

beim Wasserbaumanagement aufgrund kolonialer Erfahrungen und der Möglichkeit, ursprünglich ganzheitliche Wasserbaupläne national abzuwandeln, zusehends von einer sogenannten »großägyptischen Lösung« unter Einbeziehung des Sudan abrückte und Großbritanniens Einflussmöglichkeiten spürbar verblassten.

»[D]ie Suche nach der Nil-Formel« ermöglichte letztendlich die Realisierung des Assuan-Hochdamm-Projekts und schuf so auf der politischen Ebene die Basis für einen Nationalstaat »Ägypten« und dessen Festigung, was Blocher im fünften Kapitel seiner Studie darlegt.

Als zentrale und gleichberechtigte Untersuchungskategorien überträgt Ewald Blocher das von David Gurgeli und Daniel Speich in ihrer 2002 erschienenen Studie über *Topografien der Nation. Politik, kartografische Ordnung und Landschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* beschriebene »Dreiecksverhältnis zwischen Wissen, Macht und Raum« sehr schlüssig und scharfsinnig auf seinen Untersuchungsgegenstand. Durch das erworbene Know-how über den Nil, so Blocher, verwandelten die einflussreichen Experten den »realen Fluss« in »Möglichkeitenräume«, die sowohl die britische Kolonialmacht als auch die ägyptische Seite für machtpolitische Zwecke einsetzten.

Blocher bündelt die Ergebnisse seiner Studie schließlich überzeugend in dem prägnanten Fazit, dass der »Wasserbau-Staat« wie folgt charakterisiert werden könne: Der »Wasserbau-Staat« sei durch seine Wandlung im Dekolonisationsprozesses modelliert worden. Er hatte die Eigenschaft, ein immerwährender »Planungsstaat« und ein »Staat ausgeprägter infrastruktureller Naturbeherrschung und territorialer Ressourcennutzung« zu sein und folgte dem (notwendigen) Streben nach »Ressourcensicherheit« als oberste Priorität. Die Studie schließt mit einem lohnenden Ausblick, der kritisch die horrend gewachsenen und durch die Schnelllebigkeit von scheinbar universellen Planungen erst offenbarten Ansprüche an das Wasserbaumanagement beleuchtet.

Eine Stärke von Ewald Blochers Analyse sind die jeweiligen Theoriebezüge und -verzahnungen, insbesondere jene in den Zwischenfazit gegen Ende der jeweiligen Kapitel. Blochers tiefgründige Analyse drifftet lediglich vereinzelt in eine zu detaillierte ereignisgeschichtliche Deskription. So ist zu fragen, ob das Hin-und-Her eines über das vorhandene Wasser ausgelöst und letztendlich verselbstständigten Expertenkonfliktes, der über vierzehn Seiten beschrieben wird, nicht hätte akzentuierter abgehandelt werden können.

Insgesamt zeichnet sich die Studie von Ewald Blocher insbesondere dadurch aus, dass unterschiedlichste zusammenwirkende Mechanismen wie das Akteurshandeln, der institutionelle Rahmen und verschiedene naturwissenschaftliche Phänomene in der Untersuchung eingehend analysiert werden. Beispielsweise ermöglicht die Einbeziehung der historischen Grundlagen und Kernelemente der wissenschaftlichen Fachrichtungen der Hydrologie und der Geografie, hier speziell der Kartierung, den Lesern eine gehaltvolle Einordnung und Durchdringung der Nil-bezogenen Expertenmeinungen und der diesbezüglichen politischen Auseinandersetzungen. Über die Kapitel hinweg wird so durch aufeinander aufbauende und stetig tiefergehende Analysen, die immer neue Ebenen, Zusammenhängen und Perspektiven bieten, ein sehr umfassendes Verständnis der Gesamtthematik ermöglicht.

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### **Hungarian Women's Activism in the Wake of the First World War**

*Judith Szapor, Hungarian Women's Activism in the Wake of the First World War. From Rights to Revanche, London (Bloomsbury Academic) 2017, 224 S., 12 Abb., 95 €*

This is a long-overdue study of a turbulent period in Hungarian history through the prism of gender. By unearthing a treasure

trove of archival sources, Szapor chronicles a hitherto blind spot in historiography, spinning a wide narrative that reverberates through to our millennium. In this meticulously researched volume, the author builds on and complements previous works about Hungarian women's history and activism by Eliza Ablovatski, Andrea Pető, Agatha Schwartz or Susan Zimmermann. She also relates her findings to the broader infrastructure of existing scholarship about woman suffrage in Europe specifically and the two waves of feminism before and after the First World War generally, positioning Hungary adequately in the academic field and asserting that women's organizations from all ideological corners either were involved in triggering changes or, successively, adapted to these changes.

By presenting and drawing on previously neglected archival material and images, Szapor traces the trajectory of post-1918 Hungary with its political modifications from the perspective of women's roles and public involvement. Especially in post-conflict nations, female figures are usually heralded as bearers of these nations, and discourses about procreation and female citizens as mothers of the state are prolific and common. In her nuanced account, Szapor investigates these nation-building processes in post-war Hungary, where patriotism, nationalism and irredentism intersected with notions of feminine duties and iconographies. Most importantly, the author teases out interconnections with contemporary goings-on in Hungary (but, one could argue, applicable beyond this country, too) and debates about women's function in society and the family.

