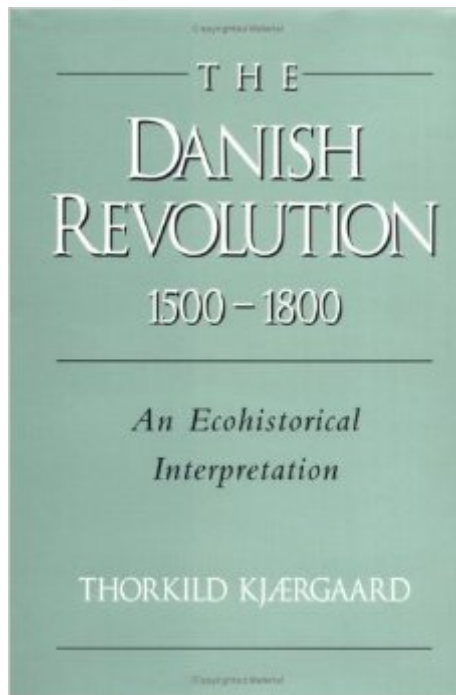


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The Danish Revolution, 1500-1800: An Ecohistorical Interpretation (Studies In Environment And History)



Synopsis

This book tells the story of a fertile European country that, as a result of over-population and military armament, over-exploited its fields and forests in a nonsustainable fashion. By the eighteenth century, Denmark, along with other European countries, found itself in an ecological crisis: clear felling of forests, sand drift, floods, inadequate soil fertilization and cattle disease. This book explains how the crisis was overcome, and is the first attempt to understand early modern Europe from a consistently ecological viewpoint.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A very interesting insight into the development of Denmark in the expansionist era and the effects on the kingdom's subjects.

I think that The Danish Revolution is interesting for a number of reasons. First of all it is provocative in the sense that it questions the tradition of Danish history. TK does not agree with the old view that the reforms of late 18th century marked the beginning of a new progressive period of Danish agricultural history. On the contrary he focuses on the breakdown of the rural community which, according to Mr. TK, was the basis of the ecological recovery of the 18th century. This I think is an interesting new angle.

First of all let me declare that I in no way question the methodology used by Mr. Kjaergaard. What I do question is his political and environmental ideas which he uses this book to further. These really quite entertaining ideas are a "wonderfull" mix of the ideology of Khmer Rouge and a more or less academic version of the ideas of Greenpeace. The book is a great read, should one want a laugh combined with an interesting new historical viewpoint (ecological-history). A new form of history that really could be an interesting science. When the book was first published in Denmark it caused quite a debate in the intellectual circles and Mr. Kjaergaard, who has often brought forth highly controversial views regarding a broad spectre subjects, was by most people ridiculed and many commented that Mr. Kjaergaard might have lost the key to his ivory tower and therefore totally lost his connection to "the real world". I agree in that theory but nonetheless I found the book an interesting read and would recommend it highly to those who find very subjective history interesting.

The Danish Revolution, 1500-1800: An Ecohistorical Interpretation (Studies in environment and History) by Thorkild Kjaergaard

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Unfortunately, an 'ecohistorical' interpretation of Denmark's past will always gain a hardy following of critics. Such criticism necessarily devotes its firepower to outlining how 'radical' and 'what a break from tradition' it is. It only breaks from a tradition that accepts man's relationship with the earth as being one of master and servant. By historicising that particular statement, one would discover that humanity's relationship with the earth (our Mother) has not always been so short-sighted. I recommend this book ... When such important historical writing has such a princely price tag it's no wonder that the world is mired in such dilemmas. Of course, scholars deserve adequate

remuneration, but not at the expense of the public good. Kjaergaard's destruction of the 'common-sense' paradigms that dominate so much scholarship is certainly worth a read - even if it does reek of 'Khmer Rouge' politics. Until the problems that he discusses are removed from the earth, his history will remain relevant. Perhaps any such removal would necessitate the cessation of 'homo historicity'. I certainly hope not!

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