MAREN RÖGER / RUTH LEISEROWITZ

INTRODUCTION

GENDER AND WORLD WAR II IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Did the war and post-war twisting lead to a deformed double helix?

In what has become a classic attempt to explore the interdependencies between war and gender roles, Margaret Randolph Higonnet and Patrice Higonnet introduced the image of a *double helix*. In geometry, a double helix is a winding spiral of two strands, but Higonnet and Higonnet used this metaphor to explain how the changing roles of women and men in the two World Wars of the last century did not automatically cause trouble for established gender relations. Although women were forced to fulfill functions that previously had been in the male domain, the distance to the male roles (which were also changing) remained. The World Wars, then, in a very specific and paradoxical way, led at one and the same time to both progress and stability in gender roles.[1]

The model Higonnet and Higonnet have offered is often referred to for explaining in general terms the dynamics of gender roles in the two World Wars. As a model, it is schematic. But does the metaphor still work despite the lack of any differentiation with regard to differing regions and time periods? Because of specific war and post-war experiences and policies, one could conceivably hypothesize that the metaphor of the double helix does not fit for Central and Eastern Europe during World War II and its aftermath.

Our thesis is rather: Even during the course of the war in Central and Eastern Europe, experiences, self-awareness, and roles were changed by the extreme situations, such that the helix was temporarily and uniquely

[1] See Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', in Margaret R. Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 31-47, here 34-35.

deformed. In the time period following the establishment of the new Soviet and People's Republics (as a result of the war), the specific gender policies led to a continuation of these deformations.

From our perspective, Central and Eastern Europe is not simply a geographical category, but rather has substantive content in the sense that as far as gendered experiences and gender roles are concerned, there were clear differences with the West both during and after the war.[2] The Second World War distinguished itself through its great brutality. The aggressive policies of Germany forced almost all European countries into a war that soon extended itself worldwide, leading to an unbelievable loss of human life. Among the fallen were more than twenty million male and female soldiers, and yet thirty million civilians died as well.[3] Millions of people were forced to work as slave laborers, losing control over their bodies as well as family members and their homes through both the war and the post-war deportations. This war completely blurred the division between the frontline and the interior, although this development started in World War I.

The Central and East European theaters in World War II were notable in one sense for their brutality. This region, in fact, was in many ways quite distinct from the other theatres of war in Europe. Most Central and East European countries experienced not one, but in fact two occupying forces during the war, being either occupied by NS-Germany and the Soviet Union, or being occupied by Germany and then 'liberated' by the Soviet Union with the effect of becoming part of the socialist bloc in the Cold War. Furthermore, Central and Eastern Europe was the staging ground for the mass extermination of European Jews, and was the place where non-Jewish civilians were exposed to mass atrocities and deporta-

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[2] Claudia Kraft pointed out in 2008 that there were more intense efforts made in the 2000s to recount European history without going along an East-West dichotomy. See Claudia Kraft, 'Geschlecht als Kategorie zur Erforschung der Geschichte des Staatssozialismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Zur Einführung', in Claudia Kraft, ed., *Geschlechterbeziehungen in Ostmitteleuropa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Soziale Praxis und Konstruktionen von Gechlechterbildern* [*Gender as a Category for Researching the History of State Socialism in Middle and Eastern Europe. An Introduction, in Gender Relations in Eastern Middle Europe After the Second World War: Social Practice and Construction of Gender Images*] (München: Oldenbourg, 2008), 1–21, here 3. Thereafter Kraft, 'Geschlecht'. Among the empirically based studies (in which however the category of gender plays a subordinate role), are: Tony Judt, *Postwar: A history of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006). Thereafter Judt, *Postwar*. Concerning the conceptual considerations, see Ulrich Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity. Reflections on a Theory of the 20th Century', *Journal of Modern European History*, 5, 1 (2007), 5-20.

[3] The discussion about numbers is still not finished. For this reason, we decided to give only approximate numbers.

tions. The policies of the occupiers to a large extent ignored the sex of the civilians. This was especially true in the extermination of European Jewry. In this case, the Germans aimed at a group defined by racist categories, regardless of their age, sex, or class affiliation. Yet the instruments of terror used against gentiles (mass killings, deportations, etc.) also affected both sexes. Among the deported slave laborers from the Soviet Union in 1944, 51% were women.[4] The percentage of Slovakian and Polish women was also comparatively high (44% and 34% respectively).[5] While so many men and women fell victim to the occupiers' policies, there were also men *and* women who participated in the struggle against the invasion. The number of women engaged in the armies and partisan movements reflects the high level of internal mobilization. During the war, women in Central and Eastern Europe also came much more clearly into focus than those in the West because of their resistance to the occupiers' repressive measures.

The gender historical dimension of the Second World War in Central and Eastern Europe up to now has often come up short in research. As Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur have stated in their important volume (one of the first transnational attempts at a gendered war history in Eastern Europe):

> "Given the enormous English-language literature on the two world wars, it is perhaps surprising how small the share of studies on Eastern Europe is. Moreover, the literature of the world wars in Eastern Europe has heretofore focused almost exclusively on traditional military-diplomatic questions. Only recently have historians of the region turned their attention to cultural and social aspects of war, and gender analysis has remained marginal in this new trend."[6]

While numerous studies have explored the occupation policies and also the effects of the occupying regimes on the respective societies,[7] the impact of

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[4] See Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany Under the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The quotation here is from the original German edition: Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des "Ausländer-Einsatzes" in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches*, 2nd edn (Berlin: Dietz, 1986), 271. Thereafter Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*.

