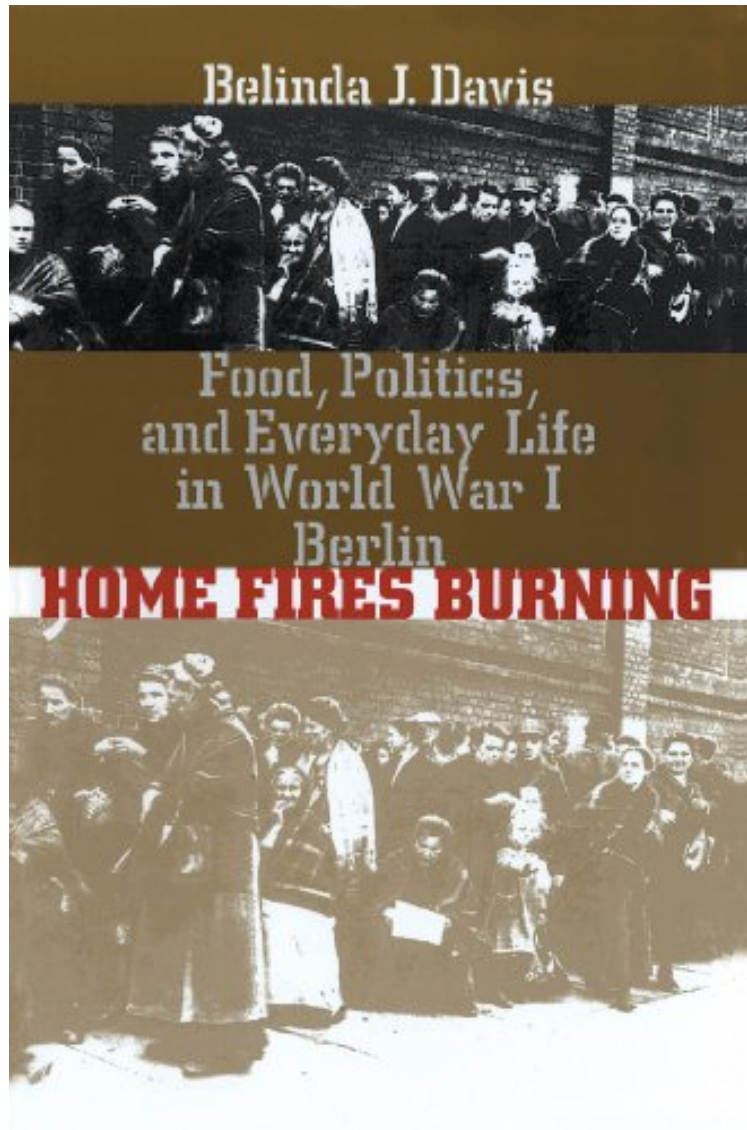


Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin

Belinda J. Davis

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Belinda J. Davis : Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin:

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helpful. One StarBy Cody StaffordThe book had pages with the words missing. Unbelievable...3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. full of information but lacked impactBy Elizabeth SotoDavis' Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin focuses on the "economic war" aspect of WWI. When Great Britain declared war on Germany, they put their greatest weapon, the Navy, to use. The British placed a naval blockade and stopped imports of weapon and food supplies. The British waged "economic war", with the intention of destroying the morale of the German civilians. German soil was poor for growing wheat and so Germany had to import two-thirds of the wheat needed to make bread. 1915 and 1916 had especially poor harvests of potato, which is a staple crop. Along with the British naval blockade, there were significant food shortages, which affected the general population. Davis wanted to introduce the reader to the food shortages and hardships inflicted on the public by the food shortages. Davis wanted to bring out the point that WWI did not only affect the young men going off to fight but the women who stayed home as well. WWI in Germany was all encompassing war, which included not only the military aspect of the front lines. Davis wanted to illustrate the government needed to realize WWI also included the home front and the commoner who also was sacrificing for the war. It was not just the soldier, who was fighting for the Fatherland, but the housewife was "fighting" for the Fatherland too. She made her contribution to the Fatherland through dealing with shortages of essential food supplies, rising prices and long food lines. Davis continued her argument with the officials realizing the home front aspect of the war; the administration now understood the connection between the condition of the home front and the condition of the front line. The morale of the people at home would affect the fighting capabilities of the soldier. By the government being aware of this correlation, the soldier's wife, housewife, and factory worker wheeled a considerable amount of political power. "As Berliners cast it, it was still in midwar the women of little means, a figure without formal political rights but with great symbolic power as the leader on the right side of the economic war and of the war over Germany's future." Even though the book had a great deal of information, she organized the information into a format, which all lead to her point. The reader wasn't overwhelmed with facts thrown at them. Yet, Davis had a tendency of dehumanizing the hardships of the shortages of food. The reader never truly gets the feeling that the Berliners are starving to death. The reader is not able to understand the desperation of the situation. Davis was missing emotion from her book. She reduces starving situation of the common people into a premeditated political move.

