

### 3.6. Agricultural politics in Europe between WWII and 1957. Part I

**Panel organiser:** Martiin, Carin, *Agrarian History, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden*; Pan-Montojo, Juan, *Departamento de Historia Contemporánea, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

The session is a two-part panel with contributors representing various parts of Europe. The overall aim is to discuss and compare agricultural politics in the early years just after World War II, and the two panels will bring international and national approaches together in a comparative perspective. Beginning in 1945, or even with the Hot Springs Conference in 1943, and ending in the late 1950s before the creation of CAP, the session will highlight times and processes that have often been overshadowed by wartime food and farming, and by the introduction of the CAP. More than a decade passed in between, however; a decade that saw new political climates, the emergence of the Cold War, and the implementation of new national agricultural programmes in many European countries. Early post-war agriculture can be studied from an international perspective that brings to the forefront the international context of the 1940s and 1950s; the reorganisation of food exchanges; bilateral agreements, and agrarian policies, including the development of the FAO and the programmes designed within the framework of the Marshall Plan. Post-war agriculture can also be examined from the national perspective by looking at national food production, structural policies, and market regulations. Agricultural policies cannot, however, be analysed without taking into account more general political factors: the new understanding of socio-political integration and the role of farmers/peasants after the experience of the 1930s and the war; the electoral realities of various political forces and the reshaping of political coalitions in European democracies; the ruralist discourse of Southern-European authoritarian regimes; and the position of peasant parties in “popular democracies”. Among the many issues to discuss are: When and how were agricultural programmes worked out? What were their short and long-term purposes? What role did agricultural organisations and factors play in the political coalitions after the war? What was the impact of pre-war plans, war-related agricultural problems and the Marshall Plan at the international, national and local level? What were the technological trends and policies across Europe and how did the US influence these trends? How did agricultural productivity, food supply and nutritional standards change during the first decade after the war? Did newly introduced policies favour agriculture, or were industry and urbanization given priority at the expense of farming and rural societies?

**Chair:** Pan-Montojo, Juan, *Departamento de Historia Contemporánea, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

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#### 3.6.1. British Agriculture in transition: Food Shortages to Food Surpluses (1947-57)

**Martin, John, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK**

The ten year period 1947 to 1957 constitutes a period of profound change for the state's relationship with British agriculture. The 1947 Agriculture Act marked a watershed in that the Labour government was committed to ensuring ‘stability and efficiency’ in the form of guaranteed prices accompanied with a five year expansion plan with clearly defined targets for the main agricultural commodities. In addition, not only had the Labour party's historic commitment to land nationalisation been abandoned, but it was now actively seeking to align itself with the agricultural interest. In contrast, following the return to power of the Conservatives, food rationing and the other controls administered by the Ministry of Food were dismantled in favour of re-establishing pre-war Marketing Boards and radically reforming the system of state support. The aim of this paper is to consider how far the changes in government were a pragmatic response to the world food situation with food surpluses now replacing the post war shortages or whether the change reflected the ideological differences between the two main political parties.

#### 3.6.2. Cold War Farm: international contexts for British farming in the 1940s and 1950s

**Griffiths, Clare, Department of History, University of Sheffield, UK**

The Second World War is often presented as a period of revolution in British agriculture. Yet the most durable transformations in the farming sector were largely features of the post-war period, as the promise of increased mechanisation and technological advances began to bear fruit across many parts of the country, and as a new political settlement established a privileged economic status for the industry. This paper considers these changes in farming practice and national policy against a background of international

pressures and influences. How does this agricultural history relate to the Cold War context in which these developments were taking place? Farmers had been on ‘the front line of freedom’ in wartime, and in peace they were also seen as having roles to play in national defence, in its broadest sense. Even the countryside was not immune from concerns about the new threats of potential attack, or from the impact of international political alignments. Whilst farming lobbyists argued for the sector's role in an international commitment to improved nutrition as a universal goal, farming was mobilised to promote recovery at a national level – to feed the country, support the project of postwar reconstruction and foster a rebuilding of the nation's economy. At a time when Britain's economic and political links with its empire, Europe and the United States were all in flux, the management of the nation's agriculture and the planning of its food supply need to be considered in the light of these broader contexts.

