

Tilley, Charles, Louise and Richard. *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930*. Harvard University Press, 1975

E. P. Fitzgerald

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habitant and labourer. History from the bottom up is certainly welcome, but urban history must attempt an even broader approach.

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Tilly, Charles, Louise and Richard. The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930.
Harvard University Press, 1975.

During the late 60's and early 70's several articles and mimeographed working papers provided specialists with a glimpse of Charles Tilly's ambitious researches into violence and collective action in modern European history. In this book that research is supplemented by the expertise of his wife, a specialist in Italian social history, and their son, a specialist in German economic history. The Rebellious Century describes and analyzes the incidence and function of collective non-governmental violence in three nations undergoing the crucial structural changes of modernization. It also puts forward hypotheses about linkages between socio-economic change and political conflict on the one hand and collective action -- non-violent as well as violent -- on the other.

Readers of this journal will likely be more interested in the Tillys' interpretations of such linkages; therefore this report restricts itself to the authors' cross-national generalizations, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The Primary of politics. In each country violence tended to cluster around years which saw key power struggles at the national level. This link is far more apparent than any connection with major structural changes. For this reason the authors hold that collective violence is part of an overall historical surge in collective action by groups contending for power within an essentially political framework. "We keep rediscovering the political basis of collective violence." A corollary to this is:

2. The breakdown of "breakdown" theories of social conflict. The

massive structural rearrangements of urbanization and industrialization did not cause violence by eroding traditional norms, by straining time-honoured modes of social control, or even by failing to meet the new expectations of the uprooted. Instead, urbanization and industrialization worked in the longer run to create new social loyalties and a new framework for collective action. This process was paralleled by the rise of complex voluntary associations (e.g. trade unions) which replaced localized territorial communities as vehicles for collective action. Cities and factories, in short, did not call forth violent reactions simply by breaking down the structures of traditional society: "...instead of being a direct response to hardship, normlessness, or rapid change, collective violence is a by-product of contention for power and its repression."

3. The role of the State. State action (and the process of state-building) were very important in determining the incidence of collective violence. The Tillys insist that the state is a violent institution, that the "order" it maintains with its repressive agencies is usually a violent order. Their data show that violence often resulted from the reaction of state agents to claims put forward by organizations on social groups. They also show how the demands of the central power (taxation, conscription) and the requirements of a growing capitalist economy (national market network, cash-crop farming) provoked massive and oft-times violent resistance from local communities.

4. The role of collective violence. While the authors show how repression could incite collective violence, they also argue that on the whole repression was effective. A state bent on repressing protest could make violence (and even collective action) too costly for the potential participants, a situation that existed in France during the 1850's and Italy during the years of Fascist dictatorship. But in other circumstances collective violence could be a very effective tactic for advancing the claims of a particular group. In advancing this argument they make the point that collective violence was not the result of mindless, impulsive outbursts: even participants in "primitive" forms of violent protest were aware of what they were doing, could articulate their demands, and followed

time-honoured procedures with an internal logic of their own. In short, if repression worked, so did violence; the final outcome depended upon the broader political situation.

The Rebellious Century will interest social historians for many additional reasons: e.g. the way the authors' have collected and interpreted their data, the categories they use to classify collective violence, and so on. Let it be enough to say that the Tilly's have written an important, thoughtful book. They have done so in an engagingly offhand style that eschews jargon and academic fetishism. They have put forward their ideas with care and reserve; nevertheless, in the opinion of this reviewer it is not an exaggeration to report that their work has put the study of comparative social history on a new methodological and analytical foundation.

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McCormack, A.R., and MacPherson, I., Cities in the West: Papers of the Western Canada Urban History Conference. National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, History Division Paper No. 10. Ottawa 1975.
316 pp., maps.

Urban history sessions have been a regular feature at the Canadian Historical Association meetings in recent years, however, the Western Canadian Urban History Conference at Winnipeg in 1974 broke new ground as the first purely urban history conference in Canada dealing entirely with Canadian topics. Held to celebrate the centenary of the incorporation of the city, and organized by the History Department of the University of Winnipeg, the choice of the western Canadian city as the theme was a natural one. It was also a very fortunate one, for the Canadian cities in the West have been rather neglected in the still underdeveloped field of Canadian urban studies.