

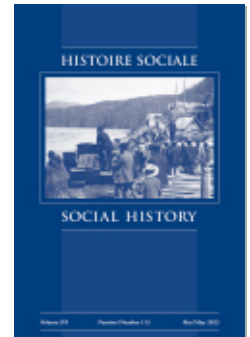


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*Feeding Fascism: The Politics of Women's Food Work* by  
Diana Garvin (review)

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*Histoire sociale* / *Social History*, Volume 56, Numéro/Number 115, Mai  
2023 / May 2023, pp. 217-219 (Article)



Published by Les publications Histoire sociale / Social History Inc.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/his.2023.a899621>

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la chronologie et à rompre avec la thèse mutationniste — soutenue par Lester K. Little en 1978 — faisant de l’an mil le point de bascule entre un système d’échanges primitif fondé sur le don et la mise en place d’une économie monétarisée. Au cours des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, il fait ensuite succéder à ce premier essor — correspondant d’ailleurs au phénomène de l’encellulement identifié par Robert Fossier — une période de développement urbain et de commercialisation des échanges (sans que disparaisse pour autant l’échange non marchand) toujours intimement liée aux milieux ruraux. En parallèle, les seigneurs auraient procédé à une restructuration du système de prélèvement et à la reconfiguration de l’encadrement du monde rural sur une base moins coercitive que celle du grand domaine. La seigneurie incarnait alors un pôle de productivité et de stabilité nécessaire au développement de l’Occident médiéval, l’accroissement des échanges étant inhérent aux milieux ruraux et à la capacité des exploitants et leurs seigneurs à produire des surplus et à les mettre en circulation.

Bien que la structuration de l’ouvrage donne lieu à des passages parfois répétitifs, le propos est limpide et permet à la fois de dépasser les débats autour de la mutation de l’an mil et d’insister sur le développement inégal de l’Occident médiéval. Il confère, enfin, à la période altimédiévale le rôle nodal qui lui revient dans la croissance de la société occidentale. Cette enquête constitue un outil de travail indispensable à quiconque souhaite s’intéresser aux modalités de règlements des rapports sociaux et des échanges au Moyen Âge.

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GARVIN, Diana – *Feeding Fascism: The Politics of Women’s Food Work*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. 292 p.

Diana Garvin’s fascinating new book brings Fascist foodways to the Italian dinner table. *Feeding Fascism* explores how the state intervened in food and feeding, and in doing so, Italian women across all classes adapted, negotiated, and resisted such culinary dictates. In an attempt to avoid reducing these women to domestic roles, Garvin instead uses “site-based” case studies—rural rice paddies and grain fields, the Perguina factory, and ideal fascist kitchens—to demonstrate how these spaces are neither private nor public but interconnected. In her examination of women’s lived experience feeding their families, she argues that these women did not “unquestioningly receive cultural messages from above” and instead made careful decisions about what to cook, how to prepare, and what to preserve; Fascist food policy was often applied unevenly in such decisions (pp. 5, 14). Daily decisions and everyday life are explored through varying socio-economic classes of women from the Northern and Central regions of Italy. Her approach is the strongest feature of the book; she presents the rural and urban settings—and the women who lived and laboured in both—in tandem with one another. In doing so, she avoids the

tendency to create an isolationist and monolithic experience of Fascism; women in both spaces became national interests. As part of her methodology, Garvin takes care to present these women's "own conceptions of gender, class, and region" to describe social categories and make sense of daily life, food, and feeding under Fascist rule (p. 4). Using food as a lens, *Feeding Fascism* investigates how Fascism's affinity for autarky, rationalism, and pronatalism transformed the kitchen into a political landscape.

*Feeding Fascism* first explores what Garvin refers to as tabletop politics to explain how politics, public policy, and debate made its way into the family household. The first chapter reads like an extension of the introduction, providing context on the topics explored in further depth throughout the rest of the book. In doing so, the reader is presented with the regime's goal of autarky, a mandate for economic self-sufficiency, and how this political goal was harnessed through women's work, bodies, and children (p. 17). Autarkic production heavily depended on rural women's agricultural labour. Not only did their work on rice and grain paddies fulfill Mussolini's state-approved foods campaign, such as the Battle for Grain, National Day for Rice, and "Amate il Pane," as substitutes to bread and pasta to liberate the country from foreign foodways (pp. 18, 20). Consumption and production of Italian products meant there was more food to feed the nation, healthier bodies, more infants birthed, and more Fascists for tomorrow. Garvin argues that rural women's bodies also embodied the Fascist vision of hyper productivity, femininity, and maternalism (p. 48). Popular *ricettario*'s (pamphlets) insisted Italy was the land of plenty and abundance, particularly when it came to young children. Imagery in these *ricettario*'s would often depict happy and plump infants with overflowing bags of rice produced from Italian soil. The *mondine* (female rice workers) "constituted a symbol of gendered hyperproductivity based on and in the female body" through their ability to harvest autarkic foods and their reproductive capabilities (p. 59).

