La lucha de los rabassaires: análisis a largo plazo de un movimiento social y político.

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Abstract: In 1964, E. Giralt described the ‘rabassaire’ struggle in the late 19th century as “the most intense unrest in the Catalan countryside since the rebellion of the ‘remences’ in the 15th century”. As Giralt explained, this conflict subsided momentarily only to reappear in the 1920s with the creation of a peasant union, ‘Unió de Rabassaires’, which in the 1930s became the major organization in the Catalan countryside and led the way to the social and political struggle of the Catalan peasantry until the Civil War. We want to address this peasant struggle in the long-term. Following Ch. Tilly, we understand this social movement as a form of political action which had an early period in the late 18th century and reached maturity in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Its development was shortened by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. The analysis of this movement can shed light to the relationship between democratization and social mobilization, since it was when the Spanish liberal State opened to more democratic forms when the ‘rabassaire’ movement reached to mobilize the peasantry by adopting new forms of collective action and establishing political ties with republican parties. Beyond the organizational changes arising from the different social and political situations, a new long-term overview should to highlight the continuities in this movement, especially in terms of building a social identity and legitimating its claims and its struggle.