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und Nationalismus (Gippius, Merežkovskij), die dennoch auf einen guten Ausgang des Krieges hoffen, sowie Solitären wie Blok, der schwer auf eine Position festzulegen war, oder Belyj, der den Krieg am konsequentesten ablehnte (Hellman nennt beide „outsider“). Ging es aber um große Abstraktionen wie die fundamentale Umformung der Gesellschaft, die Erneuerung der Menschheit oder die Begründung einer universellen Kunst, dann ließen sich noch immer Gemeinsamkeiten aus früherer Zeit erkennen, als ob sich nachträglich die apokalyptischen Prophezeiungen bestätigen sollten, mit welchen die Symbolisten die Ausprägungen der Moderne zu Vorboten eines großen Zusammenbruchs erklärt hatten.

Die „symbolistische Erfahrung“, von der Hellman in seinem Schlusskapitel schreibt, vereinigt daher überaus disparate Elemente. Keiner und keinem der genannten Hauptvertreterinnen und -vertreter der Gruppe gelingt es, den Konflikt zwischen einer Kunst, die ganz der Zukunft zugewandt sein wollte, und einer Realität, die keine Auswege aus der chaotischen Gegenwart zu weisen schien, aufzulösen. Debatten um Sieg oder Niederlage, Parteipolitik oder soziale Frage, Empathie mit den Frontsoldaten oder Rückzug in die „reine Kunst“ forderten zur Stellungnahme heraus. Der moderne Krieg gab einigen eher Anlass zu schweigen, als ihn zu fiktionalisieren, poetisch zu überhöhen oder publizistisch zu kommentieren. Zweifel wurden dem Tagebuch anvertraut. Wer wie Gippius alle diese Genres bediente, nutzte sie, um das eigene Schwanken zu bewältigen. Brjusov ging unbefangener mit der Notwendigkeit um, Zugeständnisse an das Faktische zu machen. Für ihn wie für einige andere wurden die Revolutionen zur neuen Inspirationsquelle, besiegelten aber zugleich das Ende des Symbolismus.

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Mie Nakachi

**Replacing the Dead. The Politics of Reproduction in the Postwar Soviet Union**

New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021. XIV, 327 S. ISBN: 978-0-19-063513-8.

Nikita S. Khrushchev launched many ill-advised schemes during his long political career – from the Virgin Lands campaign to the reorganization of the Party – but his imprudent overreach was perhaps nowhere more perfectly captured than in his pro-natalist proposal toward the end of World War II, which became the basis for the All Union Soviet Family Law enacted in 1944. In a striking combination of legal and social history, Mie Nakachi provides the first full length study of the 1944 Family Law and its impact on women and families. She takes us on an intimate tour of family life during the grim postwar years, profiling the plight of single mothers, the state's extreme pro-natalist measures, and the efforts of health officials, doctors, jurists, and social reformers to undo the Family Law's most harmful provisions.

The war created a demographic catastrophe in the Soviet Union. Over 26 million Soviet citizens died on the battlefield, in POW camps, under German occupation, or working as slave labor. The

consequences of the losses were evident to Soviet leaders even before the war was over and the terrible tally taken. The state was desperately short of workers to rebuild the newly liberated territories and many villages were completely depopulated of young men. In 1944, in the Western part of the Soviet Union, the ratio of adult men to women of reproductive age was 28 to 100. (p. 21) The war deeply disrupted family life in other ways as well. Millions of people were evacuated to the rear as men and women of draft age went to the front. Family members lost touch with each other for long periods of time, driven apart by death, distance, and successive relocations. Many people formed new relationships at the front, some temporary, others more enduring. Women became pregnant by soldiers who had left their wives and children in the rear. And most tragically, as Nakachi points out, vast numbers of soldiers never returned, leaving women in the postwar period with no opportunity to marry, to establish a family, or to provide their already existing children with fathers. To encourage an increase in the birth rate, the state introduced a new law, "On Increasing Government Support for Pregnant Women, Mothers with Many Children, and Single Mothers", known by the more convenient shorthand: the 1944 Family Law.

The new law's most distinctive provision, however, was not contained in its long official title. Seeking to address the demographic losses, the law aimed to promote single motherhood by encouraging women to have children out of wedlock. To this end, it promulgated a policy Nakachi terms "one-parent pronatalism" by providing a state stipend and other benefits to help unmarried mothers raise their children (p. 10). At the same time, in the interest of stabilizing families, it also made divorce more difficult to get, prohibited women from seeking child support for children fathered outside of marriage, absolved men from supporting their out-of-wedlock children, and even prevented unmarried mothers from placing the biological father's name on the child's birth certificate.

