

within “medicine under National Socialism.” The volume clearly communicates that this larger field continues to grow and yield new insights that expand our understanding of the past and its connection to the present. As a result, this compilation is strongly recommended reading for scholars of modern Germany, the Holocaust, the history of science and medicine, as well as for medical professionals and educators who will find echoes of the past in their contemporary practice. The overall emphasis on linkages, be they faint resonances or concrete continuities, extends the volume’s appeal to scholars of memory and trauma studies, and certain contributions would make the volume a valuable resource for specialists in Jewish studies, women’s and gender studies, law, and art theory.

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Revolution and Political Violence in Central Europe: The Deluge of 1919

By Eliza Ablovatski. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 302. Cloth £75.00. ISBN: 978-0521768306.

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Eliza Ablovatski’s book looks at an extremely volatile and unstable period of European history immediately after the First World War. Globally, 1919 was a year ripe with revolutionary potential, characterised in Europe by uprisings that sought to overthrow autocratic systems of government and bring in alternatives rooted in social and economic justice. Ablovatski chooses a comparative approach, looking in detail at the revolutions in Hungary and Germany through the lens of two cities, Budapest and Munich. She deals with their complex histories succinctly and with remarkable clarity, drawing out both commonalities and differences to give readers an insight into the ways that revolution played out in these contexts. Both nations suffered devastating defeat in the war, losing territory, status, and wealth and bearing huge casualties, and revolutionary governments were left to rebuild truncated, traumatised, divided nations. However, there are significant differences between the two revolutionary cities, outlined in chapters on the dominant narratives, bloody aftermath, and constructed memories of the revolutions. Ablovatski shows how pre-conceived ideas about revolution – revolutionary scripts – shaped both attitudes to events and the events themselves. This is at its most striking in chapter 3, in which she shows that the uncertainty and lack of information fostered fear, and exaggerated but plausible rumours of violence fuelled cycles of actual violence by revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces.

Placing the revolutions and their counterrevolutionary suppression in Budapest and Munich side by side allows us to see them within a wider context of political violence that is important for understanding postwar Europe. This perspective goes some way towards challenging claims for German and Hungarian exceptionalism. Most tellingly, Ablovatski argues that Germany’s descent into fascism cannot simply be explained by postwar conditions – if anything, antisemitism, division, and postwar trauma were even more marked in Hungary, which took a different path. By reading the work of a nationalist Hungarian woman, Cécile Tormay, alongside the well-known work of Klaus Theweleit (*Männerphantasien*, 1977-1978), Ablovatski also demonstrates that the ideological

underpinnings of violence were not restricted to men. While Theweleit's focus on violent masculinities offers a psychological explanation for the misogynistic and antisemitic violence of the right-wing paramilitary organisations and counterrevolutionary forces in Germany, paying attention to the writings of nationalist women reveals a wider context in which traditional gender roles stood as proxy for an entire social order. This is a significant argument and demonstrates the importance of writing history from a broader perspective and using multiple sources.

Ablovatski herself uses a range of sources, including news reports and memoirs, but the stand-outs are the very full accounts of the trials of revolutionaries in both cities (chapter 4). From these, she is able to demonstrate how the court proceedings reflected and shaped the understanding of and attitudes to the revolution, helping to "standardize the distinct and scattered experiences of individuals into collective revolutionary scripts that motivated people into action, for or against the revolution" (124).

Ablovatski highlights the different emerging narratives, noting the greater leniency of the Munich courts and the greater press freedom there to put forward diverging perspectives. The suppression of all opposition news reporting in Hungary added to the population's fear and uncertainty and "left an imbalanced legacy for historians" (152). More than 15,000 revolutionaries went on trial in Budapest, compared to Munich's 5,000, and 97 death sentences were passed (68 carried out) compared to Munich's eight. In both countries, counterrevolutionary forces were far more violent than revolutionaries, with forces led by Admiral Miklós Horthy dispensing summary "justice" in the towns and villages outside Budapest. A major motivation, as outlined in chapter 5, was antisemitic prejudice, identified as the ideological glue that held the counterrevolution together, which associated all Jews with revolution and violence, regardless of their actual actions or beliefs. In both Munich and Budapest, the revolution was constructed as foreign to the true heart of each nation, using the all-too easily believed trope of Judeo-Bolshevism to justify the expulsion of revolutionaries from the national community.

Antisemitism became entangled with the far-right's ideological commitment to rigid gender norms, so that Jewish women were accused of revolutionary violence, public activism, and sexual licence, all of which placed them beyond the scope of male or state protection. As Tormay clearly articulated for Hungary, only the pure, apolitical woman who focussed on home and family was truly "of the nation." Thus, women represented both the nation's greatest strength and its greatest vulnerability, with women seen as weak, easily influenced, and in need of protection. Ablovatski argues that the apparent upending of gender hierarchies and the vague but horrifying threat that socialists would "nationalise" women was one of the most potent signs that the world had indeed lost all rationality, and this caused many middle-class citizens to support the restoration of order by counterrevolutionary forces.

The book centres political violence and vividly conveys how the uncertainty, deprivation, and terror of the time shaped the historical developments of the 1920s and 1930s. However, the focus on violence obscures some of the more visionary ideas that motivated revolutionaries to take part, overlooking in particular the importance of antiwar activists. The voices of revolutionary women closely involved in the events in Munich, for example Hilde Kramer or Rahel Straus, both of whom wrote letters and memoirs, could have been used to balance the voices of far-right women like Tormay. I would also have welcomed more images than the nine included.

These minor quibbles aside, this is an excellent, well-researched, and clearly argued book that offers researchers and students at all levels a new and valuable perspective on a key period for understanding twentieth-century Central European history.