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The Politics of Provisions (The History of Retailing and Consumption)

By John Bohstedt

Ashgate. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 332 pages. Dimensions: 9.2in. x 6.3in. x 1.0in. Food marketing and consumption were matters of politics as much as economics as England became a market society. In time of dearth, concatenations of riots, repression, and relief created a politics of provisions that matured over England's long eighteenth century. In exploring the dynamics of negotiations over subsistence during industrial revolution and political evolution, this book also sheds light on wars and famines in modern world history. Over three centuries, some eight hundred food riots crackled in waves across England. This study argues that, so far from shaking social equilibrium, they contributed to its resilience. Crowds seized wagons, attacked mills and granaries, and lowered prices in marketplaces or farmyards. Sometimes rioters parleyed with magistrates. More often both acted out a well-rehearsed political minuet: similar negotiations can be traced back to Tudor risings and policies when harvests failed. Occasionally troops killed rioters, or judges condemned them to the gallows, but increasingly riots prompted wealthy citizens to procure relief supplies. Thus provision politics comprises both customary negotiations about hunger, and negotiations of the social vessel through the turbulence of dearth. This pioneering analysis of three centuries of provision politics...



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