10.7. Co-operatives under authoritarian (socialist and capitalist) regimes in Europe in the 20th century

Panel organiser: Varga, Zsuzsanna, Lorand Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary

2012 was the International Year of Co-operatives. International years are declared by the United Nations to get attention and to encourage action on major issues. Nowadays, when the global economic crisis is still deepening, the historical experience of the co-operative movement to a wide range of economic and social issues is getting more and more attention. After 1844 when the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers created the first successful co-operative societies and co-operatives began to expand, and contributed to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration in various modes and at different places. At Brighton conference, our colleague András Vári organised four panels on "co-operatives and rural society". The participants of these panels were dealing with the developments in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. The focus of the panel is on the 20th century which was marked by the confrontation between dictatorial and democratic regimes. However, the dictatorial regimes could be characterized by two socio-economic models: capitalism and state socialism. The contributors to this panel aim at addressing comparative aspects of the co-operative movement under different types of dictatorships and democracies in Europe. To strengthen this viewpoint the following themes should be highlighted: the relationship of the co-operatives and the state, regulation of co-operatives, main fields of co-operatives' activities with special regard to the socio-economic and a socio-political functions, the role of co-operatives in crisis management.

Chair: Swain, Nigel, University of Liverpool, UK

Thursday, 22 August 2013 // 1000 - 1200 // Session 10 – Room A 019

10.7.1. The liberal, democratic and authoritarian regulation of co-operatives in Spain, 1906-1950

Pan-Montojo, Juan, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

Co-operative societies were first regulated in a very broad way in 1906 by the liberal monarchy. In the following years, there were several attempts to control their organisation even though the most regulated elements were the banking co-operatives and the fiscal benefits which had been foreseen in the initial regulation. The liberal regulation was replaced in 1931 by the democratic republic and the democratic regulation was changed in different laws at the beginning of the 1940s by the authoritarian franquist regime. Co-operatives, mainly agricultural co-operatives, seem to have been therefore a very sensitive issue for Spanish political elites and projects. In our paper we will try to analyse the different norms and their differences and to explain the reasons behind the reforms and changes as well as their consequences on the actual development of the rural co-operatives.

10.7.2. Diverging roads from the Soviet kolkhoz-model inside and outside the Soviet Union

Jörgensen, Hans, Umeå University, Sweden

Varga, Zsuzsanna, Lorand Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary

The aim of this paper is to explore the reorganization and structure of agricultural production in Estonia and Hungary from the 1940s up to the late 1980s. This implies a comparison between the forced collectivization and the reorganization of land-use and management following the Soviet-model. The rationale for the comparison is due to several factors. Estonia was forced to become a part of the USSR and a planned economy already in 1940. Hungary had sided with the losers in WW II and it fell under the Soviet sphere of interest as the result of the preliminary agreements between the Allied Powers. Sovietization of political functions, the role of co-operatives in crisis management, the relationship of the co-operatives and the state, regulation of co-operatives, main fields of co-operatives' activities with special regard to the socio-economic and a socio-political functions, the role of co-operatives in crisis management.

10.7.3. Co-operatives, peasants and agriculture in fascist Italy: from self-organisation to social control

Mignoni, Niccolò, EHESS, Paris, France

At the beginning of 20th century, credit, labour and production rural co-operatives are largely developed in Italy. These initiatives were dominated by socialist and political forces. To contrast this hegemony, fascist regime uses direct violence to attack movement’s leaders and to destroy headquarters. But, after Mussolini takes the power in 1922, the strategy of repression becomes more and more preventive, strengthening co-operatives control over social and financial resources. At the same time fascism is not ideologically adverse to co-operative, on the contrary it declares the necessity to focus on its technical and economic functions, against monopoly powers and for the moralization of free market conditions. Many of the local kolkhozes, therefore, may also to negotiate a survival strategy, but in 1932-1937, when dictatorship is reinforced and corporative regime installed, a unique national federation is created, claiming formal neutrality and assistance functions. Control and selection often dominate fascist attitude towards co-operation. During the Thirties, a large part of existing experiences is definitely closed, but some others find development opportunities: agricultural co-operatives take progressively the place of poor peasants’ co-operatives. This dynamic explains how fascist regime participates in Italian capitalism reorganization process that in agriculture originates a dualistic development process where intensive farming coexists with peasant dependability. Co-operatives thus become instruments to manage social conflicts.

10.7.4. The agrarian co-operatives and the policy of the Greek governments: from the enactment of the law of 1914 until the establishment of the compulsory co-operatives

Angelis-Dimakis, Dimitris, Dimitris Angelis-Dimakis. Graduate in History and Master in European History with several grade excellent (National and Capitoline University of Athens, 2000). He has been awarded a four year scholarship for Doctoral Studies in European History and be a currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Contemporary History of the Autonomous University of Madrid; he has several publications (in Greek) and he has presented papers in conferences and workshops.

Pan-Montojo, Juan


Angelis-Dimakis, Dimitris

Dimitris Angelis-Dimakis (1985). Graduate in History and Master in European History with several grade excellent (National and Capitoline University of Athens, 2000). He has been awarded a four year scholarship for Doctoral Studies in European History and be a currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Contemporary History of the Autonomous University of Madrid; he has several publications (in Greek) and he has presented papers in conferences and workshops.

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Pan-Montojo, Juan


He has been since 1987, Associate Professor of Modern History at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Among others he has published the following books: La biología del mundo: la vía y el vino en España, 1800-1936 (Madrid, 1996), and Agrariedad, perfecta y tecnológica. Una historia de los ingenios agrícolas españoles (Madrid, 2005). Currently he is the editor of the academic journal Historia agraria.

Swain, Nigel

Nigel Swain has been employed since 1989 as researcher and then lecturer at the University of Liverpool, first in the Department of Economic and Social History, then in the Department of History within the School of History, Languages and Cultures. He is author of numerous articles, book contributions, and books, mainly on aspects of land reform, collaboration and decollaboration in Eastern Europe, but also on joint author with G. Swain of Eastern Europe since 1945, now in its fourth edition. He has just completed a comparative history of de-collectivisation in the early 1990s in six Eastern European countries.

Varga, Zsuzsanna

Zsuzsanna Varga (1970) received PhD in Agricultural History in 1998. Since 2000 she has been teaching at the Department of Modern Hungarian History of the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest (PhD). She is Associate Professor for research in trends and publications are focused on the history of social agriculture. In 2000 the Committee of Agricultural History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences elected Zsuzsanna Varga also as a member. Since 2010 she is a Management Committee Member of EHESS. Her latest book: Hungarian Rural History and Rural Society: changes, problems and possibilities, 1945-2004 (Budapest, 2008).