

was a duty, not only to the individual, but also to 'our generation'.

The speech – including its emphasis on voluntarism and individual willpower – was well received. Criticisms that the new fitness movement was being 'Nazified' were dismissed. There was to be no compulsion. A 'progressive government' had a duty to improve national health – and this required everyone's participation. Crucially, it meant that the government and voluntary organisations had to tackle problems of malnutrition, unemployment, and sub-standard housing. Masculinity also had to be strengthened. In the words of *Keep Fit*, the campaign's popular film of 1937, 'the nation's got an A1 plan and I might turn into a man, if I had biceps, muscle, and brawn.'

Of course, this emphasis on manliness and the need to strive for an 'A1 nation' has a long history. As Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska rigorously documents, since the 1880s, national healthiness was frequently judged according to military criteria. Infamously, during the Boer War, two out of every three urban men who attempted to sign-up for military service were 'virtual invalids'. Within less than forty years, the situation had dramatically improved. Nearly seventy per cent of men examined under the National Service Act between June 1939 and July 1945 were classed as being exceptionally fit. Major differences remained in terms of age, volunteer or conscript status, occupation, and place of residence, but major improvements were obvious nonetheless.

Zweiniger-Bargielowska brilliantly sets out to explain how this happened. Rising living standards, declining morbidity and infant mortality, and increased life expectancy were inevitable consequences of welfare reforms. However, she also draws attention to the contributions of a wide range of voluntary and philanthropic organisations. Imperial and eugenic motives were clearly important (and not the exclusive ideological preserve of the political right), but the whole physical culture movement cannot simply be reduced to women as 'race mothers' and men as 'empire-

builders'. The dysgenic disaster of the First World War encouraged a new focus on the value of preventative medicine and environmental restructuring. In the words of Sir George Newman, the first Chief Medical Officer, 'Never before in the history of this country has so much been attempted by the State on behalf of the health of the people as now.' Crucially, he insisted, healthiness could 'only be achieved by the people themselves.' The number and range of voluntary organisations which embraced this 'call to arms' was remarkable, and their influence could be seen throughout society.

This is a meticulous and formidably researched book about British society in the decades just prior to the Second World War. Although Zweiniger-Bargielowska focuses on health and the body, her book makes significant contributions to social history more generally. She clearly sets out her arguments, and is careful never to exaggerate the pace and extent of change. Not only is her story compelling in its own terms, but it also provides a model for future researchers dealing with the period immediately after the Second World War.

Joanna Bourke,

Birkbeck College, University of London

Katharina Rowold, *The Educated Woman: Minds, Bodies, and Women's Higher Education in Britain, Germany, and Spain, 1865–1914*, Routledge Research in Gender and History, No. 7 (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. x + 311, £70.00, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-415-20587-0.

While one still finds the antifeminist pronouncements of Henry Maudsley and other late nineteenth-century medical men and scientists quoted as exemplary of attitudes towards the possibility of women being capable of, and benefiting from, higher education, one seldom finds these adequately contextualised as part of a much larger, and

more contested, debate on women's minds and bodies; not to mention the fact that in spite of the diatribes as to their mental and physical unsuitability to advanced studies and the deleterious effects of these on female health, women were nonetheless increasingly entering higher education during the later decades of the nineteenth century in Britain. Katharina Rowold has already performed the valuable service of producing an edited volume, *Gender and Science: Late Nineteenth-Century Debates on the Female Mind and Body* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1996), documenting these debates in the UK. In *The Educated Woman* she sets the British story within a wider European context, invoking, in comparison, the situations in Germany and in Spain, which provide particularly useful examples of differing traditions affecting how these debates were framed and how they played out in practice.

Both these nations saw women admitted to university education a good deal later than they were in the UK (not until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century). This did not occur very substantially earlier in Germany than in Spain, in spite of the existence of an organised women's movement from the late nineteenth century in the former, and no such degree of collective organisation in the latter, although there was the emergence of a 'woman question', and individual voices arguing for some degree of female emancipation. However, as Rowold points out, when women were admitted to tertiary education in both countries, this was universally applicable across the institutions of higher education, whereas in the UK, although the University of London and the various emerging provincial universities, as well as those in Scotland and Wales, were open to women from the late nineteenth century, Oxford and Cambridge remained hold-outs for much longer in the grant of actual degrees. The differing systems for the provision of higher education – in the UK, a decentralised mixture of public and private, compared to, for example, the monolithic state system of Prussia – thus had a

significant impact on their permeability for female students.

