
12.2 New institutions in southern Europe

Room 104

Chair: Socrates Petmezas

12.21 Raluca Musat – The ‘model village’ of Diosti: sociologists and the future of the Romanian countryside

This paper is a case study of the ‘model village’ Diosti, planned and built in Southern Romania between 1938 and 1939. Through this, I will examine the role of sociology in modernising the Romanian countryside through housing and rural planning. Founded in 1925 by Dimitrie Gusti, the Bucharest School of Sociology engaged in field-based research of rural life and other cultural activities aimed at reforming the countryside. In charge of Romania’s participation at the 1937 Paris World Fair, Gusti and his team exhibited a *maquette* of a model village, made up of planned purpose-built rural housing. This ‘village of the future’, combining traditional architectural features with the comfort of modern living, was partly realised in the reconstruction of Diosti. During the royal dictatorship (1938-40), King Carol II embarked on a mission to reform the countryside by reconstructing entire villages affected by natural disasters, especially fires. Almost entirely burnt down, Diosti became the pilot for a future large-scale project of rural modernisation. Part of the village was rebuilt according to a rational plan, including new ‘model’ houses and a village centre. This paper will examine the sociological vision behind the reconstruction of Diosti. Firstly, I argue that the planning of the village reflected the ideas of the Bucharest School of Sociology, who sought to re-centre the rural community around culture. Secondly, I hold that the new model housing was an attempt to rationalise the peasant body. Planning the indoors and outdoors spaces reflected ideas about how people ought to live and behave in the countryside, at the same time showing the limits of comfort the urban scholars thought necessary for village life.

Raluca Musat is currently completing a PhD in History at School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, UCL, entitled *Sociologists and the Transformation of the Peasantry in Inter-war Romania*, working under the supervision of Professor Dennis Deletant and Dr Wendy Bracewell. My research interests include the history of the social sciences, the history of the European peasantry, and ideas about modernisation in twentieth-century Europe. I have been living in the UK since 2003 when I came to study for an MA in Contemporary European Studies at the University of Sussex (2004). Before beginning my doctoral studies, I worked for 3 years in multinational companies. Previously I lived in Bucharest, Romania. There I completed a BA in European Cultural Studies at the University of Bucharest (2003).

12.22 Paolo Tedeschi – New institutions for agrarian development: the *Cattedre Ambulanti di Agricoltura* in Lombardy during the early decennia of the twentieth century

The aim of this paper is to show how the *Cattedre Ambulanti di Agricoltura* helped the growth of the Lombard agriculture from the last years of the nineteenth century (when they were progressively created in all Lombard provinces, the first in 1895, the last in 1904) to 1935 (when Mussolini decided to replace them with the *Ispettorati Provinciali di Agricoltura*, new institutions more strictly linked to the fascist regime).

The *Cattedre* were public institutions financed by the provinces and some agrarian institutions and country banks: their aims were to coordinate the activity of farmers and breeders and to promote the diffusion of new more productive cultivations and new more efficient productive systems. They had to help Lombard farmers and peasants to know the new agronomical techniques and so to improve the crops and the agrarian yields. Using the example of the *Cattedre* is so possible to analyse advantages and limits of the public intervention for the development of the agrarian sector.

The agronomists working in the *Cattedre* had a very good knowledge of agronomics and veterinary sciences: they organised lectures, courses, evening classes, trainings and also some special itinerant

offices where they gave advice to farmers and breeders. In fact all agronomists were itinerant, that is they visited all farms and cattle-breeding of the province and informed the owners about all innovations in agronomics and zootechny. They particularly gave suggestions concerning:

- a) the best rotation of the crops, the best way to sow and, for every different type of land, the hybrid seeds and chemical fertilisers having the best yields;
- b) the best cures for vine disease (particularly phylloxera) and silkworm disease (particularly diaspis pentagona), and the least expensive and most efficient methods of replacing the incurable ones.
- c) the best breed of cattle and the best fodder crops, to improve the production and the quality of the milk.
- d) the best modern equipment to buy and the best agrarian machines to rent.
- e) the best methods to cultivate vines and olive trees and produce better-quality wine and olive oil.
- f) the best methods to cultivate the most important fruits for the market such as apples, pears, cherries, peaches and lemons.
- g) the *Alpicoltura* – studies and innovations in the Alpine pastures – and the best techniques for obtaining the highest yields and improving cattle-breeding in the Lombard valleys without overgrazing and exhausting soil fertility.
- h) the best ways to defend crops from damage by bad weather (particularly hail).

So the *Cattedre* gave to the Lombard rural people up-to-date know-how to improve agrarian production. The *Cattedre* were obviously more important in the backward areas: they reduced the existing gap with the more advanced agricultural ones. On this subject it is important to note that the positive effects of the *Cattedre* also depended on their links to other institutions supporting the agrarian sector: together to the other agrarian institutions (such as the rural co-operatives and friendly societies and the *casse rurali* that is the co-operative country banks) and the veterinary and agronomical schools which were born in the last decennia of the nineteenth century, the *Cattedre* helped the development of the Lombard agriculture. If the *Cattedre* had represented the only institution charged with the improvement of production and the productivity of farms and cattle-breeding the results could not have been so positive.