[5] See Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*, 272.

[6] Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, 'Introduction: Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe', in Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, eds., *Gender and War in twentieth-century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1-20, here 2. Thereafter Wingfield and Bucur, 'Introduction Gender'.

[7] See for Poland e. g. Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society Under German Occupation: The General Gouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Waclaw Długoborski, 'Die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Veränderungen der sozialen Struktur Polens 1939-1945', in Waclaw Dlugoborski, ed., *Zweiter Weltkrieg und sozialer Wandel: Achsenmächte und besetzte Länder* [*German Occupation Policies and the Changes to the*

World War II on gender relations and gender roles in Central and Eastern Europe has generally been treated as a rather marginal issue.

These studies are unsatisfactory because they tend to overlook how the *homo socius* (Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann) acted in many of his/her social roles as they were profoundly affected by the war.[8] The reality of war, with its deaths, separation from partners and families, and deportations clearly influenced relationships, one's performance as a father or mother of a family, or as a partner, etc.[9] Social groupings in the village or in the city neighborhoods fell apart as well. The extreme situation of the war also influenced the values and norms, which are themselves always gendered and which were in many cases deeply shaken during the war.

The neglect in previous efforts is unacceptable for a second reason: the Second World War, with regard to gender roles, put in motion in Central and Eastern Europe a development which found a continuation after 1945. We argue that in the post-war history of this region, this deformed helix did not untwist and return to form, but stayed deformed for a while. First of all, the consequences of the racial and political persecution that was carried out in Eastern Europe with unbelievable brutality were much more dramatic. What comes to mind first are the demographic consequences, for which there is no comparison in the West. There were 20 million more women than men in the Soviet Union after the war – an imbalance that would take longer than a generation to correct.[10] Secondly, due to ideological, economic, and political necessities, women in the Soviet sphere of influence were not sent back into a role of secondary importance, but rather integrated.

It is here that one can see a further significant difference to Western Europe, where the lack of a work force was offset through the recruitment of migrants. In the East the individual states did not capitalize on the female population only after the war, but instead they drew on the vast mobilization of the female population that had taken place during the war. Altered gender roles during the war were not dispensed with in order to be changed yet again by the Soviet system, but instead they were carried over into the post-war society. In general awareness, the role of politicized and fighting women was present as never before, which is why in general there

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Social Structure of Poland 1939-1945] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 303-63.

[8] See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, reprint (New York: Anchor Books, 1990). Thereafter Berger and Luckmann, *Construction*.

[9] See Berger and Luckmann, *Construction*.

[10] Judt, *Postwar*, 3.

was little social resistance to the new role for women. The number of men following traditional role behavior was few for demographic reasons, but such behavior was nevertheless still partially valid as a preferred model. A direct demographic consequence of the war is captured in the term "youthification" (Tony Judt) and this reality had a significant relevance for the gender roles after 1945.

It is an established fact that a targeted promotion of women was introduced and women were deemed as equal, however not treated as equal political subjects, because differences and forms of discrimination remained. In the Soviet and People's Republics these had different gradations.[11] Through integration in many areas, women were indeed much more actively present in the society; there were, therefore, fewer spheres that were divided by gender. Having said that, later on new gender domains did develop. For example, the groups in typically female professions remained far below the pay level of the traditional male jobs. What increasingly came to be was a greater discrepancy, since women formally fulfilled many duties, but nevertheless were not equal. Below the declared tier, a high measure of social discrimination was taking place. The position of men could only be protected by massive governmental backing.

Among these contradictory policies one finds a disregard of certain female and male accomplishments during the war. Only a behavior during the war that conformed to a Soviet norm was built up into a role model. In the case of other behavior, for example, participation in the 'false' underground movement, layers of taboos were imposed upon it. Up until the breakdown of the Eastern bloc, the men and women who had been important agents in wartime, e.g., in partisan movements or para-governmental armies, these people were politically instrumentalized after 1945 or excluded from public commemoration, depending on the political aspirations of the communist leaders.[12] Further, the memories of those who fought in wartime became highly standardized and attempts were made to keep politically unwanted aspects out of public discourse. This was also true for many civilians' experiences in Central and Eastern Europe. A history from below never really developed in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. It was only in the 1980s that some tendencies toward social liberalization were observed.

Thirdly, values – within which there are always gender specific components immanently present – were permanently shaken during the war.

[11] See Kraft, 'Geschlecht', and the chapters in the respective volume for bibliographical remarks.

[12] For differences in commemoration politics see Wingfield and Bucur, 'Introduction Gender', 4.

Occupation meant a confrontation with differing values and a confusion of existing values. The obvious decriminalization of murder, plundering, harassment, etc. for the occupiers influenced the suppressed societies. Wartime profiteers who adapted to the new codes emerged in all of the occupied countries. Unfortunately, we do not have many written or oral memories from them. Also for this reason, there has been little discussion about the specific dimensions of moral brutalization during the wartime beyond a general statement that one can recognize it. The émigré Polish author Czesław Miłosz emphasized this quite early on in his influential work "Captive Mind" published in 1953.[13]

Post-war twisting II: Why have questions about the gender history dimension of the Second World War in Central and Eastern Europe largely failed to appear?

