

## **From Food Self-Sufficiency to International Aid: Food Nationalism and Trade Networks in Europe (1920s-1950s)**

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## **Innovations in agribusiness and credit in Libya during the colonial period (1920s-1930s)**

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The contribution focuses on the evolution and dynamics of agri-food chains during the 1920s – 1930s in Libya . It will analyze both the flow of agri-food commodities between Italy and Libya and the contribution of the colonial farmers in rural Lybia to the country's food security. The results of the Italian heritage during that time can be found in the growth of a specific line of Libyan agriculture and agri-transformation that is not only based on a few available non-cultivated products. The agricultural revitalization manifests itself in abundant olive and citrus cultivars also thanks to pioneering experiments in the agricultural field and to new seeds/plants imported in particular from Sicily. The work will cross data from bank loans provided to agricultural colonial settlers in order to switch from mere agricultural cultivation activities to agri-food production, and to entrepreneurs who have invested in processing raw materials for the production of wine, soft beverages, flour, pasta, etc. The framework is that of a country that still imports from Italy – above all cold cuts but also Parmesan and other cheeses, as well as tinned goods – but which is increasingly becoming autonomous in the production of a variety of vegetables. this approach to agri-food signed the passage to more focused agri-food and entrepreneurship society although leaving ethnic and class difference.

agri-food industry in Libya; credit to settlers in Libya; agrarian experiments in the colonies

## **Not only wheat! Agricultural imports in Italy between fascism and reconstruction**

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The aim of the panel is to provide an opportunity for an analysis of the relationship that arose between the food sovereignty policies imposed by European countries from the 1920s onwards and the need, after the Second World War, to open up quickly to international trade networks and food aid provided especially by the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan). During the 1920s European countries adopted increasingly protective and “patriotic” strategies concerning the primary sector ('battle of wheat' in Italy, 'campanha do trigo' in Portugal, 'office du blé' in France) and in the 1930s the economic crisis increased the autarchic policies: then, in the post

WWII these countries needed food aids arriving from UNRRA and ERP (in its first phase). The food sovereignty policies into force in the 1920s and 1930s strengthened the associations of producers: these latter maintained their relevance in the midst of food emergencies and collaborated to the European reconstruction in the post WWII.

Issues to focus on are: food chains reconstruction in the first and second post; protective policies and the evolution of productions and trades concerning food “commodities” during the 1920s and 1930s; the rhetoric of 'national' foods and the use of rural world as a reservoir of autarkic food resources; the Marshall Plan and the start of the progressive opening of European food markets.

Italy; Europe; Wheat; Agricultural imports

### **From survival to strategic trade policy: Italian agrofood exports from “autarchia” to the economic boom (1936-1962)**

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Being a country without a large availability of raw materials, Italian economic policies have traditionally aimed at fostering the export flows, in order to gain the resources needed to pay for the necessary imports and keep the national trade balance in equilibrium.

Such a necessity became paramount immediately before and immediately after the Second World War, for opposite reasons. During the first period, the economic and political isolation caused by the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia closed most of the traditional commercial outlets, greatly increasing the importance of what remained open. During the second period, the war destruction and the difficulties of industrial reconstruction left to agriculture the task of relocating the Italian economy inside the new international context. In both cases, economic constraints went along with dire social situations, giving to the export issue a key role also as an instrument for the construction of the internal consensus.

Having very few export possibilities but agriculture products, during both periods agro-food exports were intended as the main (and sometimes the only) viable channel to maintain the import-export balance at least near "the equilibrium to keep the economy working at a politically and socially acceptable level. With the aim of fostering the export flows, Italy experienced an original policy of "food sovereignty".

This policy was also influenced by: a) the negotiations concerning the "pool vert" (that is the very first step of the Common Agricultural Policy) which began in the early Fifties; b) the first relevant agreement concerning the European rural products which arrived in Stresa in 1958 and de facto prepared the birth of the CAP (1962)

food export; food sovereignty; strategic trade policy; Italy; economic boom; Common Agricultural Policy