At the same time the *Cattedre* also allowed their young agronomists to perform important experiments and undergo training in a region where there existed a great variety of pedologic areas and agricultural environments, such as Alpine valleys, morainic hills, the plain (dry and irrigated) and the Riviera of the lakes (which have specific microclimates). This obviously improved the quality of agronomical studies in Lombardy and consequently the level of know-how available to Lombard farmers in the early decennia of the twentieth century. Please note that this target was not foreseen by the people who suggested the creation of the *Cattedre*.

Paolo Tedeschi is 'Ricercatore' (Lecturer) in Economic History at the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics, University of Milan-Bicocca; 'Chargé de cours visiteur' in Economic History at the Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, Catholic University of Leuven UCL; and 'Professeur vacataire' in History of the European Integration, Faculty of Literature, Human Sciences, Arts and Sciences of Education, University of Luxembourg. He has a PhD in Economic and Social History at the University 'Bocconi' of Milan (Thesis on Agrarian History). Recent publications include: 'Sale or Gratuitous Transfer? Conveyance of Family Estates in a Manufacturing Village: Lumezzane in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', in *Continuity and Change* 3 (2008); 'Marché foncier et systèmes de production agricoles dans l'Italie du nord au XIXe siècle: le cas de la Lombardie orientale', in *European Review of History / Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 5 (2008).

12.23 Elisabeth Kontogiorgi and Dimitris Panagiotopoulos – Land reform and the rural settlement of refugees in Greece during the inter-war period: the role of the agriculturalists

Greek society and economy underwent fundamental changes during the inter-war period. The débâcle of the Greek Army in Asia Minor (1922) and the subsequent massive influx of hundreds of thousands refugees was a crucial event that triggered important developments. The compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey had momentous consequences for Greek society. The establishment of over a million of refugees in the country, seven hundred thousands of whom were resettled in rural areas, land reform and redistribution of resources (loans, land, human capital), the quest for modernisation and increased agricultural production, urbanisation and the acceleration of growth transformed Modern Greek society and economy.

This paper seeks to highlight the various aspects, social, economic and demographic, of the establishment of refugee settlements in rural areas. It will focus on the contribution of the agriculturalists (agronomists, engineers, cadastral surveyors, agricultural economists) in the complex project of refugee resettlement. These specialists on the field of agriculture, who had been emerged in the second decade of the twentieth century, were employed by the Refugee Settlement Commission, an international organisation supervised by the League of Nations who carried out the refugee resettlement project in Greece. This work suggests that the involvement of agriculturalists both in the land reform and refugee resettlement was pioneering. In addition, it also examines the impact the project for the resettlement of refugees had on the model for the development of the agrarian sector which was followed by the Liberal party in the context of its modernisation programme. The paper's final portion attempts a comparative discussion and tries to seek parallels and differences between the agrarian problems and the way they were tackled in Greece and the countries of southeastern Europe.

Elisabeth Kontogiorgi is Senior Research Fellow at the Research Centre for the Study of Modern Greek History, Academy of Athens. Degrees in Philosophy and History from the Universities of Thessaloniki and Glasgow (M.Phil); D.Phil. in Modern History from St. Antony's College, Oxford University. She is the author of *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees, Oxford Historical Monographs* (2006). Other [relevant] publications: 'Konstantinos Amantos's Views on the Importance of Rural Areas and their Modernization', Bull. Research Centre of Modern Greek History, Academy of Athens 1 (1998) (in Greek); 'Economic Consequences following Refugee Settlement in Greek Macedonia, 1923-1932' in Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean. An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (2003); 'Aspects of viticulture and wine production in the places of origin of the refugees settled in the regions of Megalo Karabournou and Kalamaria' in G.A.Pikoulas (ed.), *Oionon Historo*, 3 (2004), (in Greek); 'Location Patterns of Agro-food Industry in Inter-War Greece' (with Sophia Skordili) in *Proc. Conference: Greek Agricultural Society and Economy during the Venizelos' era, Athens* (2007) (in Greek).

Dimitris Panagiotopoulos is Director of the Documentation Centre of the History of Greek Agriculture, Agricultural University of Athens. Currently Associate Lecturer of Modern Greek History at the Ionian University, Corfu. B.A. in Modern History, University of Athens. Ph.D. in Modern History, Ionian University. He is the author of *Agricultural Education and Development. The Agricultural School of Athens and Greek Society: 1920-1960*, (Athens 2004) (in Greek); co-editor of the recently published *Proceedings of the Conference: Greek Agricultural Society and Economy during the Venizelos' era*, (Athens 2007), (in Greek).