

Feeding the Children: Nutrition, Health and Welfare in Italy in the long aftermath of World War II

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The paper aims at analysing the contribution of the agency Administration for International Aid (Amministrazione per gli Aiuti Internazionali -Aai) in the field of food safety for children in Italy, in cooperation with Unicef and Fao. Aai's policies were implemented by the Italian Government in the post-war emergency period. In the 1950s and in the early 1960s, the Aai launched a series of programmes to help the children in need, and aimed at combining social solidarity and the promotion of science of nutrition and food education within public policies. The need for the establishment of massive programmes was brought to the fore following the results of the Parliamentary Inquiry on Poverty (1950-1953), whose vice-president was Aai's president, Christian Democratic politician Lodovico Montini.

The welfare and food education programmes, aimed at children aged 0 to 12, were implemented through the involvement of local bodies and public and private institutes, the employment of school refectories and summer camps, as well as of nutrition, health and welfare experts (many of whom were women). My work will focus also on the relations among Aai, Unicef, Fao and the US Government (within the framework of the contributions of the Public Law 480), in the attempt to analyse how the management and the quality standards of the above mentioned programmes were influenced by various intervention models (such as those promoted by Unicef and Fao), as well by interests other than child care (e.g. the economic and commercial interests behind the Public Law 480).

I will finally analyse the interrelationship and the mutual influence among the various actors (governmental and intergovernmental institutions, political and education systems, nutrition and health experts, families, the press and, last but not least, the children) within the framework of the relationship between children and food, which plays a key role in the debate on health, welfare and equality.