The study of occupation policies and the occupying regimes themselves have been numerous, yet what has remained on the margins is the impact of the Second World War on gender relations and gender roles in Central and Eastern Europe. Gender as one crucial category of a social history has seldom been applied to this subject. Not only has the gender history regarding Eastern Europe not given attention to this period, the general historiography of World War II has not attended to questions of gender in research about the Eastern European theatre of World War II. Many volumes with a gender history approach stop at 1939 and restart in 1945.

This has been to a degree true for the diverse publications and conferences of the German Historical Institute Warsaw which have examined the gender history of Central and Eastern Europe,[14] a tradition in which our volume generally stands, based as it is on a conference held at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw in 2011. This is also true for Eastern Euro-

[13] Czesław Milosz, *Captive mind* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

[14] See Johanna Gehmacher, Elizabeth Harvey, and Sophie Kemlein, eds., *Zwischen Kriegen: Nationen, Nationalismen und Geschlechterverhältnisse in Mittel- und Osteuropa 1918-1939* [*Between the Wars: Nations, Nationalism, and Gender Relations in Middle and Eastern Europe 1918-1939*] (Osnabrück: fibre, 2004). Thereafter Gehmacher, Harvey, and Kemlein, *Zwischen Kriegen*. The anthology by Claudia Kraft, also a former research fellow of GHI Warsaw, focused on "Gender relations in Eastern Europe after the Second World War". It was based on a conference not held at the GHI, but Kraft herself puts it in any case in a line with the GHI-Gender history. See Kraft, 'Geschlecht', 6.

pean conferences about gender history – as in Riga 2008[15] or Moscow 2009[16]. They did not discuss gender and World War II.

There are multiple reasons why World War II in Central and Eastern Europe is still seldom discussed with regard to gender relations and gender roles. Without trying to have a homogenized view of this region, comprised as it is of countries with different historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds, we see different common factors for this slowness. Firstly, we identify the need in many of the different societies, after 1990, to tell their stories of World War II in a specific way. After decades of revisionist or sometimes faked public history with its restraints on remembering specific events (for example, the national underground movements), the master narratives of the wartime have had to be re-written. In many of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the new narratives written since 1989 have been aimed at telling a patriotic story, a story of a unified nation.[17] These stories have strong links and ties with the images and narratives of the pre-war history. Historiographical approaches, like cultural history or gender history, which focus on specific aspects of wartime, have been rarely applied, especially in the smaller countries. Connected with this is the still slow reception of the approaches of gender history in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the field of war history, though one can see progress in recent years.[18]

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[15] Irina Novikova, ed., *Gender matters in the Baltics* (Rīga: Latvijas Universitate Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2008).

[16] Natalia Pushkareva, Muravyeva, Marianna, and Novikova, Natalia, eds., *Zhenskaja i gendernaja istorija Otechestva: novye problemy i perspektivy* [*Women and Gender History in the Fatherland: New Problems and Perspectives*] (Moskva: IAE RAN, 2009).

[17] See for an overview about historiography after 1989 Sorin Antohi, Peter Apor, and Balazs Trencsenyi, eds., *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-communist Eastern Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007).

[18] See for the state-of-the-art in 2004 Andrea Pető, 'Writing Women's History in Eastern Europe: Toward a "Terra Cognita"?', *Journal of Women's History*, 16, 4 (2004), 173-181. Thereafter Pető,'"Terra"'. From 2003, but in German language, see Carmen Scheide and Natali Stegmann, 'Themen und Methoden der Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte' ['Topics and Approachs of Gender and Women History'], in *Digitales Handbuch zur Geschichte und Kultur Russlands und Osteuropas* [*Digital Handbook for the History and Culture of Russia and Eastern Europe*], 2003, available at http://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/578/1/scheidestegmann-frauengeschichte.pdf (last visited 22 February 2011). There one also finds additional references to literature about the determination of the position. See also Dietlind Hüchtker, 'Zweierlei Rückständigkeit? Geschlechtergeschichte und Geschichte Osteuropas' ['Two-folded backwardness? Gender History and the History of Eastern Europe'], *Osteuropa*, 58, 3 (2008), 141-44. Concerning individual countries, see Andrea Pető and Judith Szapor, 'The State of Women's and Gender History in Eastern Europe. The Case of Hungary', *Journal of Women's History*, 19, 1 (2007), 160-66. Mał-

Secondly, this delayed application of gender history approaches to Central and Eastern Europe has been accompanied by a reluctance to recognize memoirs, oral-history, and other forms of individual sources that are often the basis for the analysis of gender roles, mentalities, gendered values, etc. In many Central and Eastern European countries, the communist governments organized contests for individual memoirs about the wartime or the aftermath of the war, but the outcomes were always instrumentalized to serve the state's need according to the official historical policies. As a result, individual sources had been suspect for a long time. Only recently have changes started, and in some of the countries the history of everyday life under communism is booming.[19] Furthermore, the creation of more sources from women through oral-history interviews has just started in the last decade.

