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Helena Flam, ed. *Pink, Purple, Green: Women's, Religious, Environmental, and Gay/Lesbian Movements in Central Europe Today.* Boulder and New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. 175 pp. \$27.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-88033-475-4.



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Four Issues in

Four Issues in "Central Europe Today"

Edited books usually present varied interpretations on one topic. Helena Flam's edited book is different for it examines four topics using limited perspectives. The first part of this edited volume contains three chapters on women's movements in "Central Europe today." Ingrid Miethe, a specialist in gender studies, and Anne Ulrich-Hampele, a researcher in German philology and social sciences, co-author their chapter "Preference for Informal Democracy—the East(ern) German Case." Steven Saxonberg, a political scientist, contributes a chapter entitled "In the Shadow of Amicable Gender Relations? The Czech Republic." Andrea Peto's interests in gender studies are reflected in the chapter "Continuity in Change: Hungarian Women's Organizations." From these three chapters we learn that while women's organizations are addressing wide-ranging issues, they have yet to make "gender equality" an item of priority. The Hungarian women's organizations remain "elitist" while those in eastern Germany are not part of mainstream reportage. Saxonberg, meanwhile, hopes that the European Union's policies on gender and human rights will introduce rad-

ical changes in the Czech Republic's women's organizations.

The second part of Flam's edited book contains two chapters authored by sociologists on the issue of "new religious movements" in contemporary "Central Europe." Klaus Hartmann argues in the chapter "Features of New Religious Movements in Eastern Germany" that the patterns of mobilization and religious consumption in eastern Germany have kept the religious market free but small. In Poland, the Roman Catholic Church remains strong, and Pawel Zalecki devotes his chapter, "Religious Revival in Poland: New Religious Movement and the Roman Catholic Church," to explaining the prospects and problems of the Light-Life Movement within Polish Catholicism.

Contemporary environmental movements in "Central Europe" constitute the third topic of this edited book. Dieter Rink, who received his highest degree in philosophy, explains that the environmental movement in eastern Germany has a "low public and political profile." On the other hand, environmental specialist Katy Pickvance informs us in another chapter that the green

groups in Hungary are “professional, innovative, and well-respected.” Petr Jehlicka and Edward Snajdr tell us about the increased visibility of a radical environmental movement that addresses problems beyond ecology in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively. Meanwhile, Piotr Glinski, a sociologist, highlights the multi-faceted problems in the Polish ecological movement, although the chapter’s focus on Poland itself is not self-evident from its title “The Ecological Movements as the Element of the Civil Society.”

The final part of this book focuses on the gay/lesbian movements in three chapters. Mihaly Riszovannij, a specialist in German philology and gender studies, examines homophobic sentiments in Hungary while Krzysztof Kliszczynski, a specialist on Polish minorities, explains how the Polish gay and lesbian movements feel marginalized and rejected. A sociologist examines this issue in eastern Germany, and we learn from Jochen Kleres’s “Cherries Blossoming in East(ern) Germany” that the problem here is compounded by the “general depolitization and commercialization of the gay subculture” (p.

143).

The book concludes with Flam’s “An Uncomfortable Conclusion.” In reviewing this book, I must say that not only is the conclusion uncomfortable, but so is the book in its entirety. Certainly, there is some value in reading the views expressed by the individual authors. However, most of the chapters are of but few pages in length, based largely on secondary research, and without substantive analysis. In this regard, the editor, a sociologist by profession, is honest in stating that the purpose of the book is to “present introductory information” on the four topics under consideration. Still, one would have expected well-integrated argumentation within chapters and, more importantly, thematic connections among the four larger topics. Unfortunately, because of the book’s hurried discussions of “civil society” and “mobilization,” as well as the equally quick identification of “Central Europe today” as “Eastern Europe before 1989,” one can find only the outlines of potentially significant narratives. Finally, the several grammatical inconsistencies and the small font of the text make reading this book less of a pleasure.

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