

The politics of food: Gender, family, community and collective feeding in South Wales in the general Strike and Miners' lockout of 1926.

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The Politics of Food: Gender, Family, Community and Collective Feeding in South Wales in the General Strike and Miners' Lockout of 1926

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Abstract

This article features the General Strike and Miners' Lockout in South Wales in 1926. It examines the Lockout from the perspective of social and gender history, focusing on communal eating which was a central feature of community survival and resistance. It documents the extensive network of soup kitchens for miners, which was established across the South Wales coal field during the seven months of the Lockout. In addition school feeding and the involvement of both central and local authorities is analysed. The article highlights the opportunities that arose from the Lockout, particularly through communal eating, for a reduction in gender segregation and a challenge to male dominance. It concludes that overall, women in these mining communities were concerned to maintain class solidarity with their men rather than to make advances for women. Maintaining the masculine identity of the militant miner, which necessarily incorporated male bonding and women's subordination, was regarded as an essential feature of the class struggle.

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