Challenging assumptions about the separation of high politics and everyday life, Belinda Davis uncovers the important influence of the broad civilian populace--particularly poorer women--on German domestic and even military policy during World War I. As Britain's wartime blockade of goods to Central Europe increasingly squeezed the German food supply, public protests led by "women of little means" broke out in the streets of Berlin and other German cities. These "street scenes" riveted public attention and drew urban populations together across class lines to make formidable, apparently unified demands on the German state. Imperial authorities responded in unprecedented fashion in the interests of beleaguered consumers, interceding actively in food distribution and production. But officials' actions were far more effective in legitimating popular demands than in defending the state's right to rule. In the end, says Davis, this dynamic fundamentally reformulated relations between state and society and contributed to the state's downfall in 1918. Shedding new light on the Wilhelmine government, German subjects' role as political actors, and the influence of the war on the home front on the Weimar state and society, Home Fires Burning helps rewrite the political history of World War I Germany.

This welcome book provides much food for thought. "Choice" "A valuable contribution to our understanding of World War I." Journal of Interdisciplinary History "Davis's sensitivity both to the material and symbolic dimensions of these women's life-world makes this a rich and rewarding study." American Historical "Focusing on female agency, Davis transforms traditional views of the interaction between state and society. Bonnie S. Anderson, author of "Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement" "A valuable contribution to our understanding of World War I." Journal of Interdisciplinary History "Davis opens up our understanding of women's agency and influence--and political agency more broadly--to give us a story that has not yet been told." Women's of Books "Focusing on female agency, Davis transforms traditional views of the interaction between state and society. Bonnie S. Anderson, author of "Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement" [Davis] opens up our understanding of women's agency and influence--and political agency more broadly--to give us a story that has not yet been told." Women's of Books "A valuable contribution to our understanding of World War I . . . Thoughtfully argued and solidly researched work.--Journal of Interdisciplinary History This welcome book provides much food for thought.--Choice Home Fires Burning . . . is exciting women's history and much more. . . . An exhaustive and persuasive study. . . . [Davis] opens up our understanding of women's agency and influence--and political agency more broadly--to give us a story that has not yet been told. . . . Well-written and handsomely produced. . . . This is an important book, not only for what it tells us about women's surprising influence, born of war, but because it gives us a refreshingly new understanding of the political history of Germany in the last years of the Empire.--Women's of Books This is an important contribution to the study of Berlin women in this period and, perhaps equally significant, to a major theme currently reemerging in

twentieth-century German history: to wit, that World War I was not the bridge between Imperial Germany and the Third Reich.--Historian Many have called for studies relating the political to people's everyday lives in the twentieth century, and, in *Home Fires Burning*, Belinda Davis has most successfully done it. This is a wonderfully thick and nuanced study primarily on women trying to get by in World War I and, thus, producing 'politics' in metropolitan Berlin. In numerous street scenes their efforts broke the ground for wide-ranging political transformation. Consumers' actions refocused politics on people's needs and, thus, sparked the revolutionary movements of 1918 (not only in Berlin but in Germany at large). Here we have a case study, but its implications affect the writing of contemporary history in general.--Alf Ludtke, University of Erfurt, Max Planck Institut für Geschichte, Göttingen A major and most carefully researched study of the evolution of German society under the impact of total war. Davis takes social and gender history beyond the conventional focus of everyday life and subtly examines the constant power-political interaction between the civilian masses and the monarchical authorities.-- Volker R. Berghahn, Columbia University This important and original World War I study graphically depicts and analyzes the impact of poor women's street demonstrations on German government policy. Focusing on female agency, Davis transforms traditional views of the interaction between state and society, as well as making a major contribution to the history of women in wartime.--Bonnie S. Anderson, author of *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement* Davis's sensitivity both to the material and symbolic dimensions of these women's life-world makes this a rich and rewarding study. A wide array of source material is presented in a narrative that is emphatic without being sentimental.-- American Historical Association Challenging assumptions about the separation of politics and everyday life, Davis uncovers the important influence of poorer women on German domestic policy during World War I.