

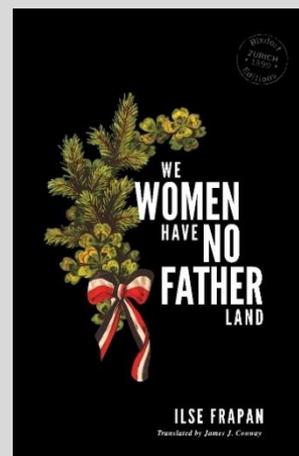
The first English publication of a visionary novel of female self-determination

WE WOMEN HAVE NO FATHERLAND by Ilse Frapan

On 12 November 1918, just days after the abdication of the Kaiser, German women gained the right to vote. Exactly one hundred years later comes the first English edition of a visionary novel that foresaw that very outcome. In *We Women Have no Fatherland*, Ilse Frapan draws on her own experience, reflecting a time when she joined other German women barred from their own country's universities and found an enlightened haven in Zurich. It is here that we meet law student Lilie Halmschlag, whose impassioned diary entries form much of the book. There is an authentic intensity to the emotional world of its protagonist, who records her ecstatic visions and dreams – including a pageant of women heading for the ballot box. Rejected by her father and her fatherland, brought low by poverty and solitude, Lilie arrives at the striking conclusion captured in the title. She abandons her studies and joins the proletariat, but never relinquishes her righteous rage: 'I have gone underground, but I have not gone under'. A radical departure from the author's previous work, Ilse Frapan's novel was a bold dispatch from a new realm of female self-determination.

German writer ILSE FRAPAN (1849-1908) turned to fiction in her thirties and experienced modest initial success with stories set in her native Hamburg. In 1892 she moved to Zurich to attend university, and here her life and work took a far more radical turn. Her most outspoken works addressed the new breed of female students as well as other outcasts, and she actively campaigned for women's and children's welfare. Relatively late in life Frapan embarked on an affair with an Armenian man twenty years her junior, and took up the cause of his country's sovereignty. But her most profound relationship was with artist Emma Mandelbaum, her partner of many years. Their fates were entwined until the end; discovering Frapan had incurable cancer, the women chose a suicide pact rather than life apart.

Described by the *TLS* as an 'exciting new list', RIXDORF EDITIONS is a Berlin-based press which is introducing forgotten German classics to a contemporary English-language readership, focusing on the Wilhelmine period (1890-1918), a time of unexpected daring and innovation. In addition to Frapan's novel it has published two fiction collections (Franziska zu Reventlow, Anna Croissant-Rust) and two works of literary non-fiction (Magnus Hirschfeld, August Endell).



Ilse Frapan

We Women Have no Fatherland

translated and with an afterword
by James J. Conway

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