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Helga Schubert: Judasfrauen. Geschichten nach Akten

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ein Ermittlungsverfahren wegen Zoll- und Devisenvergehen einzuleiten und die "Bonner Stellen" darauf hinzuweisen seien, daß die Veröffentlichung im Piper-Verlag "ein unfreundlicher Akt gegen das Kulturabkommen DDR-BRD ist." Aufgrund seiner Popularität und seiner ständigen Medienpräsenz im Westen schlägt Kurt Hager vor, Rathenow nicht auszubürgern, weil das "weltweite Aufmerksamkeit einbringen" würde, sondern ihn nicht weiter zu beachten. Gleichzeitig sollte der im Stasiterminus mit "Zersetzungsmaßnahmen" bezeichnete Plan gegen seine Person intensiver umgesetzt werden. Lutz Rathenow vollführte mit seinen Texten einen gefährlichen Drahtseilakt, wenn er beispielsweise im *Schlachthofmonolog zwei* einen Menschen vorführte, der keine sichere Methode zum Selbstmord findet, sich deswegen zum Herrscher bestimmt, sein Volk verspeist und immer neuen Terror ersinnt, um wenigstens einen zum Attentat zu bewegen. Aber die Menge applaudiert und katzbuckelt nur um so eifriger, weshalb der Tyrann letztlich auf die Idee verfällt, einen "rettenden Krieg" vorzubereiten, um das Land und sich zu vernichten.

Dieses Buch enthält mehr als nur das Interessantschreiben des Lebens in einem langweiligen, ereignislosen Land, wie es der Klappentext benennt. Die Wirkung der für Rathenow selbst nicht ungefährlichen Gedankenspiele auf die bis zu 500 Zuhörer bei kirchlichen Lesungen ist im Einzelfall schwer nachvollziehbar. Mit Sicherheit hatten sie befreiende Aspekte. Gleichzeitig lag im Hinwegschreiben der DDR-Ordnung für die staatlichen Literaturverwalter etwas Irritierendes und Provokatives.

Es verunsicherte sie, wenn er in *Konstruktive Vorschläge* zum Schutz der "Länder und schützenswerten Einrichtungen ... das Aufstellen von Lachposten" vorschlägt, alle Generäle einsammeln will, um sie "zur Pyramide des Friedens" zu stapeln und die Regierungen, Polizei und Armeen der Länder regelmäßig auszuwechseln gedenkt - natürlich nie en bloc, um Komplikationen zu vermeiden. Oder wenn er in *Die sechzehnte Eingabe* erklärt: "Wie Sie wissen, begrüße ich das geplante Thälmannendenkmal heftig. Der real existierende Sozialismus muß sich Denkmäler setzen, damit man nach seiner Zeit an ihn denkt."

Diesen Anspruch hat Lutz Rathenow mit seinem satirischen DDR-Nachlaß im Maulwurf-Verlag jetzt auf seine Weise erfüllt. Er spendet der Ordnung, die über ihre eigenen Dogmen stolperte, ein kurzweiliges und nachlesenswertes Denkmal.

Udo Scheer

Helga Schubert. *Judasfrauen. Geschichten nach Akten*. Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1990. 180 pages.

Like Helga Schubert's previous publications, such as *Das Verbotene Zimmer*, *Judasfrauen* asks more questions than it answers about the inextricable relationship between gender and power under German fascism. Framing her study within the twelve years of the Third Reich, Schubert investigates why women, in particular, informed on husbands, relatives, friends, neighbors and strangers to the Gestapo, thus sending many of them to their death by execution. In addition to ten case studies of women who denounced others, *Judasfrauen* includes Schubert's detailed description of the ideological and material obstacles (such as the Berlin Wall) she faced during four years of research in archives and libraries, and a sketch that explores the differences between "Spitzel und Verräter." The case studies appear as montages of excerpted documentation from actual court proceedings, letters, records, newspaper reports and interviews involving female informers during the Third Reich who were brought to trial after the war for their complicity in providing information to the Gestapo in return for money, recognition, small favors or, in many cases, personal gain. In her afterword, Schubert stresses her interest in learning more about the motives behind the denunciations. She does not intend to condemn the female informers and even feels some empathy towards some of them. Instead she criticizes a long-standing mythology that associates women with victims, thus relegating them to the position of the oppressed, but also overlooking the destructive agency allotted to some under a dictatorship whose ideology and policies made it possible for men and women to use the power of the state to solve their personal problems or to carry out personal vendettas. Schubert sees the female informers as victims of the Nazi dictatorship. They could not resist the temptation to betray someone else's trust for personal gain. Without having to directly face the consequences of their denunciations, the women often denied their guilt after the war, while others insisted upon the call of duty.