Lying crosswise to these findings are the research results about the extermination of European Jewry, since it was Poland that the Germans chose as its primary venue. After the groundbreaking works of Joan Ringelheim, Lenore Weitzmann and Dalia Ofer, the category of gender has been addressed in more and more English-language investigations about the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, even though some scholars have refused to introduce the category of gender in order to avoid splitting up the victims who had been persecuted for specifically racial reasons.[20] As it is, during the last twenty years information has become available on the importance of the category of gender in understanding the mechanisms of discrimination inside and outside the ghettos and camps as well as in the processes of remembrance.

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gorzata Fidelis, 'Diverse Voices: Women and Gender in Recent Polish History and Historiography', *Aspasia*, 3 (2009), 233-44.

[19] Compare regarding informal economy e. g. Włodzimierz Borodziej, Jerzy Kochanowski, Joachim von Puttkamer, eds., 'Special Issue: Hidden Paths Within Socialism', *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 2 (2010). For Poland see e. g. Barbara Klich-Kluczewska, *Przez dziurkę od klucza: Życie prywatne w Krakowie (1945-1989)* [*Through the Keyhole. Private Life in Kraków (1945-1989)*] (Warszawa: Trio, 2005). The book was published in a series of books dealing with every-day-history.

[20] A summary of these arguments can be found in Dagmar Herzog, 'Introduction', in Dagmar Herzog, ed., *Lessons and Legacies VII: The Holocaust in International Perspective* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006). See also Joan Ringelheim, *Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research*, in Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 373-418.

(Dis-)Continuities: World War I – Inter-war Period – Post-war Period

Gender history research regarding Central and Eastern Europe has in most cases held to the traditional political stopping and starting points of 1939 and 1945. This happened for the memory-cultural reasons mentioned above, as well as on account of the research logic of specialization and the pragmatic decisions within a research field. What is commonly in short supply are studies of the continuities and discontinuities of societal developments that consider the extreme situation of war in a larger context. There have been studies about the Third Reich and its aftermath by researchers like Elizabeth Heineman or Dagmar Herzog, who have shown us the wide acceptance of premarital sex in the course of NS-Germany,[21] yet we know little about these questions in the Central and Eastern European countries. Among others, Heineman and Herzog argue that in regard to a history of morality and sexuality, a parallelism of political and moral breaks should be doubted – an important argument we think. Far too little research has been done regarding changing moral values in relation to sexuality. Furthermore, if we ask about specific female experiences (like the acceptance of abortion in the pre-war period, in wartime, and the continuities or discontinuities in the aftermath of the war), we have answers on hand for only a few Eastern European countries.

Research has focused rather on the two World Wars. Diverse studies have conclusively shown that World War I confused dominant gender roles: Having to replace the men who were fighting, more women than ever became the bread-winners for their families by working outside the home, e.g., in factories.[22] In addition, women worked behind the fronts as nurses or auxiliaries, some of them becoming the stuff of legend.[23] At a more general level, World War I blurred the distinction between the front and the interior so completely that since then the latter has often been

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[21] See Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[22] See e.g. for Great Britain Penny Summerfield, 'Gender and War in the Twentieth Century', *The International History Review*, 19, 1 (1997), 2-15; Gail Braybon, and Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in two World Wars* (London: Pandora, 1987).

[23] See Karen Hagemann, 'Heimat - Front: Militär, Gewalt und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Zeitalter der Weltkriege', in Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, eds., *Heimat-Front: Militär und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Zeitalter der Weltkriege* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2002), 12-52, here 22. The book was also published in English: Karen Hagemann, and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, eds., *Home/front: The Military, War, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002).

referred to as the 'home front', meaning that the war with its hardships affected not only the male fighters. As a result, World War I is extremely important when discussing changes in the gender roles in World War II. For this reason, many contributions in the field of war-studies from a gender point of view have chosen to take an integrated perspective on both World Wars.[24] In one of the few English language publications on this topic in Eastern Europe, Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur chose to use an integrated approach.[25] When speaking about a gendered history in Central and Eastern Europe, the state of research regarding gender and World War I differs from country to country. For some of the countries concerned, we have to remember and recognize the importance of the national movements in the processes of the foundations of the national states, something which overshadowed the women's rights movements. For example, the essays in the books of Sophia Kemlein et al. clearly show this.[26]

Aims and Limitations of this Volume

One of the aims of our volume is to provide insights into the field of gender and war studies with regard to different Central European countries. These have been provided by researchers at research institutions in the various countries, by researchers with an academic or cultural background in the region of their research who have emigrated from that area, and by researchers from the international community. Unfortunately, the researchers' knowledge of the literature is normally limited by his/her knowledge of languages, so the intention of this volume is to provide an insight into academic research and discussions on World War II from a gender perspective in the respective countries.

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[24] Especially regarding German history this became quite popular. See beyond the mentioned e. g. Birthe Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen: Familienpolitik und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* [*Wives of Soldiers: Family Policies and Gender Relations in the First and Second World War*] (Hamburg: Christians, 1995); Ute Daniel, 'Zweierlei Heimatfronten: Weibliche Kriegserfahrungen 1914 bis 1918 und 1939 bis 1945 im Kontrast' [Two Different Home Fronts: Women's War Experiences 1914 to 1918 in Contrast to 1939 to 1945], in Bruno Thoß and Hans-Erich Volkmann, eds., *Erster Weltkrieg – Zweiter Weltkrieg: Ein Vergleich. Krieg, Kriegserlebnis, Kriegserfahrung in Deutschland* [*First World War – Second World War: A Comparison. War, War Experience in Germany*], 2nd edn (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005), 391-409.

