minute he died Mancur was single-minded: teaching, learning, sharing, and encouraging a host of students and colleagues. His charm, eloquence, and sheer energy were without parallel. Informed of his death, a colleague asked, “who else you know is an engine of growth?” Mancur would have liked the description.

ANAND SWAMY, *University of Maryland*

### 1997 ECONOMIC HISTORY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The editors and the Association wish to thank the following individuals who were chairs or discussants at the 1997 Economic History Association meetings.

Judith Brown, Rice University  
Charles Calomiris, Columbia University  
Lois Green Carr, Historic St. Mary's City  
Ann Carlos, University of Colorado  
Susan Carter, University of California, Riverside  
Gregory Clark, University of California, Davis

Carolyn Cooper, Yale University  
Dora L. Costa, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Philip D. Curtin, Johns Hopkins University  
Colleen Dunlavy, University of Wisconsin  
Steven Epstein, University of Colorado  
Charles Feinstein, Oxford University  
Nancy Folbre, University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
Tony Freyer, University of Alabama  
Roderick Floud, London Guildhall University  
Claudia Goldin, Harvard University and NBER  
Gillian Hamilton, University of Toronto  
Joan Hannon, St. Mary's College of California  
Paul Hohenberg, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Harold James, Princeton University  
Phillip T. Hoffman, California Institute of Technology  
Lynn Hollen Lees, University of Pennsylvania  
Stanley Lebergott, Wesleyan University  
Margaret Levenstein, University of Michigan  
Gary Libecap, University of Arizona  
Peter Lindert, University of California, Davis  
Kenneth Lipartito, University of Houston  
Anne McCants, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Edward McDevitt, University of California, Los Angeles  
Marvin McInns, Queen's University  
Henry M. Miller, Historic St. Mary's City  
Judith Miller, Emory University  
Cynthia Taft Morris, Smith College  
Morris D. Morris, Brown University  
Larry Neal, University of Illinois  
Peter Perdue, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Daniel Raff, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania  
Paul Rhode, University of North Carolina  
Winifred Rothenberg, Tufts University  
Harry Scheiber, University of California, Berkeley  
Pierre Siklos, Wilfred Laurier University  
Peter Temin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Louise Tilly, New School for Social Research  
Frank Trentmann, Princeton University  
Carolyn Tuttle, Lake Forest College  
John Wallis, University of Maryland  
David Weir, University of Chicago  
Thomas Weiss, University of Kansas  
Gavin Wright, Stanford University  
R. Bin Wong, University of California, Irvine

ECONOMIC HISTORY ASSOCIATION MEETING

The fifty-eighth annual meeting of the Economic History Association will be held in Durham, North Carolina, from September 25 to 27, 1998. The preliminary program follows:

*The Black Death and the Medieval Economy*

Greg Clark, University of California, Davis, "Microbes and Markets: Was the Black Death an Economic Revolution?"

Stephen R. Epstein, London School of Economics, "The Late Medieval Crisis as an 'Integration Crisis' "

Harry Kitsikopoulos, New York University, "The Impact of the Black Death on Peasant Budgets and Their Ability to Innovate"

*Property Rights and Distribution*

Mary Ann Fay, Virginia Military Institute, and John Willoughby, American University, "Subordination through Exclusion: Women's Property Holdings in 18th Century Cairo"

Elizabeth Herr, University of Colorado, Denver, "Women, Economic Opportunity and Wealth Accumulation Strategies in Frontier Colorado"

Leigh Shaw-Taylor, Cambridge University, "The Hammond-Neeson Thesis Revisited: Did Agricultural Laborers Have Common Pasture Rights?"

*Economic History and the Consumer*

Ann Carlos, University of Colorado and Frank Lewis, Queen's University, "Native American Indians as Consumers, 1700–1770"

Anne McCants, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Let them Drink Tea: The Consumption of Colonial Groceries Among the Amsterdam Kleine Burgereij"

Martha Olney, University of California, Berkeley, "Consumerism: An Economist's Perspective"

Lorena Walsh and Ann Martin, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, "Reconstructing the Food Provisioning Systems in the Chesapeake"

*Governance and Economic Growth*

Tony Freyer, University of Alabama, "Did the Allied Occupation Transform Japanese Society? Enacting the Antimonopoly Law of 1947 as a Case Study"

Aurora Gómez Galvarriato, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico City, "The Impact of the Mexican Revolution on Real Wages and Productivity Levels of Industrial Workers"

Steve Haber, Stanford University, "Political Stability and Economic Performance: Evidence from Revolutionary Mexico"

Nathan Sussman and Yishay Yafeh, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, "Institutions and Country Risk: Evidence from Japanese Government Debt in the Meiji Period"

*Does Economics Explain Political Revolutions?*

Alan Dye, Barnard College, and Richard Sicotte, University of Illinois, "U.S. Tariff Policy and the Cuban Revolution: The Political Economy of Exporting Economic Instability."

