



British Entrepreneurship in Poland: A Case Study of Bradford Mills at Marki near Warsaw, 1883- 1939 (Modern Economic and Social History)

Sarah Dietz

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Drawing upon an impressive range of international sources, this book explores the late-nineteenth century partnership between Bradford worsted manufacturers the Briggs brothers and the German merchant Ernst Posselt, and their subsequent foreign direct investment in a modern factory and workers' community at Marki, near Warsaw in Poland. Protectionism and increasing foreign competition are discussed, among many complex economic pressures on British industry, as likely catalysts for this enterprise and the general historiography of the Polish lands is explored to reveal a climate of extraordinary opportunity for well-capitalised foreign industrialists in this period. British, Polish and German press and archival documents, as well as Russian police and factory inspectors' reports reveal the everyday experience of Polish factory workers and British consular correspondence provides fascinating insight into the machinations of the entrepreneurs and Warsaw's cosmopolitan business community. Through the development and domination of market and raw materials sources, this venture is shown to have monopolised worsted manufacture in the Russian Empire, using state of the art technology to create, and modern marketing techniques to promote, its product range and evolving image. Marki was described in 1886 as 'a second edition of Saltaire' and latterly as 'the Polish Bournville or Port Sunlight', thus aspects of British and Polish social history are compared to assess the efficacy of introducing the model-community concept, in combination with a radical employment policy, to less industrially-developed Poland. The experiences of an expatriate community of skilled Yorkshire foremen and their instrumentality in diffusing British industrial technology throughout the Russian Empire are described. Against a backdrop of political instability and social upheaval, which dramatically impacted on business behaviour after 1905 and particularly during the interwar period of Poland's Second Republic, this book examines the fortunes of an extraordinary enterprise which has been little researched in Poland and is largely unknown to British scholars.

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