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Stefan Plaggenborg. *Ordnung und Gewalt: Kemalismus - Faschismus - Sozialismus.* München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012. 433 S. ISBN 978-3-486-71272-8.

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S. Plaggenborg: Ordnung und Gewalt

There was a time in Europe, not too long ago, when dictatorship was considered modern. It seemed to offer an improvement over the apparently obsolete precepts of economic liberalism and parliamentary democracy. This is why many contemporaries of the 1920s and 1930s regarded the ideological differences between the dictatorships then proliferating across Europe as less striking than their commonalities. With an ease that offends the conceptual sensibilities of historians today, commentators speculated about the affinities between Bolshevism, Fascism, and National Socialism. Some extended their ideas to the New Deal; many, as Stefan Plaggenborg shows, readily included Kemalist Turkey.

Plaggenborg takes his cue from contemporary voices to motivate a historical comparison of three regimes not hitherto united in a monograph. Soviet Communism, Italian Fascism, and Turkish Kemalism were "alternative projects for shaping a better future after the cataclysms of World War I" (p. 33). The book discusses four main questions. What were the origins of the three regimes in World War One and the civil wars that followed it? How did the three regimes develop cults around their respective leaders? How did each regime deal with the religious traditions they inherited? But most importantly, which regime was the most violent, and why?

Going forward, Plaggenborg eagerly picks his fights. He is not fond of attempts to deduce the political content of the three regimes from their ideological pronouncements. But he also has a few things to say about the now-fashionable "praxeological " approach, which claims that what matters is not what Fascists thought but only what Fascists did. "Isn't that what Mussolini already said some eighty years ago"?, Plaggenborg asks wryly (p. 106). Plaggenborg is skeptical about the utility of Max Weber's concept of charismatic domination in describing the dynamic of dictatorship. Here his arguments are less convincing. Charisma, as Plaggenborg himself points out, describes a social and political relationship, not the qualities of an individual leader. But his proposed alternative - "chutzpah, not charisma" - simply returns to the assertiveness of hard-nosed individuals like Stalin, Mussolini, and the somewhat less boorish Kemal.

But Plaggenborg's core concern is the theme of political order and the violence it engenders - "Ordnung und Gewalt". His inquiry "lastly comes down to a single question: in terms of the annihilation of human life, are the three regimes similar?" (p. 32) In response to this question, an overarching thesis gains traction across Plaggenborg's chapters: set against its contemporaneous neighboring regimes, Kemalist Turkey absolved the process of authoritarian modernization with comparatively less violence, more realism, and greater overall success. In telling moments, Plaggenborg signals that he is prepared to call this "an immense historical achievement" (p. 11). Kemalism killed fewer people, engineered the repudiation of tradition more humanely, and emerged from the crucible of World War II with the ability to reform itself without renewed upheaval: while Mussolini's fall was the ineluctable consequence of military defeat, and Stalinism squandered the chance to reform itself after the victory of 1945, the Kemalists did the unthinkable: "they let themselves be voted out of office and transferred power to the opposition" (p. 352)

Plaggenborg spends considerable energy examining the reasons for Kemalism's relative success. He observes that Kemalists, while being committed secularizers, needed Islam as a cohesive ingredient in constructing a Turkish nation. The Bolsheviks in contrast needed no such reservations, which may go a long way towards explaining the more radical and more violent destruction of the Orthodox tradition in Russia. (Oddly, Plaggenborg does not mention the ambiguous Bolshevik policies towards the substantial number of Soviet Muslims in Central Asia and the Caucasus). In contrast to Bolshevism and Fascism, Kemalism was not a mass movement, but an elitist political project that remained aloof from the broad

population. Inadvertently, then, Kemalism avoided the seeping of violent and disaffected veterans into the political apparatus of the new regimes that both Italy and Russia experienced. Unlike Fascists and Bolshevists, Kemalists "had a sensibility for law and justice," Plaggenborg claims (p. 258). Never did they legally institutionalize violence; even during the 4-year state of emergency triggered by the Kurdish uprisings of 1925 a functioning court system persisted. Moreover, Kemalist Turkey kept to itself and refrained from "externalizing violence" as Fascist Italy did in waves of colonial mass murder in Northern Africa.

