

16.5 Winners and losers in the modernisation of the countryside in the late twentieth century

Room 203

Chair: TBA

16.51 Erwin Karel – The modernisation of the Dutch agriculture system after the Second World War (1950-70)

In 1958 the Dutch minister of agriculture Sicco Mansholt became the first European commissioner for Agricultural Affairs. Ten years later he launched a plan intending to reorganise the whole European agriculture system. His plan was opposed by most European farmers, because it left too little room for the traditional family farms. The modernisation of the Dutch agriculture during the period from 1950 until 1970, was partly based on the same ideas that Mansholt put forward in Europe: rationalisation, specialisation and increasing in scale. His policy resulted in the Netherlands in large farms with high output and strong market orientation. The reverse side of the medal was the disappearance of more than 75 per cent of the farms (from 400,000 to 80,000) and growing environmental problems. Both questions are today well-known all over Europe.

The modernisation of the Dutch agricultural system in the period between 1950 and 1970 covered both technical and social aspects. A large-scale land consolidation, concerning nearly all the Dutch farmers, was the technical aspect. The government also developed a social program for so called backward farmers. This program intended to push the traditional farmer and his family into modern times. It learned how to run (financial) a farm, about modern aspects of housekeeping, about raising children and about career opportunities. The paper will mainly deal with the meaning of state interference in the agriculture sector.

Dr. Erwin H. Karel is co-ordinator of the Dutch Agricultural History Institute. He also works as lecturer for the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Groningen. In 2005 he wrote a thesis about the Rural Area Development Program as an instrument of the Dutch agriculture policy. He is one of the authors and editors of the forthcoming books on *Rural Economy and Society 500-2000*. Besides Rural History he publishes on themes concerning environmental history.

16.52 Carin Martiin – Ruling the rural: incorporation of the Swedish countryside into the welfare state

The transformation of Sweden from being rural to urban-dominated, did to great extent take place during the second half of the twentieth century. By then, much of the rural exodus came to be patronised by the emerging welfare state, whose success partly depended on opportunities to change structures in the countryside. First and foremost agriculture had to be rationalised in order to supply the rapidly expanding industrial sector with labour, but without reducing total farm production. Moreover, economic and social aspects were to be taken into account, both for political reasons and to design the process of urbanisation as a long-term win-win project for everybody. The results were enormous. In the course of the second half of the twentieth century the number of farmers decreased from one third to a few per cent of the total population, while agricultural productivity increased considerably. Yet, it would be a mistake to argue that the process was painless. On the contrary, ‘the flight from the countryside’ caused disappointment among the rural population as well as among many rural-born urban dwellers. The paper analyses parts of the parliamentary process that ruled this transformation and highlights instructions from the Ministry and interesting discussions in the official reports on which the process was based from the late 1940s to the very beginning of the 1990s.

Carin Martiin is associate professor at Stockholm University and at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala. She is agronomist, PhD in agricultural and rural history, and ‘docent’ in economic history. At present,

Carin Martiin is writing a textbook on agricultural economics for Routledge. Among recent publications are 'Swedish Milk, a Swedish Duty', *Rural History* (2010), and 'Milk as means of payment for farm labour: the dairy economy of a Swedish estate 1874-1913', *Ag.HR 57* (2008). Her present research focuses on agricultural politics during the twentieth century with particular emphasis on influences from two world wars.

16.53 Korrie Melis – Secondary education in the rural region of North-Groningen, the Netherlands, from the 1950s to the 1990s

Incorporating elements from both history and cultural geography, this paper focuses on and explores how secondary education in the rural region of North-Groningen, the Netherlands has changed over time between the 1950s and the 1990s. In many Dutch rural regions after World War Two secondary education became increasingly accessible for rural youth. This occurred as a result of the development of national institutional factors, like compulsory school attendance, child allowance and, later on, the Dutch Secondary Education Act of 1963. On a more regional level the development of educational facilities, like the development of technical schools and domestic science schools, were a contributing factor to the advancement of a region. Based on quantitative and qualitative data, such as in-depth interviews with representatives of schools, reunion books and minutes, this paper analyses the school developments in North Groningen in relation to the concepts of livability and regional identity. The analysis shows that governmental intervention, which from 1968 onwards resulted in an increase in scale of educational facilities, has changed the educational provision in North Groningen. Additionally a shift in the traditional importance of denominational schools is noticeable.

Korrie Melis holds an MSc in Cultural Geography attained at the University of Groningen. Her Master's thesis was a qualitative study about females in the man-ruled profession of dairy and arable farming in the North of the Netherlands. Since September 2008 she is working on a PhD in Economic and Social History at the University of Groningen. Her PhD deals with socio-cultural developments in the Northern part of the province of Groningen, the Netherlands, after World War Two. The PhD is part of a bigger project about the 1959 report 'Threatened Existence, the social, economic and cultural situation in North-Groningen'.