[25] See Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, eds., *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). Thereafter Wingfield and Bucur, *Gender War*.

[26] See Gehmacher, Harvey, and Kemlein, *Zwischen Kriegen*.

When trying to give an overview of the extensive topic of gender and World War II in Eastern Europe, one could arrange this according to different categories, for example, the state of research in the different countries or languages. But a severe imbalance is observable amongst the academic communities in the different countries. Although we are unfortunately not able to trace all native-language debates in Central and Eastern Europe, it seems that the most vivid discussions about gender and World War II in this region are published in English- or German-language anthologies. Other historiographies, among them the Polish, have until recently only marginally integrated questions of everyday life and gender relations with regard to World War II.[27] With regard to Russia in the last decade, primarily regional research has been done on women and their role in the 'Great Patriotic War', focusing mainly on peripheral regions.[28] Prior to that, most of the Russian writing merely contributed to a heroic narrative of the Soviet people in the war where the representation of men and women was rather stereotyped.

Whereas many of the articles collected here are research results being published for the first time, most of them are being published in English for the first time. Although all chapters deal with the question of gender

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[27] Pioneering: Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union During World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

[28] Yelena Aleksandrovna Bembeeva, 'Deyatel'nost' zhenshchin Kalmykii v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg' ['The Activities of Kalmykian Women in the Years of the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945'], Ph.D. thesis, Astrahhan State University, 2008, available at http://disszakaz.com/catalog/deyatelnost_zhenshchin_kalmikii_v_godi_velikoy_otechestvennoy_voyni_1941_1945_gg.html (last visited 1 August 2012); Aleksandra Aleksandrovna Vdovina, 'Patriotizm i obshchestvennopoliticheskaya deyatel'nost' zhenshchin Urala v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny' ['Patriotism and Sociopolitical Activities of the Women in the Ural during the Years of the Great Patriotic War'], Ph.D. thesis, Moscow University, 2005, available at http://www.dslib.net/istoria-otechestva/vdovina.html (last visited 1 August 2012); Natal'ya Nikolaevna Pozhidaeva, 'Zhenshchiny Kurskoy oblasti v Vooruzhennykh Silakh Sovetskogo Soyuza i v dobrovol'cheskikh voenizirovannykh formirovaniyakh v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945gg' ['The Women of Kursk Oblast' in the Soviet Armed Forces and in the Voluntary Paramilitary Units during the Years of the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945'], Ph.D. thesis, Kursk State University, 2007, available at http://disszakaz.com/catalog/zhenshchini_kurskoy_oblasti_v_vooruzhennih_silah_sovetskogo_soyuza_i_v_dobrovolcheskih_voenizirovann.html (last visited 1 August 2012); Chetav Saida Yerestemovna, 'Zhenshchiny Adygei transformatsiya sotsial'noy roli v gody radikal'nykh peremen i v ekstremal'nykh usloviyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 20-40- e gg XX v' ['The Transformation of the Social Role of the Adygian Women in the Years of Radical Changes and under Extreme Difficulties'], Ph.D. thesis, Maykop State Technical University, 2005, available at http://disszakaz.com/catalog/zhenshchini_adigei_transformatsiya _sotsialnoy_roli_v_godi_radikalnih_peremen_i_v_ekstremalnih_uslovi.html (last visited 1 August 2012).

and World War II and its aftermath, the pursuits are very different. They reflect not only individual understandings of gender history, but also academic cultures. In some cases, the texts reflect that some historiography is still working in 'national contexts', even to the point of having only limited access to international research literature. In some cases, authors limit themselves to women's history – often representing the beginnings of what today is gender history in the U.S. or Germany.[29]

Bucur and Wingfield identified in their book that such a focus on female participation in historical events is an important first step in making female experiences visible.[30] This is also true for our volume. But our authors have gone further, following an apt statement of Andrea Pető in her 2004 essay: Please, let us talk about gender, and not only speak about women.[31] In sum, this volume historicizes concepts of masculinity and femininity, analyzing the gendered role models of men *and* women in armies and partisan groups. It also turns away from a gender history that *exoticizes* women and sets men as the norm. Since gender history often brings into view the norms, values, and self-understandings of the actors, ego-documents given in the first person play a special role. As a result, many contributors work with autobiographical literature or oral history interviews. Yet traditional administrative records also have a part to play.

Of course, this volume will not be able to untwist the *deformed double helix* in all its dimensions. In the following, we will present – against the background of the current state of research – four thematic blocks for this anthology: 1.) Gender Rules: The power of ideologically and autobiographically gendered interpretive models, 2.) Gender Roles and Gendered Identities in Armies, 3.) Gender Roles and Gendered Identities in Partisan Movements, 4.) Post-War: (Dis-) Continuities and Memories. At this point we will present short discussions of our four themes, then the remaining part of the introduction will emphasize the two different concepts of gender history that are found in the chapters.

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[29] See for a resume of American and German developments Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, 'Comparing Historiographies and Academic Cultures in Germany and the United States through the Lens of Gender', in Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, eds., *Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 1-38.

[30] Wingfield, and Bucur, 'Introduction Gender', 4.

[31] See Pető, '"Terra"', 175.

