Editors’ Note

This issue of Business History Review pursues some of the journal’s main themes, including globalization and the role of governments in shaping economies. In his article “The Problem of Productivity: Inflation and Collective Bargaining after World War II,” Samuel Milner looks at the efforts of the steel industry to scale back some of the consequences of New Deal regulations supportive to organized labor by introducing wage-price policies that linked compensation to productivity. Paolo Di Martino and Michelangelo Vasta’s article, “Reassessing the Italian ‘Economic Miracle’: Law, Firms’ Governance, and Management, 1950–1973,” considers the ways that small, private, firms—firms that made up the majority of Italian businesses in those years—sought to avoid, rather than change, what they saw as burdensome legislation. Such moves, Di Martino and Vasta argue ultimately discouraged meaningful innovation. Rika Fujioka and Jon Stobart pursue a comparative perspective in their article, “Global and Local: Retail Transformation and the Department Store in Britain and Japan, 1900–1940,” which traces the evolution of department stores in Britain and Japan. While the stores were transformative in shaping retail broadly in both countries, the effort to bring about change in Japan grew from a far more deliberate goal to modernize. Finally, in “Making Sense of Business and Community in Hollywood Films, 1928–2016,” Per Hansen and Anne Magnussen look at the timely issue of the popular image of businesspeople and the ways changing perceptions of business have been shaped by film characters and plots.

The issue also includes two review essays, one looking at the history of innovation in Silicon Valley. William Sahlman, a leading scholar of entrepreneurship, reviews Leslie Berlin’s Troublemakers: Silicon Valley’s Coming of Age. Historian Jeffrey Sklansky reviews a new installment in the Oxford History of the United States series—Richard White’s The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1896.