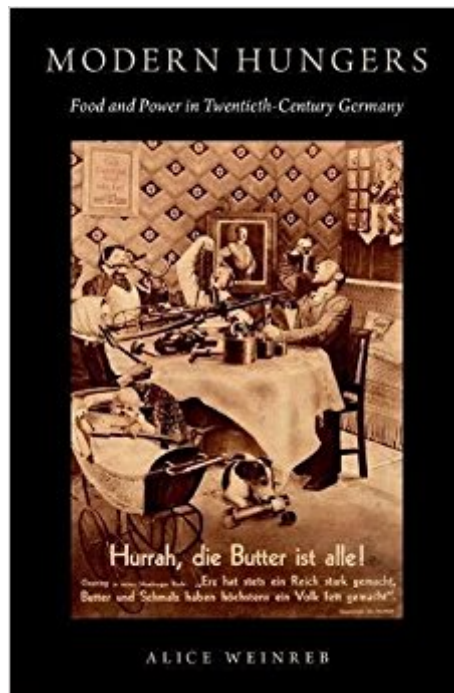




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Modern Hungers: Food And Power In Twentieth-Century Germany



Synopsis

During World War I and II, modern states for the first time experimented with feeding--and starving--entire populations. Within the new globalizing economy, food became intimately intertwined with waging war, and starvation claimed more lives than any other weapon. As Alice Weinreb shows in *Modern Hungers*, nowhere was this new reality more significant than in Germany, which struggled through food blockades, agricultural crises, economic depressions, and wartime destruction and occupation at the same time that it asserted itself as a military, cultural, and economic powerhouse of Europe. The end of armed conflict in 1945 did not mean the end of these military strategies involving food. Fears of hunger and fantasies of abundance were instead reframed within a new Cold War world. During the postwar decades, Europeans lived longer, possessed more goods, and were healthier than ever before. This shift was signaled most clearly by the disappearance of famine from the continent. So powerful was the experience of post-1945 abundance that it is hard today to imagine a time when the specter of hunger haunted Europe, demographers feared that malnutrition would mean the end of whole nations, and the primary targets for American food aid were Belgium and Germany rather than Africa. Yet under both capitalism and communism, economic growth as well as social and political priorities proved inseparable from the modern food system. Drawing on sources ranging from military records to cookbooks to economic and nutritional studies from a multitude of archives, *Modern Hungers* reveals similarities and striking ruptures in popular experience and state policy relating to the industrial food economy. In so doing, it offers historical perspective on contemporary concerns ranging from humanitarian food aid to the gender-wage gap to the obesity epidemic.

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"Alice Weinreb's imaginative study reveals how outsized a role the production, distribution, and consumption of food has played across Germany's twentieth century--impacting the outcomes of war and revolution, constructions of family and gender, ideological rivalries and successive visions of the good life."--Charles Maier, Harvard University"Finally we have a book that recovers the remarkably stubborn and yet changing experience of hunger in Germany across the twentieth century. Weinreb's deeply researched and majestic analysis takes us from global politics, to national systems of rationing and welfare, to the intimate and everyday forms of government that took hold of households and bodies to explain who got what to eat. An important and impressive achievement."--James Vernon, author of *Hunger: A Modern History*"In this fascinating and highly original study of 'food and power', Alice Weinreb deftly analyzes the significance of food, its production, consumption, and acquisition, as well as the discourses it produced, for the construction of German identity, both as victims and villains, over the course of a tumultuous twentieth century and multiple regimes. Combining wide-ranging theoretical reflection with deeply researched detail on everyday life and perceptions, this book combines transnational food studies with an innovative account of the peculiarities of German history."--Atina Grossmann, author of *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*

Alice Weinreb is an assistant professor of history at Loyola University Chicago.

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