Rowold's study focuses primarily upon the debates which proliferated about 'women's minds and bodies, their natural aptitudes and limitations, and how these related to women's place in society' (p.1), and their progress from unarticulated assumptions about women's capacities, to much more elaborated positions both for and against. In particular, she demonstrates that science, medicine, religion, and theories of gendered citizenship were neither neutral, nor inevitably associated with pro or anti views, but were subject to a constant process of renegotiation. Although a good deal of the agitation for improved female education in Spain was driven by the rationalist, secularist, modernising Krausist movement, Gimeno de Flaquer, for example, was a devout Catholic who argued on the basis of the equality of the sexes before God, while repudiating 'the vulgar tradition' of the inherited sin of Eve (p. 172).

These debates were, perhaps inevitably, framed around the vexed problem of the relationship between women's individualistic mental development, and their role as mothers of the nation, increasingly inflected by Darwinism and developing notions of eugenics. It is clear from Rowold's nuanced account, however, that Darwinism was contested, problematised, and reworked in the interests of supporting female education, with reiterated arguments that apparent female intellectual inferiority was due to environmental and societal causes rather than an innate result of evolutionary processes. Lamarckian notions of the inheritance of acquired characteristics continued to exercise considerable influence. In England, by the early twentieth century, there was an intricate interweaving of feminist and eugenic ideas about the informed and free choice of partners by women, the value of education in motherhood, and the importance of intelligent women bearing offspring for the nation. In Germany, however, female higher education was seen as having a role primarily to provide

career opportunities of social utility for unmarried women.

The Educated Woman is a valuable and thoroughly researched study that illuminates the interaction of numerous different strands – the scientific, the medical, the religious, the political – within specific national contexts and particular historical moments on this important topic.

Lesley A. Hall,
Wellcome Library, London

Kenneth M. Pinnow, *Lost to the Collective: Suicide and the Promise of Soviet Socialism, 1921–1929* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. xi + 276, \$49.95, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-8014-4766-2.

With *Lost to the Collective*, Kenneth M. Pinnow details the rise of the ‘social science state’ in the Soviet Union. In the investigations of suicides by state, party, and military organs, Pinnow underscores the desire of authorities to see citizens through forms, statistics, and forensic examinations, but highlights a uniquely Bolshevik goal of diagnosing and preventing ideological deviance alongside a distinctive conception of the role of the state in the lives of Soviet individuals. Pinnow argues that because the Bolsheviks believed the survival of their collective was closely tied to individual behaviour, ‘the making of suicide into public property achieved its ultimate expression in the hands of the Soviets’ (p. 65).

The number of suicides pales in comparison to the vast losses from war, disease, and famine in the aftermath of revolution, yet suicide emerged as a focal point for broad investigation in 1920, under the purview of the Soviet Commissariat of Health, even in the face of limited resources and personnel. Pinnow argues that Soviet doctors, psychiatrists, and forensic specialists elevated the importance of suicide as a way to assess both the individual’s progress and that of

society as a whole. The evaluation of suicide fluctuated depending upon viewer and victim. Many authorities considered it a mark of degeneracy in males, it was especially disquieting when found among the advanced cadres of Komsomol youth, the Red Army, or party workers, yet they considered suicide a sign of progress in women who, as a consequence of the opportunities of revolution, were more engaged in economic and social affairs. Numbers, especially those collected by the Department of Moral Statistics of the Central Statistical Administration, became a major part of expert analysis, but even so, Pinnow deftly shows how not all were won over to the side of data, as debate raged over the value of aggregates over the investigation of the particular. As they examined holdovers of the past, moral statisticians measured their profession’s progress against the dearth of statistical studies from Tsarist authorities. In the creation of this statistical structure, Pinnow argues that the Soviet state presided over ‘the formation and radical expansion of the social as a site of governmental action during the 1920s’ (p. 13).

Firmly embedded in works on the history of medicine, psychology, and sociology in Russia and Europe, Pinnow’s study is less tied to cultural works – particularly those on gender. Although Pinnow brings excellent insights to the perceived wave of female suicides, anxiety over masculine potency and feminine danger resonate through the expert commentaries on male suicides as well, and could have been more fully explored. Including Elizabeth Wood’s work on the interconnection of gender and political standing, as well as further incorporating the ruminations of Fran Bernstein, Dan Healey, Sharon Kowalsky and Eric Naiman on the angst-filled, gender-troubled NEP era, would have expanded on the underlying disquiet regarding nervousness and problems of the will among male suicides, as well as giving further depth to the analysis of suicides among women.

Clearly written and provocatively argued, the work is extremely, and impressively, well