

FOREWORD OF THE EDITORS

Modern wars do not limit themselves to the battlefields. Violence and shortages of resources also affect the interior, the home-front. This was true to an exceptional extent for the Second World War in Central and Eastern Europe, an area scarred by having been overpowered and seized multiple times and by the brutal occupations of German and Soviet aggressors. And then there were the inner-societal tensions and conflicts that followed, discharging themselves along ideological and ethnic lines. The war affected all generations, men, women, and children in especially drastic ways. Direct violence, being ruled by occupiers, and deportations affected men and women in and not in uniform; soldiers and civilians suffered from material and psychological hardship. Whole life-worlds were destroyed by the daily presence of war and the occupation regimes – often with long-lasting consequences.

At the front and on the home-front stood women and men whose experiences were gender-specific. Research about the occupations in Central and Eastern Europe have blotted out such everyday and gender historical questions for a long time, whereas fortunately in more recent times numerous research works have appeared and it has been our intention to gather them together. For this reason, a conference was held from the 31st March - 2nd April 2011 in the German Historical Institute in Warsaw with the topic of “Dynamization of Gender Roles in Wartime: World War II and its Aftermath in Eastern Europe”. At this gathering, female and male historians (but also representatives of other disciplines) from different countries presented their reflections on this aspect of a social history of the Second World War. We would like here to thank once again all the participants in the conference. Our thanks include the organizational support we received prior to the conference from the administrative office of the GHI, namely from Grażyna Ślepowrońska, Edyta Turek und Dorota Zielińska, and the interns before and during the conference, Oskar Świdorski und Mike Plitt. In a special way we would like to thank the chairs of the panels and the speakers. Also we would thank especially Professor Jane Caplan, from Oxford, who contributed through her stimulating concluding comments to the sharpening of our deliberations.

This volume is a collection of the contributions to the conference. We would like to thank Professor Eduard Mühle for accepting this volume in the series of the German Historical Institute – a series that has a long tradition especially with regard to gender historical issues. For the willingness of the authors to be open to a re-working of their texts and following along with our time plan, we would like to thank all of them most cordially. Isabella Osenberg was as an intern helping in the final formatting. A special thank-you is due for Dr. Philip Jacobs who edited the texts as a native speaker with regard to grammar and style (while still allowing the voice of the authors to be heard), and he translated certain contributions.