These are good observations. But Plaggenborg's conclusion is underwhelming: the difference in the scales of violence, he suggests, ultimately boils down to ethics. Kemal and his elite could have instituted a "bloody tyranny," Plaggenborg argues, "if they had wanted it." And yet they did not. "That is precisely the difference." (p. 263) In turn, Plaggenborg highlights the "ethical stance" (Sittlichkeitsauffassung, p. 280) of the Bolsheviks to explain how violence became the very social fiber of Stalinism. Indeed, when Plaggenborg sees it necessary to disparage the "intellectual obduracy, ideological pigheadedness, and human baseness" of Stalinism (p. 351), he seems to be fighting the very historiographical battles of the 20th century that he aspires to leave behind.

One obvious sphere of comparison is largely absent from the book: the economy. This is unfortunate not for reasons of comprehensiveness. Rather, since all three regimes aspired to modernize their countries with precepts that would supersede liberal capitalism, economic decisions seem to lie at the core of what kind of order the three regimes created. On the one hand, discussing the economy would have allowed Plaggenborg to point to actual cooperation between the regimes. The textile and aviation industry of the Kappadokian city of Kayzeri arose from a Soviet-Turkish joint venture during the 1930s. Fascist Italy, in turn, provided the Soviet Union with technical assistance in the tank and automobile industry. Rossiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki Moscow, Fond 7297, Opis' 38, Delo 129; Fond 7620, Opis' 1, Delo 701. On the other hand, the nexus between order and violence that concerns Plaggenborg is particularly clear in the way that the three regimes went about their economic modernization projects. After all, the staggering death tolls of agricultural collectivization dwarfed even the human cost of the Great Terror. The historical record suggests that uprooting precarious but usually workable systems of agricultural subsistence tends to result in millions of deaths. (The British Empire learned this decades before the Soviets. Mike Davis, Late Victorian Holocausts. El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World, London/New York 2001.) Kemal and his elite - consciously or not - refrained from meddling with the agricultural structure they inherited from the Ottoman Empire, even if that meant leaving untouched the power of a small elite of large landowners. Plaggenborg mentions this Kemalist "virtue of omission" only in passing. However, it was arguably the major reason why interwar Turkey avoided a humanitarian meltdown of the Soviet kind.

Perhaps thankfully, Plaggenborg stays away from branding his monograph in transnational terms. But from the perspective of transnational history, this is a highly welcome book. Not only does it firmly position Turkey on the mental map we ought to draw of 20th century Europe - a move most likely intended to counter Hans-Ulrich Wehler's notorious dismissal of Islam from the European heritage. See for example: Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Die Kluft zwischen den Kulturen, in: Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 4.10.2002. <http://www.ksta.de/kultur/die-kluft-zwischen-den-kulturen,15189520,14317728.html>, (21.11.2012). More importantly, "Ordnung und Gewalt" does what transnational history does best: it puts red question marks over the categories and concepts that historians have inherited from the obsessions of the 20th century. To name only one example: by sidestepping the obvious comparison between Nazism and Stalinism, Plaggenborg moves "beyond totalitarianism" more elegantly than a recent tome bearing that title. Michael Geyer /Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds.), Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared, Cambridge 2009. Plaggenborg demonstrates how to widen the perspective. Nazism and Stalinism then emerge as particularly violent exemplars of a political genre that gained high currency during the interwar years: the illiberal modernizing regime. This genre arguably encompassed not only Fascist Italy and Kemalist Turkey, but also, say, 1930s Japan or Vargas's Estado Novo. There's a research agenda here for polyglot emerging historians.

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