Helge Berger, Princeton University, and Mark Spoerer, University of Hohenheim (Germany), "Not Ideas but Hunger: Revolution and Economy in 1848 Europe"

Roger Ransom, University of California, Riverside, and Richard Sutch University of California, Berkeley, "Conflicting Visions: The American Civil War as a Revolutionary Conflict"

*The Financial Pre-History of the United States*

David Cowen, New York University, "The First Bank of the United States: 'Central Banking' and Credit Markets, 1791–1811"

Winifred Rothenberg, Tufts University, "Mortgage Credit: A Proto-Capital Market in the Early Stages of Economic Development: Massachusetts, 1642–1770"

Robert E. Wright, Temple University, "Two Ventricles of America's Early Financial Heart: Bank Lending in New York and Pennsylvania, 1781–1830"

*The Industrial Revolution: Preconditions and Consequences*

Robert Allen, University of British Columbia, "The Great Divergence: Wages and Prices in Europe from the Middle Ages to the First World War"

Margaret Jacob, University of Pennsylvania, "Scientific Culture in the Making of the Industrial West"

Oliver Volckart, Max-Planck-Institute, "Stability and Change in the Premodern Economy and Society of Germany"

*Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century Cotton South*

Michael Gagnon, Emory University, "The Industrial Revolution in 19th Century Georgia: An Evolutionary Model of Textile Industrialization"

Shepherd W. McKinley, University of Delaware, "The Revolution After the War: Workers, Managers, and Entrepreneurs in South Carolina's Phosphate Industry, 1867–1900"

Suzanne L. Summers, Texas A & M University, Kingsville, "The Economic Impact of Postbellum Political Revolutions: Reconstruction, Redemption, and Texas Cotton Merchants, 1865–1880"

*Immigration and Emigration Histories*

Raymond L. Cohn, Illinois State University, "Different or Simply More?: Comparing Colonial and Antebellum Immigration to the United States."

Andrew Godley, University of Reading, "After the Pogroms: The Great Wave of Russian Jewish Emigration to the United States and the United Kingdom, 1880–1914."

Drew Keeling, University of California, Berkeley, "Trans-Atlantic Migration and the Transportation Revolution, 1850–1914."

*Technological Change and its Consequences*

Alexander J. Field, Santa Clara University, "Telegraphic Transmission of Asset Prices and Orders to Trade: Implications for Economic Growth, Trading Volumes, and Securities Markets."

Wayne A. Grove, Colgate University, "Postbellum Cotton Economy No More: A Chemo-mechanical Revolution Across the Pan-Continental Cotton Belt, 1949–1964."

Graeme J. Milne, University of Liverpool, "The Steam Revolution: Shipowning Strategies in mid-19th Century Liverpool."

*Two Millennia of Legal and Contractual Innovations*

Farley Grubb, University of Delaware, "Statutory Regulation of Immigrant Labor Contracting: The Role of Legally Mandated Freedom Dues in Colonial American Servitude."

David Stead, Oxford University, "A General Theory of Enclosures."

P. V. Viswanath, Pace University, "Agricultural Contracting in Roman Palestine: Risk Sharing or Moral Hazard?"

*Regions and Economic Development in North America*

Marilyn Gerriets, St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, "The Origin of the Hinterland: Agricultural Resources and Manufacturing Development at Confederation."

Margaret Levenstein, University of Michigan, "Capital Markets and the Industrialization of the American Midwest: A Study of the Cleveland Stock Exchange."

Paul Rhode, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, "After the War Boom: Reconversion on the Pacific Coast, 1943–1949."

#### DATABASE OF PRIVATE BILL WITNESSES

A new database of major importance to economic historians is now available at the House of Lords Records Office. It contains the names, occupations, places of residence or work and other information relating to about 200,00 witnesses who gave evidence to committees of the Commons or Lords considering opposed private bills between 1771 and 1917, together with names of petitioners and bill titles.

The database enables easy access for the first time to about five million pages of predominantly manuscript evidence, largely in the House of Lords Record Office but including some held elsewhere. It is possible to search for all database entries relating to a particular person, place, occupation, or company, or to locate all traffic surveys relating to a particular area, or all evidence relating to petitions by canal companies against railways. Evidence was taken most often on bills for the construction of railways, but there were also large numbers of bills concerning canals, docks, harbors, road, tramways, civic improvements, gas works, and water and electricity supply systems. Questioning often ranged far wider than might be expected, dealing with, for example, the detail of manufacturing processes, the effects of railways upon lunatics, the relative merits of public and private ownership and the interests of pressure groups such as the Open Spaces Society. The evidence relates to the entire United Kingdom, including the whole of Ireland; in addition, many witnesses drew on their international experience.

The database is available on-line at the House of Lords Record Office. The Record Office is able to make quick searches for researchers who write to the Clerk of Records, House of Lords, London, SW1A 0PW. A guide to the database, entitled "Witnesses before Parliament," is available from the same address, price £3 including postage. The database has been funded by the Transport History Research Trust, with a major contribution from the House of Lords Record Office.