Gender Rules: The Power of Ideologically and Autobiographically Gendered Interpretive Models

Until now, a book summarizing the gender history of World War II in Central and Eastern Europe has been almost an utopian hope. Up to this point, we have only had available some important pieces of a puzzle, each focusing on different regions and different aspects of men and women's roles, power structures, gendered identities, bodily concepts, representations and remembrance – just to name a few of the key concepts of gender history.[32] In the first section, the authors show (using various examples) the kinds of interpretive power that gendered explanatory approaches can generate. *Elizabeth Harvey* studies the resettlement process of the German minorities from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. With such relocations, the NS-leadership wanted to create ethnically pure territories. The goals and the process have heretofore been frequently described,[33] but now Harvey turns the attention to the gendered self-awareness of the actors and the ideologically driven accounts of the NS-media which was likewise founded on gender roles. The members of the resettlement commandos saw and staged themselves like a bunch of "wild freebooters and frontiersmen". Harvey notes their heroizing tales and colonial-style descriptions of meetings with the aliens. Here one finds points of contact with her groundbreaking 2003 study about German women sent to work in the occupied Polish territories and who enjoyed the empowerment given them by the racial categories.[34] For the re-settlers of both sexes, the National Socialist concept of comradeship played a crucial role. Franka Maubach comes to a similar conclusion in her chapter about female auxiliaries in the German army.

While Harvey can show how truly present gendered narratives can be found in how the settlers saw themselves and how this worked together reciprocally with the NS-propaganda, in another contribution *Mara Lazda* considers the female and male role models of the occupiers as ideological bait in Latvia. She investigates the publications of both the German and Soviet occupiers, which offered in newspapers their image of a social and gender order (reaching back into Latvian traditions). This was done not

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[32] Classic: Joan W. Scott, 'Gender. A Useful Category in Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91, 5 (1986), 1053-75. For the different concepts, see one of the more recent introductions, for example, by Sonya O. Rose, *What is Gender History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010).

[33] See the chapters in Wingfield and Bucur, *Gender War*.

[34] See Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

least of all to gain the cooperation of the Latvians. She further shows how the gendered public discourse influenced individual narratives about the war. Using oral-history interviews she traces the impact of the occupiers' gendered speech and concludes that Latvians "repeatedly use gendered frameworks to recall their wartime experiences." How new role models were established *during* the war and which kinds of visual material and narratives were instrumentalized to spread the ideas, are crucial questions, but we have so far only a few answers for far too few countries. Here we would like to mention Elena Baraban's work on the re-activization of the symbol of "Mother Russia" in Soviet cinema during World War II as well as Susan Corbesero's research on the symbolic configuration and reconfiguration of femininity and the female image in the Soviet poster propaganda.[35]

Andrea Pető identifies as well the influence of gendered interpretative patterns. While Harvey and Lazda's papers in this volume focus on autobiographical or public media narratives, Pető traces the severe consequences of gendered assumptions in post-war Hungarian collaboration trials.[36] Female perpetrators, members of the pro-fascist Arrow-Cross Party, were rarely found guilty. Especially when claiming that they had been under the influence of a male person, judges gave them more lenient sentences. The aim was a reconstruction of the pre-war gender order, but it was also based on political needs: Communist leaders did not want to admit that there had been another political party that had mobilized women on a mass scale. Pető further discusses the "conspiracy of silence" regarding Hungarian women raped by Soviet soldiers. She concludes that remembrance frameworks in both cases, for the perpetrators and the victims, are highly gendered and serve among others things the construction of "emotional communities".

Gender Roles and Gendered Identities in Armies

One of the large thematic blocks is gender conceptions and gender roles in the armies that either attacked Eastern European countries or defended

[35] See Elena Baraban, 'The Return of Mother Russia: Representations of Women in Soviet Wartime Cinema', *Aspasia*, 4, 1 (2010), 121-38; Susan Corbesero, 'Femininity (Con)scripted: Female Images in Soviet Wartime Poster Propaganda, 1941-1945', *Aspasia*, 4, 1 (2010), 103-20, here 118.

[36] See for a gender-sensitive history of postwar collaboration in Czechoslovakia Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution Against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

them. The historiography of the military, when it has integrated gender at all, has concentrated throughout the decades on women in the armies. German Historians Klaus Latzel, Franka Maubach and Silke Satjukow have argued in their reflection on female soldiers in a *longue durée* (from the Middle Ages to the present day) that the cross-dressing and arming of female fighters has always fascinated societies.[37] This is clearly reflected in an extensive historical literature about women in the some armies of World War II. Regarding the Red Army, there are academic studies describing the role of women in it.[38] But popular accounts also exist.[39] The fact that women served in the Red Army is widely known in many countries. In Germany, books of remembrance written by German soldiers often include stories of women in the Red Army, with their being mentioned merely as a tool for intermingling misogynistic and racist perspectives.[40]

Yet in fact, "German women auxiliary forces did not become the stuff of legend" as Elizabeth Heineman once put it.[41] Since the 2009 work by Franka Maubach, we finally have detailed information about the several hundred thousand female auxiliary forces in the German army.[42] In our

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[37] Klaus Latzel, Franka Maubach, and Silke Satjukow, 'Einleitung', in Klaus Latzel, Franka Maubach, and Silke Satjukow, eds., *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis heute* [*Female Soldiers: Violence and Gender during Wartime from the Middleages until nowadayas*] (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), 11-49.

