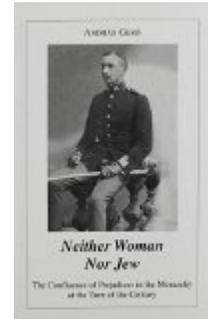


András Gerö. *Neither Woman Nor Jew: The Confluence of Prejudices in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the Turn of the Century*. Boulder: Columbia University Press, 2010. 190 pp. \$40.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-88033-669-7.

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Published on HABSBUURG (May, 2011)

Commissioned by Jonathan Kwan



## Antisemitism and Antifeminism in Turn-of-the-Century Austria

Several scholars have explored discourses of race and gender in fin-de-siècle Europe in general and Vienna in particular. George Mosse, Sander Gilman, Nancy Harrowitz, and Christina von Braun, among others, have written on this theme, while other scholars, including Jacques Le Rider, have shown that the convergence of stereotypes of Jews and women had a particular resonance in the Habsburg capital. Similarly, in *Neither Woman Nor Jew*, András Gerö sets out “to show [that] there was a discourse which elevated racism, antifeminism, and misogyny to the rank of an ideological interpretation of reality” and that the prejudices existed together and jointly. While Gerö focuses on some of the more marginal and neglected proponents of these views, such as Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels, he makes some erroneous assertions: namely, that “because of the increasing specialization of social science those who study racism are unlikely to write about antifeminism and misogyny” and “conversely, those interested in women’s history will not discuss racism” (p. x).

Gerö’s methodological approach is to “let the actors speak for themselves,” and in doing so he includes long excerpts from his subjects, with minimal commentary and analysis. He justifies this approach by pointing out that most of these writings have not been previously available in translation, nor have they been contextualized. Chapters focus on Georg von Schönerer, List, Liebenfels, Otto Weininger, and Arthur Trebitsch, in order to “show this other face” of fin-de-siècle Vienna, the

face that had an impact on the young Adolf Hitler (pp. 9-10).

In the first chapter, Gerö examines general European trends of secularization, mass politics, and nationalism, which he suggests led to new interpretations and a search for identities: Social Darwinism, which defined the world according to race; misogyny, which defined the world according to gender; and the Second International, which defined the world according to class. In chapter 2, Gerö presents his interpretation of Austrian German nationalism, which challenges some previous assumptions about the nature of Austrian racism. He suggests that the identity struggle of Austrian Germans was problematic particularly after the unification of Germany as they were excluded from a German political identity. This resulted in the emergence of three political mass movements: the Christian Social Party, the German Nationalist (Pan-German) Party, and the Social Democratic Party. Despite their different orientations to the Catholic Church and to the monarchy, the Christian Social and Pan-German parties shared a racist orientation that targeted Czechs, Hungarians, and Jews.

Chapter 3 focuses on the nationalist and racial theories of pan-German leader Schönerer and occultist List. Gerö provides a biographical sketch of each followed by a series of excerpts from their works. He suggests that the nationalist racist politics of Schönerer and the racist system of thought preached by List both emerged out of

the identity crisis of Germans in Austria. German Austrians were thus “ahead in the cult of race” (p. 36). This interpretation contrasts with the view that the multiethnic character of the Habsburg monarchy contributed to a more tolerant attitude toward Austrian Jews and other minority groups.

The Viennese Jewish philosopher most known for his self-hatred, Weininger, is the subject of chapter 4. Gerö discusses Weininger’s seminal work *Sex and Character* (1903), examining primarily his chapter on the “Jew,” arguing that this was a philosophical rather than a political work. He focuses on Weininger’s personality, offers a list of Weininger’s sayings against women, and presents excerpts from his text. He concludes that Weininger’s fusion of antifeminism and misogyny with Aryan racial theories was the most original approach to the German Austrian identity crisis. Although Weininger’s solution of renouncing sexuality is unrealistic, the content and ideas he promoted took hold and were repeated in later works by other authors.

Chapter 5 presents the “diffusion of Weininger” in two distinct directions in the works of Liebenfels

and Trebitsch. Liebenfels, the Austrian publicist who founded an extremely racist pamphlet, *Ostara*, in 1905 was influenced by Weininger’s racism and misogyny, but simplified his message. Trebitsch, a writer and philosopher who denied his Jewishness and became an extreme anti-Semite and German nationalist, applied Weininger’s ideas to literary interpretation.

In the afterword, Gerö restates his goal, to put the ideas of turn-of-the-century German Austria in their historical context. He also repeats his claim that these ideas have been “consistently omitted from the mapping of intellectual trends and memory cultures of the turn-of-the-century Monarchy” (p. 106). Again he seems unaware of previous works that link the stereotypes of Jews and of gender in Vienna. Gerö’s argument would also have benefited from a theoretical discussion that defined and clarified his uses of such terms as “antifeminism” and “misogyny.” Nevertheless, Gerö’s work is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the various manifestations resulting from the confluence of prejudices in the monarchy at the turn of the century and how they related to the crisis of Austrian German identity.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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**Citation:** Alison Rose. Review of Gerö, András, *Neither Woman Nor Jew: The Confluence of Prejudices in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the Turn of the Century*. HABSBUrg, H-Net Reviews. May, 2011.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32463>



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