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Faking the News: Antiwar Activists, the Italo-Ethiopian War, and the Practice of Human Rights

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Going Against the Grain

University of Dayton Human Rights Center
Social Practice of Human Rights Conference, Oct. 1-4, 2019

Faking the News: Antiwar Activists, the Italo-Ethiopian War, and the Practice of Human Rights

Presented by:

Caroline Waldron Merithew, *University of Dayton*

Session: New Media and Imagery

Abstract:

In “Faking the News,” I bring past and present together to underscore lessons already learned by antifascist antiwar activists from the 1930s. These activists used, what they termed, “Authentic News,” to combat the propaganda Benito Mussolini’s regime was making up about the Italo-Ethiopian war. How might knowing about how people faked the news, and faked out fascism, in the past shape current and future human rights actions and help us go against the grain today for a better world tomorrow?

Presenter information:

Caroline Waldron Merithew is Associate Professor of History and Human Rights Fellow at the University of Dayton. She specializes in immigration, labor, and women’s history. Her current research focuses on transnational feminism and antifascism to explore women’s central role in the fight against Italy’s colonial quest and invasion of Ethiopia, 1920s-1940s. On this subject, she has published the article: “‘O Mother Race’: Race, Italian Colonialism and the Fight to Keep Ethiopia Independent, *Zapruder World: An International Journal for the History of Social Conflict* (2018). Her earlier publications include: “Navigating Body, Class, and Disability in the Life of Agnes Burns Wieck,” in the *Journal of Historical Biography* (2013); “Domesticating the Diaspora: Remember the Life of Katie DeRorre,” in *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World* (Fordham 2011); “‘We Were Not Ladies’: Gender, Class, and a Woman’s Auxiliary’s Battle for Mining Unionism,” in the *Journal of Women’s History* (2006), awarded the Anita S. Goodstein Junior Scholar Prize for the best article published in the field of American Women’s History, University of the South; “Anarchist Motherhood,” in *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives* (2002); and “‘Lynch-Law Must Go!’” in the *Journal of American Ethnic History* (2000). She has been in leadership roles at the University of Dayton focused on fair employment. Waldron Merithew was the first Special Advisor to the Provost on Gender, Equity, and Climate. And, she has recently been named Equity Advisor in the School of Engineering. She is the Co-PI of an NEH Humanities Connections Grant (2018-2019) focused on Humanities and Health Sciences with her colleague, Dr. Carissa Krane (Biology)