[38] See the diverse articles quoted in Bucur and Wingfield, 'Introduction Gender', 19; Beate Fieseler, 'Women as Comrades-in-Arms: A Blind Spot in the History of the War', in Robert Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch, eds., *The People's War. The Soviet Union During World War II* (Urbana-Chicago: University of Illinois, 2000), 211-34; and most recently Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[39] One of the most influential is the interview book with Soviet women, among them former female fighters by Svetlana Aleksievich, first published in 1985 in Russian, and which has, up to now, been repeatedly reprinted and translated into other languages, among others in German, English, Finnish, Hungarian, and Polish. See Svetlana Alekseevich, *War's Unwomanly Face* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1988).

[40] See Regina Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen: Sexuelle Gewalttaten und intime Beziehungen deutscher Soldaten in der Sowjetunion, 1941-1945* [*Conquests: Sexual Acts of Violence and Intimate Relations of German Soldiers in the Soviet Union 1941-1945*] (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2010), 115-16. Thereafter Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*.

[41] See Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What difference does a husband make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 45.

[42] See Franka Maubach, *Die Stellung halten: Kriegserfahrungen und Lebensgeschichten von Wehrmachthelferinnen* [*Hold the Line: War Experiences and Life Stories of Female Auxilaries of the German Army*] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009). Gudrun Schwarz investigated in 1997 the role of the wives of SS-men and showed thereby the collaboration of both sexes in the war crimes (in the sense of psychosocial support on site). Compare Gudrun Schwarz, *Eine Frau an seiner Seite: Ehefrauen in der "SS-Sippen-*

volume *Maubach*, based on her monograph, discusses the specific dimension of women's service in the Eastern European theatre of war. Following Elizabeth Harvey's thesis about German kindergarten teachers and other women teachers in Warthegau, she argues that a number of the women enjoyed their superiority over the local men which the racist system provided them. Yet she also describes instances of discomfort with the return of traditional gender orders. Over and above that, Maubach discusses in general the possibilities and desiderata for a gender integrated research of the NS-occupation.

If the role of women in the Red Army has been at the center of interest, the gender roles of the men have been less scrutinized. Up to this point, there have been almost no attempts to examine the role and concept of men (as a gender category) in the Red Army during World War II. Karen Petrone, however, has shown in her interesting essay about "Masculinity and Heroism in Imperial and Soviet Military-Patriotic Cultures" that comradeship became a crucial concept in the bolshevist military propaganda in the period until 1939.[43] But a study similar to the one presented by Thomas Kühne in 2006 about the concept of comradeship in the German *Wehrmacht* in wartime is still lacking with regard to the Red Army.[44] It is this gap in the research to which *Kerstin Bischl*'s paper turns. Bischl underlines the paradox that women in the Red Army have been analyzed, but the gendered identity of men has not been studied although they clearly outnumbered the women and thereby dominated the social space in the army for any woman who also served. She traces the male solders' behavior towards their families, but also their female comrades using ego-documents. Parts of her paper are in an interesting way mirrored by *Irina Rebrova*'s paper that deals with the memories of Russian women regarding the war, among them women who had served in the Red Army.

The contributions from *Łukasz Kielban* und *Maren Röger* also address the issue of the male members of the army. Kielban deals with the (gendered) values in the Polish officer corps. Honor played a key role. Many Polish officers spent the war mainly in German captivity where they

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gemeinschaft" [*A Woman At His Side: Wives in the SS-Corps*] (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1997).

[43] See Karen Petrone, 'Masculinity and Heroism in Imperial and Soviet Military-Patriotic Cultures', in Barbara E. Clements, Rebecca Friedman and Dan Healey, *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 172-93.

[44] Compare Thomas Kühne, *Kameradschaft: Die Soldaten des nationalsozialistischen Krieges und das 20. Jahrhundert* [*Comraderie: The Soldiers of the National Socialist War and the 20th Century*] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). His ideas can be found in his English language work: Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

could not fight the enemy, but struggled with the psychological burden of living *in-waiting*. While they defended their (gendered) values in the camps, the outside world was being turned upside down by the war. After 1945, the older men were lost in a Polish society among young men and women who had witnessed the brutality and moral disorder of wartime and who had fought alongside one another, something which led as well to a new understanding of gender roles. In her essay, Röger takes into view the sexual contacts of German occupiers with local women. In the German sphere of power created by the occupation, sexual contacts between occupier and occupied were not private. Neither the occupiers nor the patriotically active occupied considered it a personal matter if a German occupier met up with a local woman. Polish underground groups and private persons watched, denounced, and punished women who got involved with Germans. The occupiers forbad the contact on racial grounds, but diverged greatly in their policies on punishment. The reactions ranged from imprisonment to the suggestion of marriage.

Georgeta Nazarska and *Sevo Yavashchev* present an integrated view of the Bulgarian army and the communist resistance movement. From the perspective of military history and women's history, they first of all document the number of women in the respective formations and, secondly, present their motivations.