Regime intervention occurred in urban factory settings too. The woman-founded, and overwhelmingly woman-employed, chocolate factory, Perugina, is one such case study. Garvin follows the management style of Luisa Spagnoli to demonstrate how the Fascist vision of Taylorism, state surveillance, autarky, and pronatalism found its way inside the factory walls. Much like the *mondine*, the women workers of Perugina could feed the nation through Italian-made chocolates and through breast milk (p. 98). In true Taylorist fashion, these working women's bodies were provided breastfeeding rooms and nurseries in the Perugina factory. This allowed working mothers the space and employment to feed their children, but it also allowed Spagnoli the opportunity to promote the company and their products as autarkic (p. 101). The Fascist regime was concerned with how food powered and shaped the body, and breast milk was portrayed as the key to fighting infant mortality and strengthening the national body. Because there is no space between the mother's breast and infant's mouth, Garvin maintains that the regime was able to interfere by naturalizing "breastfeeding and childbirth as forms of mass production belonging to the state" (p. 118). In both settings, Italian infants and their mothers became the ultimate national product.

Fascism as a total regime fused public and private life. Interventions were aimed at women through their home, where the colour and shape of their kitchen was politicized. Refurbished bright, white kitchens, with floors fitted with Italian-produced linoleum, became markers of material surveillance to assess cleanliness and hygiene (p. 120). The regime-approved kitchens were, what Garvin calls, shrinking kitchens. In urban working-class homes, the large multi-use, multi-person (sometimes with the addition of animals!) “kitchen of the past” needed to be remodeled into a small, sanitary laboratory (p. 164). Fascism recognized cooking as work and because the model kitchen was thought of as a small factory, it became a space to introduce rationalism and Taylorism. The Taylorist triangle, which was the logical order of kitchen work—the preparation, cooking, and cleaning space—was popularized by Lidia Morelli, and was architectural evidence of the regime’s goal of intervention, efficiency, and hygiene in food work (pp. 179, 203). The redesign of the Fascist kitchen could close off smells and sounds that threatened to contaminate the salon; a *passapiatti* (semi-enclosed wall) was an architectural solution, effectively closing off the woman inside the kitchen, away from her family (pp. 121, 157).

The influence of Fascism did not dissipate with the fall of Mussolini. Because it encouraged and became synonymous with industrialization in Northern Italy, Garvin claims the regime left its mark on factories, Italian-produced foods, and women’s role in managing the home—through modern, rationalist, and hygienic means (p. 208). *Feeding Fascism* excels in its investigation of how the cultural meanings of food changed, how spaces acquired new political meanings, and how multiple forms of gendered labour converged under Fascist propaganda (p. 42). Although there is some passing mention to the grocery budget and a brief description of propagandic advertisements on the grocers’ shelf, this is one facet of everyday life that is largely absent (p. 26). It would be an interesting addition to explore grocery shopping as a form of labour and how these women negotiated grocery spaces under Fascism. Despite this omission, *Feeding Fascism* is an excellent contribution to the scholarship on Italian women, labour, food production and policy, industrialization, and architecture. Most importantly, Garvin’s work shows how Fascism was not only entrenched in everyday life, but how women were producers, participants, and resisters for the far-right state (p. 213).

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HAWES, Michael K., Andrew C. HOLMAN et Christopher KIRKEY – *1968 in Canada. A Year and Its Legacies*. Ottawa, Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2021, 410 p.

À l’occasion du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de 1968, en 2018, une vague commémorative s’est déversée sur l’Occident, menant à la parution d’ouvrages comme le livre collectif *1968 in Canada. A Year and Its Legacies*, dirigé par Michael K. Hawes, Andrew C. Holman et Christopher Kirkey. Il n’est pas toujours facile de démêler les fils conducteurs de ce type d’ouvrage, surtout lorsqu’il comprend 16 chapitres portant sur de nombreux sujets, particulièrement la politique, l’administration publique, les