In a slightly expanded version of *Judasfrauen* that appeared in 1990 in Luchterhand and which bears the subtitle *Zehn Fallgeschichten weiblicher Denunziation im Dritten Reich*, Schubert cites the sources for each study. For example, "Das Vierte Kind" is taken in part from the original protocol of the trial at the "Volksgerichtshof" during the Nazi period, in which a pregnant informant's doctor was sentenced to death based on his patient's detailed

description of his critical comments regarding the war and the inevitable defeat of the Nazis by the Allies. In addition to repeating the information she gleans from court proceedings and personal accounts by witnesses, Schubert also rewrites the documentation into first-person narratives that represent the different perspectives of both the victims and the informers. Schubert's own voice can be heard in the fictionalized monologues of both victims and perpetrators that she extracted from the trial transcripts of proceedings against the female informers after the war. The transcripts are collected in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, edited by Prof. Rüter and published by the "Van Hamel" Institute of Criminal Law, University of Amsterdam. Schubert documents the voices of perpetrators, victims and other witnesses in detail, while, at the same time, giving accounts of the deteriorating situation of the war in its last years. By juxtaposing statistics and circumstances of the increased number of executions and denuncements, especially after the failed attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944, Schubert conveys a deep sadness and anger about the tragic senselessness of the "political" executions of the victims of the female denouncers. Although she does not reveal the names of most of the victims or informers, the severe consequences of the informants' actions is exemplified in the case of the pianist Karlrobert Kreiten, who was denounced in 1943 by a family friend for criticizing Hitler and the war. Like others who were beheaded or hung because of remarks made in the presence of people they trusted, Kreiten's innocent carelessness cost him his life. His family's attempts to appeal the verdict were thwarted and he was executed while they were still under the assumption that their appeal might save his life. The responsibility of Kreiten's death and that of countless others, rests, above all, in the hands of the women who filed complaints with officials, some of whom refused to pass the complaints on to their superiors because they recognized the personal motives behind the accusations.

Schubert presents a sensitive and direct illustration of the motives and circumstances behind many of the informants' acts. The structure of betrayal might resemble that of the biblical Judas or Delilah, but the historical context of Nazi Germany places the actions of these women within the context of their own sense of powerlessness or frustration with their own limited sphere of action. Schubert's collection is an important contribution to a growing body of literature that addresses the inadequacy of a simple rhetorical dichotomy between victimizer and

victim that does not acknowledge the specific historical context that shapes or limits the decisions made by individuals who find themselves in the position of one or the other. Historians, such as Claudia Koonz, have researched the role of women under the Nazis and other feminist scholars are exploring the psyche and self-identity of women whose actions contributed to the terror and atrocities of the Third Reich. Given the fact that more women denounced their fellow citizens than men, scholars are beginning to take a closer look at the complex constellation of empowerment under a regime that allowed women little space for agency. Schubert shows that we cannot fully understand the mechanisms of power and betrayal without listening to the testimony of the perpetrators and the collaborators as we have been listening to the stories of the victims. Although Schubert is careful not to draw direct parallels between the Third Reich and the former GDR, she does suggest that repressive structures bring about similar phenomena. Seen within light of the recent purges of former Stasi informers and the zeal with which government officials and citizens are calling for the prosecution of the Stasi informers, Schubert's book does not forgive the informers as much as it asks us to look at the circumstances that brought about their complicity.

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