

Marko Maunula. *Guten Tag, Y'all: Globalization and the South Carolina Piedmont, 1950-2000.* Politics and Culture in the Twentieth-Century South Series. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009. viii + 162 pp. \$44.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8203-2901-7.



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Commissioned by Tom Downey (Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Princeton University)

Examining the story of economic change in the South since World War II has become something of a cottage industry, with numerous books assessing the effects of state-level industrial recruitment, federal spending, wage differentials, and industrial diversification.[1] Building on these works, historians have continued to analyze how this transition has taken place at the state and local levels. In *Guten Tag, Y'all*, Marko Maunula examines the effect of international economic development on Spartanburg, a city and county in the northwestern part of the Palmetto State.

Perhaps sooner and more strongly than many other smaller cities in the post-World War II South, Spartanburg embraced international economic development as a strategy for growth. Spartanburg's economy had been dominated by agriculture and textiles for some sixty years before World War II. As Maunula notes, Spartanburg had long been an industrial town. A World War II army training base southeast of the city drew thousands of soldiers from across the coun-

try to the community, bringing Spartanburg to the attention of many who returned to settle in the area after the war. After the war, some of the land on which the base sat was deeded to a community foundation, which used it for industrial recruitment. Local leaders sought to capitalize on the wartime boom in the textile economy and post-war boom in consumer demand, but with limited success. South Carolina embarked on a long period of "smokestack chasing" in the postwar era, and the scene of a South Carolina governor or Development Board officer visiting in a New York corporate office to sell the state was not uncommon. Growth in Spartanburg was slow but steady in the 1950s, but the 1960s saw a greater effort to lure European corporations to locate factories in the area.

Maunula argues that Spartanburg's development strategy represents a classic "Revolution from Above" in that changes in the local economy were closely managed and directed by the community's upper class. These were C. Vann Woodward's "new men" and David Carlton's "middle-

class boosters," and by the Great Depression, they controlled much of Spartanburg's economy (p. 3). High in their minds after World War II, he concludes, was the prevention of unionization and the preservation of the existing low-wage structure. Most of the textile-based leadership did not want industries to come to the area that would compete with the low wages of area textile mills, so they were not immediately enthusiastic about any high-skill industries. They were not terribly excited about industrial citizens who did not mesh with their idea of what the community should be, whatever that might have been. He argues that Spartanburg's economic leadership, and by extension its political leadership, was willing to sacrifice some of the benefits of economic growth in order to retain a degree of paternalistic control over the community. Maunula looks at a number of Spartanburg's development boosters and industrial leaders in the course of his narrative. The head of the local chamber of commerce, himself a New York native, and Roger Milliken, also a New York native, emerge as the leading figures in the globalization of Spartanburg, which is certainly accurate. Some of the earliest non-textile industries to build factories in Spartanburg during the 1950s came because of the low (and dropping lower) rates of union membership in the area, chief among these being the Kohler Company of Wisconsin.

An important question is, why did Spartanburg's economic leadership target European corporations? The earliest European companies that came to Spartanburg were textile equipment manufacturers, attracted due to the efforts of some of Spartanburg's existing textile company barons, who preferred to buy European machinery and insisted that these companies send employees who could maintain the equipment. Word of Spartanburg spread, and soon increasing numbers of French, Swiss, and German companies that were considering opening a North American factory were visiting Spartanburg. These northern European immigrants did not offer any major

threat, Maunula contends, to the area's racial status quo. It appears that the conditions that drew northern industry to the South also attracted European countries. Maunula notes the increasing burden of government regulation in Europe, rising labor costs, and victories of socialist parties in several western European countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And, Maunula contends, Spartanburg's existing leadership believed that European factory managers would fit into the community better than northern managers. The earliest Europeans who moved to Spartanburg became part of the recruiting chorus, joining existing textile barons and chamber of commerce types to lure other European factories to the area. The Europeans, who were frequently managerial men, were encouraged to settle not in one particular neighborhood but throughout the community, thus avoiding the creation of a German or Swiss neighborhood and helping to assimilate them into the prevailing upper-middle-class culture.

A recurring theme in the text is how international trade policy affected the existing and growing industries in Spartanburg. Free trade policies generally hurt the existing textile industries, though some of President Richard Nixon's policies spurred international investment, which helped Spartanburg since the community already had a history of attracting foreign investment. Moreover, when certain large corporations scouted out the Carolina Piedmont and found it acceptable, it served as sort of a seal of approval and encouraged smaller European companies to consider the region. Maunula concludes his narrative with the 1992 decision by BMW to build a factory in Spartanburg County, arguing that the decision was the culmination of Spartanburg's effort at internationalization.

The book itself is not very long, but it is tightly written and conveys a lot of information in a short space. A little more comparative information would have been helpful. For example, was Spartanburg more oriented toward globalization

than other South Carolina cities? Spartanburg, according to Maunula, seems to have been out in front of other communities in the Palmetto State, but how does foreign investment compare with other locales? He could have compared the experience of Bowater, the large English paper company, whose recruitment to nearby York County in 1956 necessitated a special session of the South Carolina legislature to amend the state's alien property ownership law. While the narrative proceeds generally in a chronological manner, there is some back and forth in the timeline, and this was occasionally confusing. Still, Maunula brings an understanding of international economics to this work and intertwines complex issues involving currency devaluation, international trade agreements, and federal policy into the narrative. The book is well situated into the literature of regional economic development.

At the very end of the book, Maunula suggests that "from the perspective of the old working-class neighborhoods and blue-collar hangouts, the change does not look as revolutionary as it does from Interstate 85" (p. 119). This is an important observation, perhaps especially so given that Spartanburg's, and South Carolina's, growth has faltered somewhat in the last decade or so. Perhaps a little greater focus on the underside of development, on the attitudes of workers as well as the orientation of businessmen, would have added some depth of understanding.

Note

[1]. For example, James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

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