#### 3.6.3. Modernized farming but stagnated production: Swedish farming from World War II to the late 1950s

**Martiin, Carin, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden**

In 1947 the Swedish Riksdag decided to implement a comprehensive long-term agricultural programme, which was part of the ambitious overall planning that characterized the development of the Swedish welfare state after WWII. The programme included aims about farming efficiency, food production and improved material living standards in farm households. Special emphasis was put on efforts to move labour from small-scale farming to the industrial sector. Moreover the programme stressed the importance of rational use of all factors of production in the Swedish society, including farming. Less interest was devoted to the total food production, even though warnings about looming overproduction were heard long before the end of the war. The paper pays special attention to changes in methods of production, for example mechanization, increased use of artificial fertilizer, pesticides, fossil fuel and electricity, but also to reduced numbers of smallholders and employees. In spite of changes in methods of production the total farm production stagnated in the 1950s, and was actually reduced per capita, which contrasts the contemporary trends in many other countries.

#### 3.6.4. Agricultural politics and production in the British West African colonies during and after World War II to 1960: Reflections on Nigeria's agro-production

**Chimee, Ihediwa Nkemjika, Department of History & International Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria**

World War II was one of the most devastating developments in Europe and indeed Africa and Asia. It created challenges not only for the powers involved in the struggle, but also for those living far off and under colonial domination. In Africa, it imposed the burden of forced recruitment into the British colonial army as well as forcing farmers to produce agricultural produce for export only. West African farmers were faced with the added responsibility of producing not to meet the consumption requirements of their people, but that of an imperial power and its industries. The simple politics was that everything needed to be done to defeat Nazism/Hitlerism, and massive agricultural production was the tool for the attainment of this goal. Thus Nigerian farmers were compelled as indeed other colonial people in Africa, to produce agricultural raw materials and food stuffs to support the war efforts. This narrow pattern affected adversely agricultural development in Nigeria up to the time of independence, thereby slowing down industrial growth. The paper intends to examine the nature of agricultural production in British West Africa during and after the war up to independence period, and the implications such had on the overall agricultural and industrial template of the region, using Nigeria as case study.

#### Participants

##### Chimee, Ihediwa Nkemjika

Ihediwa Nkemjika Chimee, is a doctoral student and an academic staff in the Department of History & International Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He holds a BA degree in History and an MA in Economic and Social History. In addition, he holds an LL.B degree in Law and a BL from the Nigerian Law School Abuja. His research areas are social, economic and political history as well as conflict and human rights. He has published in journals and contributed chapters in edited books. He has attended international conferences abroad and within.

##### Griffiths, Clare

Clare Griffiths is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Sheffield. She is the author of *Labour and the Countryside: the politics of rural Britain, 1918-1939* (2007), and co-editor of *Classes, Cultures and Politics: essays on British History for Ross McKibbin* (2011). She created the exhibition ‘Farming for the New Britain: images of British farmers in war and peace’ for the Museum of English Rural Life in 2010, and writes on visual arts for the *Times Literary Supplement*. She is currently a member of the EC for the BAHS, and on the editorial board for *Agricultural History*.

##### Martiin, Carin

Carin Martiin is Associate Professor in Agrarian History in the Department of Economics at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala, Sweden. She is agronomist, PhD in Agrarian History and docent in Economic History. Among the publications are the textbook ‘*The World of Agricultural Economics: An introduction*’ (Routledge, April 2013) and articles in Brassley, Segers, Van Molle ‘*War, Agriculture,*

and Food (Routledge 2012), *Rural History* (2010) and *Agricultural History Review* (2008). Her main research interests include cattle husbandry and dairy production, and 20th century agricultural politics in Sweden and internationally.

##### Martin, John

John Martin is Reader in Agrarian history, De Montfort University, Leicester. His main research interest is the impact of government policies on British agriculture and the countryside since the 1930s. His books include *The Development of Modern Agriculture: British Farming Since 1931*, (2000) co-editor *The Encyclopaedia of British Rural Sports* (20004) co-editor *The Frontline of Freedom* (2007). Research Associate for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the series consultant for BBC's highly acclaimed eight part ‘*Wartime Farm*’ and ‘*Wartime Farm Christmas Special*’ by Lion TV in association with the Open University (2012).

##### Pan-Montojo, Juan

Juan Pan-Montojo (1962) received PhD in Modern History in 1992. He has been visiting researcher at the LSE, London, (1988), the New School for Social Research, New York, (1995), and the Friedrich-Alexander Universität of Erlangen-Nürnberg (2003). He has been since 1997, Associate Professor of Modern History at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Among others he has published the following books: *La bodega del mundo. La vid y el vino en España, 1800-1936* (Madrid, 1994), and *Apostolado, profesión y tecnología. Una historia de los ingenieros agrónomos en España* (Madrid, 2005). Currently he is the editor of the academic journal *Historia agraria*.