

een heldere schrijfstijl, maken dit dan ook een uitstekende werk voor wie een consistent en efficiënt overzicht wil krijgen van de beleidsmatige ontwikkelingen met betrekking tot vrouwenrechten in Nicaragua en hoe deze kunnen gekoppeld worden aan de bredere politieke evolutie in het land en in de regio.

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Ruth Oldenziel and Mickael Hård. *Consumers, Tinkerers, Rebels. The People who Shaped Europe*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 416p. ISBN 978-0-230-30801-5

Sewing machines, bicycles, travel agents, milk bars and Barbie dolls all make an appearance in this volume in the Making Europe: Technology and Transformations series (edited by Johan Schot, Eindhoven University and Phil Scranton, Rutgers University). What at first sight may look like a random mix of products actually all are items that once inspired or were inspired by consumers who were not just passively on the receiving end of the production and marketing process. These consumers rebelled against or tinkered with technology and processes ranging from dressmaking and preserving food to decorating homes, playing and traveling.

Where often the history of Europe is defined by war and rupture, the editors and authors of the Making Europe series have taken an alternative approach to their subject. They put the spotlight on technology instead of war as this view can help to understand that recent European history is also about continuity and about building cross border connections despite war and conflict. For a better understanding of the role of technology the very meaning of technology required rethinking. In the view of editors and authors technology is about “people and values; ideas, skills, and knowledge” and “central to the creation of Europe.” (p.ix) In this first volume in the series the focus is on the people. “The authors argue that, while inventors, engineers and politicians played their parts, it was consumers, tinkerers, and rebels who have been the unrecognized force in the making of Europe.” (p. xiii)

The basic premise of this volume thus is that consumers shaped the products to their needs and in doing so shaped their lives and eventually Europe. The volume offers a history of technology not in the guise of the big technological developments and inventions like the steam engine and the spinning jenny, but as a social history of ordinary everyday things like sewing machines and printed patterns that (were) turned into extraordinary means to, for instance, reduce social inequality and improve the quality of life.

The volume consists of three parts: I. The Nineteenth Century: Shaping new technologies; II. After the Great War: Who Directs Technology? and III. Beyond The 1960s: Users Empowered? Topics include toys, housing, travel, food, recycling and many more. The idea of a history from below - where critical consumers and 'user movements' using, criticizing and transforming technology, are the important agents that shaped Europe - is more convincingly substantiated in some chapters (Poaching from Paris on fashion) than in others (Creating European Comfort on living conditions, housing and interiors) but overall it is well founded. Oldenziel and Hård put consumer agency center stage and by doing so they change our perspective on the history of Europe as well as our ideas about technology.

The influence of the US or better the interaction with the American way, especially after WW II, is another recurring theme. Despite the growing difference between Europe, often sober and practical, and the United States, land of abundance and commercialism, the importance of the United States is undeniable. Examples like the Barbie doll and blue jeans show that ideas and products that originated in Europe, took shape in the US and were then embraced and tweaked in Europe.

The volume gives an insightful view on the shaping of the European way of live and how it was influenced by its inhabitants, taking its examples from all corners of the continent. It provides a thorough background to an ongoing story: the current struggle of bicyclists in the City of London for instance echo's the clash between bicyclist and motorists in the 1930s that is discussed in the chapter *Bicycling & Driving Europe. Consumers, Tinkerers and Rebels* is an entertaining, beautifully illustrated volume that focuses on the people of Europe who used and innovated technology to their advantage and in doing so created a shared European culture.

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Leen Roels, *Het tekort: Studies over de arbeidsmarkt voor mijnwerkers in het Luikse kolenbekken vanaf het einde van de negentiende eeuw tot 1974* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014) 280 p. ISBN 978-90-8704-428-2

Sedert de depressie van de jaren dertig werden de kleine en oude steenkolenmijnen in het Luikse steenkolenbekken steeds meer geconfronteerd met een tekort aan lokale arbeidskracht. De mijnen moesten na 1944 in toenemende mate een beroep doen op buitenlandse arbeiders waardoor er in de Luikse mijnen sedert begin jaren vijftig meer buitenlanders werkten dan Belgen. Alle steenkolenmijnen