

and encouragement and affirms that one need not exclude the other.

The program's aim of facilitating the process of university study for women involves a re-configuring of the traditional places of higher learning. Through the Bridging classes, the ivory tower becomes accessible in the community spaces of suburban malls, public libraries, company offices where what counts is the gathering of eager minds to read, think, discuss, and communicate ideas.

Since together the individual contributions affirm the importance of shared activity in helping to realize educational goals and dreams, it would somehow be against the spirit of this volume to single out any one individual contribution for specific comment. A thoughtful addition to this collection is that each contribution is accompanied by the author's photograph. In this celebratory record of the bridging program's twenty-fifth anniversary, as in the program itself, no one remains faceless.

Mothers of the Nation: Women, Families, and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Europe

Patrizia Albanese.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Reviewed by Layne Parish Craig

In *Mothers of the Nation: Women, Families, and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Europe*, sociologist Patrizia Albanese provides an empirical study of the relationship between states' adoption of nationalist ideals and women's roles in such nations. As she writes in her introduction, "This book ... tests whether nationalism intends to modernize or archaize gender and family relations." Albanese's "test" is as rigorous and well-defined as such a project can be, and its potential contribution to work on the material relationship between "the personal and the political" is provocative.

Albanese's project examines the real-life effects of policies regulating women and families in nationalist and non-nationalist states at two points in history: between World War I and World War II and Post-1989. For each time period, she examines two nationalist states (Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy for the Interwar period and Post-Soviet Russia and Independent Croatia for Post-1989) and two non-nationalist states (Revolutionary Russia and Yugoslavia for the Interwar period and Post-reunification Germany and Contemporary Italy for Post-1989). Each of the text's chapters focuses on one of these governmental bodies, outlining its history, demography, and policies pertaining to women and families, then offering statistical information about women's

actual experiences. Albanese's articulation of her hypothesis and method can appear specious, as when she poses the question, "Did inclusion, equality, and political autonomy characterize [women's] place in the nationalist agenda?" Early in the text, most readers might anticipate a negative response to such a question. However, Albanese's careful definition of terms and defense of her methodology lend credence to her project, despite her seemingly foregone conclusions.

The most interesting and convincing parts of *Mothers of the Nation* are Albanese's detailed descriptions of nationalist policies promoting nuclear families and population growth. Hers is a comprehensive perspective that analyzes examples from Nazi Germany's "marriage loans," which were forgiven when a couple had four children, to Croatia's removal of abortion from state health insurance plans. She then reviews "Nationalist 'Successes' and Failures," using demographic information to determine the effects these measures had on such figures as birth rates, divorce rates, and numbers of abortions. Albanese's meticulous descriptions elucidate the chilling implications of common trends in nationalist rhetoric and policy, such as advocacy against women's public roles and the ideological and sometimes monetary value placed on the reproduction of "ethnically clean" citizens.

Non-nationalist states are included in the study to demonstrate that nationalist governments were not simply following broader historical trends. However, Albanese's descriptions of women's ongoing struggles in these non-nationalist states sometimes make their inclusion distracting. In her chapter on Yugoslavia she explains, "while under Italy's and Germany's nationalist regimes women were a central focus of the nation-state, in multinational Yugoslavia women were virtually ignored by the state." Such explicit comparisons between nationalist and non-nationalist examples would be helpful throughout the book.

Albanese diagnoses nationalist regimes as inherently opposed to the modernization of women's political and social lives. She emphasizes her finding that the ethnic and political "brotherhoods" extolled by nationalists have been extended to women only in narrowly defined ways, even if women had previously held prominent roles in a nation's public life. She ends by calling on Canadian readers to be watchful of the rise of nationalist discourse surrounding the issue of Quebec sovereignty. Such concrete applications of this empirical study exemplify the contribution of *Mothers of the Nation* to the fields of political theory and women's studies.