

diplomatic ‘thaw’ after World War I, one that had seemed impossible after a surge of anti-Catholicism surrounding Al Smith’s failed presidential campaign. The final chapters outline the complex history of collaboration between Roosevelt and Francis Cardinal Spellman, Joseph P. Kennedy (father of John F. Kennedy) and, most especially, George Cardinal Mundelein. This study further illumines the often-ignored American dimension of Pacelli’s controversial legacy with Fascism. Castagna’s fine work not only invites but also practically demands a subsequent history of the post-World War II ‘thaw’ itself, one that examines US-Vatican anti-Communist collaboration from Pius XII to John Paul II and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1984.

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LOS ANGELES

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*Catholic women’s movements in liberal and Fascist Italy.* By Helena Dawes. (Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements.) Pp. viii + 283 incl. 5 tables.

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As Helena Dawes underlines in this solidly researched and clearly written monograph, based upon her doctoral dissertation, the Catholic Church saw the mobilisation of women as crucial to its efforts to strengthen its presence in civil society Italy from the last decades of the nineteenth century. The threat from liberalism was compounded after the 1860s by the challenges of anarchism and socialism; and in a bid to ensure that secularism was kept at bay in an area of Europe that the Church understandably considered to be its very cradle and heartland, the Vatican encouraged the development of a growing array of female as well as male lay organisations to propagate Catholic values. However, although coordinated from 1874 until 1904 by the *Opera dei congressi*, the Catholic women’s movement proved less susceptible than the papacy would have wanted to centralised control; and, from the end of the century, *femminismo cristiano*, often spearheaded by strong-minded aristocratic women such as Maria Maggioni Baldo and Sabina Parravicino di Revel, began to flirt alarmingly with modernist currents and espouse causes of social and political emancipation. The advent of Pius X to the papacy in 1903 marked the beginning of a conservative backlash. Pius (who confessed in an audience that, in his view, the most appropriate activity for women was knitting socks in the safety of the home) cracked down on modernism and promoted, under the centralising aegis of *Azione cattolica*, a new conservative Catholic women’s organisation, the *Unione fra le donne cattoliche d’Italia* (1908), led by the energetic Princess Maria Cristina Giustiniani Bandini. Dawes charts the remarkable success of the Unione, whose membership – aided by the formation in 1918 of a separate branch for young women, the *Gioventù femminile cattolica italiana* – rose from 35,000 on the eve of the First World War, to more than 300,000 twenty years later. She suggests that a significant factor in the affirmation of the conservative Catholic women’s movement in the inter-war years lay in the ideological convergence between Fascism and the Church on such issues as gender roles, sexuality and the family. Though true, the study would have

benefitted considerably from a more detailed assessment of how the nexus between Catholicism and the regime operated. After 1945 the Church was eager to maintain that the tenacious manner in which it had promoted *Azione cattolica* in the inter-war years was evidence of its determination to protect Italian Catholics from the pagan pretensions of Fascism. But, as Dawes suggests, the Church had embarked from the 1870s on a determined mission to make Italy into a flagship of Christian civilisation; and far from constituting an impediment or threat to this goal, the arrival of Fascism, with its celebration of authority, hierarchy, faith and spirituality and its rejection of the materialistic values of both liberalism and socialism, provided the Church with what seemed an excellent instrument (though there were clearly some difficult moments, especially at the outset and again in 1931) for realising this long-held ambition. The paradox of the *Unione fra le donne cattoliche d'Italia*, Dawes concludes, was that it gave Italian women an opportunity to assert themselves in the public sphere through the active promotion of reactionary patriarchal values. The same was also true of the Fascist women's organisations. Rather than antagonistic, the relationship between Catholicism and Fascism might in many respects better be seen as one of mutual reinforcement.

UNIVERSITY OF READING

CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN

*Christians in South Indian villages, 1959–2009. Decline and revival in Telangana.* By John B. Carman and Chilkuri Vasanthia Rao. (Studies in the History of Christian Missions.) Pp. xvi + 242 + 14 ills. Grand Rapids, MI–Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014. £23.99 (\$35) (paper). 978 0 8028 7163 3  
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Published works that engage with India's varied Christian communities have been increasing both in quantity and in prominence over the last twenty years. This is especially the case in the social sciences where there has been a post-millennial explosion of interest in this area. *Christians in South Indian villages, 1959–2009*, feeds into these recent developments, but also reengages the reader with a classic work of missionary studies: *Village Christians and Hindu culture*. This earlier work was part of a wider exploration of missionary activity that focused on reviewing those Christian congregations that are situated just to the north of Hyderabad. These congregations were all part of a then newly founded loose coalition of Protestant churches, known as the Church of South India (CSI). *Christians in South Indian villages* revisits, fifty years later, the site of the *Village Christians* study in order to explore how things have changed. In addition to returning to the CSI churches that featured in the original study, *Christians in South Indian villages* expands its horizons to consider both newly founded CSI churches in the area and the many Evangelical churches that have recently appeared. The study itself was carried out by two researchers with strong CSI connections (Carman and Rao) and with the assistance of eight students, all of whom are now themselves CSI ministers. This is not then a disinterested study and the work has a practical feel to it, but (in contrast to the 1959 study) this was not an official church project. In essence, this book is the published results of that study, augmented by the presentation of general, pre-1959, contextual information, which includes