Szapor aims to shed light on a quite illustrious spectrum of female protagonists and iridescent list of women's groups with their agendas, enmities or alternating alliances. These range from Rosika Schwimmer, Vilma Glücklich or Eugénia Miskolczy Meller, all women with a Jewish background, with their so-called liberal-bourgeois Feministák

Egyesülete [Feminist Association], or the brief and later somewhat eclipsed – also by its members – stint of the Women's Debating Club, chaired by Countess Katinka Károlyi, to the first female MP, the Christian socialist nun Margit Slachta, and the right-wing Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége (MANSZ) [National Alliance of Hungarian Women], an auxiliary to Horthy's authoritarian rule, which subsequently sidelined most previous feminist endeavors and achievements. Szapor's chosen sub-title for her oeuvre, *from rights to revanche*, encapsulates how the liberal women's movement, propagating amongst other social reforms the franchise, became outmanoeuvred by reactionary women after the war. These women were willing and ready supporters of Horthy's anti-democratic and anti-liberal policies, and Szapor shows how rights, recently bestowed, can be easily and brutally withdrawn or abandoned.

The chapters are structured chronologically, starting before the Great War: by providing an explanatory overview of the three major women's groups from 1904 to 1918 – the aforementioned liberal, then the socialist as well as the Catholic. Both groups were rather dominated by masculine and patriarchal prerogatives, either of party or church – and their vying for members and thus prestige. In the first chapter, Szapor moves on to tracking the Hungarian Women's Debating Club and the partly forged plot lines of its inception. The Club was founded in 1917, but quickly sank into oblivion and was usurped by ultra-nationalist women as a foil for their rhetoric against all other feminists.

Chapter 3 deals with the so-called 'aster' or October revolution and its short-lived National Council, led by Count Mihály Károlyi, and the Bolshevik revolution that established the Republic of Councils in 1919. Here the author depicts Hungary as an exceptional case, because woman suffrage was introduced within the tapestry of two revolutions and hence oscillating political

demarcations and parameters for citizenship. Exploring how quickly the tables turned in these erratic times from the autumn of 1918 to the spring of 1919, the chapter also features the murder of Rosa Luxemburg as a crucial episode for domestic Hungarian politics and its increasing polarization at the beginning of 1919, mobilizing both left and right forces. Fluctuating between private and public interfaces, theories about women's participation in political platforms were employed during a remarkably short interval and under post-war conditions with territorial losses and significant starvation. Amidst these seismic shifts and discontents in Hungary, MANSZ commenced to monopolize Hungarian women's circles, profiting from their centrifugal tendencies and successfully recruiting acolytes from Catholic, conservative and aristocratic realms. Thereby MANSZ reaped the benefits of previous feminist campaigns and helped to frame and buffer the counter-revolution.

Congruently, the following two chapters elaborate on MANSZ, its president Cécile Tormay and her defeated rival Emma Ritoók, both extremely anti-Semitic writers. The symbiotic relationship between Horthy and MANSZ affiliates is scrutinized in the fourth chapter, while the fifth chapter examines Ritoók and her problematic interactions, for example, with the Jewish Anna Lesznai, who could not have been more different from her, or her association with the so-called Sunday Circle, a bohemian congregation of intellectuals.

Horthy's orchestration of power facilitated women's roles in their traditional spheres as an innocuous counterpart to his troops' paramilitary terror. These two chapters further contextualize the paradigms of women as agitators and perpetrators, not victims, of violence. Additionally, Szapor highlights the discrepancies of Tormay's and Ritoók's texts and tactics, which portrayed feminine grace and maternalistic instincts while promoting spiteful and abysmal dogmas, and concludes with the severe backlash regarding voting

rights for women and men in 1922. The last chapter is a synopsis of the 1920 election and its aftermath, with MANSZ quarantining formerly prominent Hungarian women's organizations whilst appropriating their transnational networks with the International Woman Suffrage Alliance to lobby for revision and to euphemize the White Terror.

The final part assesses the connotations of Hungarian liberal, illiberal and communist gender politics in conjunction with current affairs. With women's reproductive rather than political powers celebrated once again by reactionaries, blatantly echoing old slogans of the interwar era, Szapor's analysis links these developments to interwar Hungarian roots rather than recent Western European phenomena of neo-conservatism. She also explains the reasons for such a long survival and almost instant resurgence of these ideas. According to her, Horthy's government, albeit authoritarian, displayed no clear itinerary of fascism but was much more complex with quasi-democratic patterns, peppered with a hint of Magyar nostalgia. Palpably, the regime's and MANSZ's anti-Semitism and illiberalism were a ploy to divert attention from the ramifications of the lost war or the Treaty of Trianon and to legitimize and cement their rule after two revolutions. Concerning this setup and recipe, gender stereotypes were paramount.

Evidently and regrettably, today's situation in Hungary forcefully harks back to this past. Szapor ends with commenting on the present renaissance Tormay's titles have experienced since the fall of the Iron Curtain.

This is a timely and engaging contribution, utilising new archival finds and offering fresh insights into gender policies in tandem with mechanisms of nationhood and patriarchy in Eastern Europe between the World Wars. Highly recommendable for scholars and students with particular interests in twentieth-century ideologies and formations of (anti-)feminisms and nationalisms.

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