



British Technology and European Industrialization: The Norwegian Textile Industry in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Kristine Bruland

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How did small European economies acquire the technologies and skills needed to industrialize in the nineteenth century? In this important contribution to a long-standing debate, Kristine Bruland looks at the Norwegian experience to show how a technological infrastructure was created, and suggests that much of this was due to the efforts of British machine makers who from the mid 1840s vigorously sought foreign markets. Providing not only basic technical services but also skilled labour to set up and then supervise the operation of the new machinery, British textile engineering firms were able to supply a complete 'package' of services, significantly easing the initial technical problems faced by Norwegian entrepreneurs. Kristine Bruland's case-study of the Norwegian textile industry demonstrates clearly the paradox that Britain's entrepreneurial efforts in the supply of capital goods overseas were largely responsible for the creation of the technical industrial bases of many of her major foreign competitors.



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