Nakachi notes that the law opened a new social divide "between married and unmarried mothers" and broke sharply with the progressive Soviet jurisprudence of the past (p. 54). Both the Family Codes of 1918 and 1927, among many emancipatory provisions, eliminated the juridical concept of illegitimacy. All children, whether they were born within or outside a registered marriage, were entitled to support by their parents. The 1927 Family Code made divorce exceptionally easy, establishing a streamlined process at the simple request of either spouse. And in 1920, Soviet Russia became the first country in the world to legalize abortion. Under Stalin, the state recriminalized abortion and made divorce harder to get in 1936, but the 1918 provision abolishing illegitimacy remained untouched until 1944.

The 1944 Family Law was praised by Soviet statisticians as a success: between 1945 and 1954, 8.7 million children were born out of wedlock. But it also created a host of new legal and social problems (p. 90). Nakachi delves deeply into its painful social consequences. State funds quickly proved inadequate to support millions of single mothers. The sharp demographic imbalance encouraged caddish and irresponsible male behavior. Grinding poverty, long hours at work, and housing shortages – all features of the postwar recovery period – made it difficult for women to care for their out-of-wedlock children. Unmarried women, unable to register a father on their child's birth certificate, objected angrily to the shame and confusion their children were forced to endure. Men in marriages that had dissolved during the war were unable to marry new partners or register as the father of the children from these unions because the cost of divorce by now was prohibitive. Single mothers were often forced to leave their babies in orphanages where the death rates were shockingly high: up to 44 percent of the children placed in these institutions in 1947 died (p. 117). The new law, designed

to increase the birth rate by promoting single motherhood, instead drove many women to repeated illegal abortions. As Nakachi persuasively argues, it produced the opposite effect from its original intent. Women, shamed and hobbled by its provisions, were crippled and killed by repeated illegal abortions, destroying fertility and driving down the birth rate.

By the early 1950s, jurists, doctors, health officials, and social reformers were deeply worried by the law's deleterious impact. Doctors had little interest in reporting women who appeared in clinics haemorrhaging from illegal abortions. Jurists had no desire to prosecute them. Yet state-sponsored purges of the medical profession, prompted by the anti-Western *Zhdanovshchina* and the so-called the Doctor's Plot, halted early attempts at reform. It was not until Stalin's death in 1953 that such efforts could gain any traction. In 1955, after growing pressure from doctors, prosecutors, health officials, and women, the state re-legalized abortion. It was a historic decision. Although Soviet Russia had led the world in the legalization of abortion 35 years before, its re-legalization marked the first time that abortion was officially granted on the basis of a woman's right to choose rather than on medical, eugenic, social, or other grounds.

The reform efforts, however, were less successful in reversing other parts of the 1944 Family Law. Not until 1965 did the law ease divorce requirements, and not until 1968 did it revise the provision forbidding an unmarried woman from registering the father of her child or suing him for child support. Men retained the option of denying their out-of-wedlock children. Moreover, the state made little investment in either education about or production of contraception. In Nakachi's arresting phrase, a "culture of abortion" developed throughout the country (p. 185). Women – married and unmarried, mothers and childless, poor and prosperous – relied on repeated abortions over the course of their reproductive lives to control fertility. This culture spread throughout the Soviet bloc and China, and the experience of abortion became a common, painful, and defining feature of women's lives under socialism.

*Replacing the Dead* is essential reading for scholars interested in war, pro-natalism, abortion, Soviet history, or socialist culture, and for anyone, for that matter, who cares about women's rights and reproductive issues. Its powerful conclusion, built on exhaustive research, is as relevant today as it would have been to Soviet state planners in the postwar period: the best way any state can ensure a healthy, robust population is to offer women well-paid work outside the home along with the ability to transfer their unpaid reproductive labor within the home to well-subsidized institutions within the public sphere. States with high female labor participation that insist on women's traditional unpaid roles as caregivers and homemakers will continue to experience low or declining birth rates. In Nakachi's words, "the distribution of family care work away from women is a key factor that influences fertility when women's labor participation rises" (p. 17). Indeed, it is the only policy capable of resolving the tension between a pro-natalist state policy and support for women's well-being.

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