Gender Roles and Gendered Identities in Partisan Movements

Another large thematic block addresses the gender roles and gendered identities in the different partisan movements in Eastern Europe. The state of research concerning gender roles in the diverse partisan movements differs from case to case. Several studies deal explicitly with Jewish partisan movements and in the historiography of these movements aspects of everyday life have (since the 1990s) been consistently integrated, for example, the gendered power relations within the fighting units.[45] Conversely, some of the national partisan movements have never been analyzed from this perspective, even though their history was quite present in the new patriotic or nationalistic narratives after 1990 – that was after decades in which their history had no place at all in the former communist master

[45] See among others the diverse publications of Tec Nechama, *Jewish Resistance: Facts, Omissions, and Distortions* (Washington D.C.: Miles Lerman Center for Study of Jewish R, 1997); Tec Nechama, 'Women among the Forest Partisans', in Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 223-33.

narratives.[46] For the gender roles in partisan movements, memory and history are even more intermingled than with regard to the armies. The majority of the partisan movements have no written documents or transmitted conceptions of, for example, how women should be employed. As historians we strongly rely on memories, in writing and orally transmitted, as well as on visual material.

Ruth Leiserowitz, *Barbara Wiesinger* and *Olena Petrenko* demonstrate how to write a history of the partisans (using such sources) which integrates the category of gender. Ruth Leiserowitz's paper, a comparison between women in the ethnic and Jewish resistance movements in Lithuania, shows that the stability of gender differences, which existed in the pre-war period, was clearly broken up by the war, by the armed resistance, and by the underground insurgency of the post-war period. Although the experiences during the war were largely tabooed in the Soviet era, they remained in the collective memory. Since the end of the 1980s, the female veterans of the different partisan movements have played important roles in the memorialization and cultural-political functionalization of their respective histories.

Barbara Wiesinger, who presented in 2008 a monograph about the female partisans, discusses in this volume the revolutionary aspirations and the everyday life experiences of female fighters in Yugoslavian partisan units. The units were comprised of up to 15 percent by women, even though women living among men were suspected of having dubious sexual morals by those living in rural areas of Yugoslavia.

In Ukraine, however, the politization of the OUN-history made it impossible to develop a more or less objective account of the individual motives of the fighters. Petrenko argues that the suppression of such biographies in communist time found its weird continuity after 1989. Female fighters were heroized. Part of making them heroines was an exclusion of unpleasant elements found in their biographies. In the case of Ukraine, this might have been cooperation with Soviet security forces or participation in executions of civilians during the war. Already in the inter-war period, Petrenko argues, the OUN had many female fighters whose deeds were depicted as heroic efforts. Alongside radically minded young men, women were already media stars to help legitimate the fight.

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[46] This is true for the Polish case, where only some initial attempts have been made to integrate the female fighters' story and ask them about their experience. See Weronika Grzebalska, *Płeć i naród w Powstaniu Warszawskim. Kobiece doświadczenie w narracjach członkiń AK* [*Gender and Nation in the Warsaw Uprising. Women's Experiences in the Narratives of Female AK-Members*], Master Thesis, University of Warsaw, Institute of Sociology, 2010 (to be published in 2012). We thank the author for sharing her unpublished manuscript with us.

Post-War: (Dis-)Continuities and Memories

Determining even a date for the end of war is not an easy task. Ruth Leiserowitz emphasizes that this is true for Lithuania and Vita Zelče says the same for Latvia. Andrea Pető points out for Hungary that in some parts of the country fighting was still ongoing, while in other parts collaborators were already being brought to trial. In general, in all Central and Eastern European countries, the German capitulation brought relief, but that was not the end of chaos, poverty, displacement, and political and moral confusion.[47] Moreover, values, which are always gendered in and of themselves, were deeply shocked during the war, something which had long-lasting effects after 1945.

A very concrete effect of war was the loss of so many citizens. *Barbara Klich* shows that the diminution of the Polish population during the war was one of the arguments in post-war public discourses about reproduction and abortion. Giving birth was considered a women's task in the reconstruction of the Polish nation as a socialist entity.[48] She further shows the influence of Catholic church. War led to a loss of whole populations, but especially to the loss of men. In all European countries, women outnumbered men after the war. As mentioned, in the Soviet Union women outnumbered men by 20 million, an imbalance which took longer than a generation to correct. The surplus of women – beyond the ideology – was a reason in Central and Eastern European countries for including them as fit for jobs previously considered as traditionally male.[49] *Vita Zelče* offers a further argument by pointing to the fact that Latvian women, while men were mobilized in war, went through professional training and were hence better skilled after 1945. In sum, her paper presents a broad picture of Latvian women during and after the war. Alongside the socialist ideal of the "new woman" (that was itself changing) women had to perform different roles in work life, political life and in the family. To make a complex situation even more contradictory, Zelče stresses the fact that external signs of femininity became an important value in the post-war Latvian Soviet Republic – something that had its parallels in Western Europe, but there it

[47] See e.g. the contributions in Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, eds., *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Thereafter Bessel and Schumann, *Life Death*.

[48] Compare for the legal context Małgorzata Fuszara, 'Legal Regulation of Abortion in Poland', *Signs*, 17, 1 (1991), 117-28.

[49] See for Poland Małgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

happened without conflicting with the new role model of the working women.

Last but not least, *Irina Rebrova* provides insights into gendered remembrance processes. On the basis of oral-history interviews – something that she classifies as a "fairly new phenomenon in Russia" – she reconstructs gendered patterns of war remembrances. In women's narration, everyday life during the occupation plays a key role. Russian women stress individual experiences more than presenting a patriotic master narrative.

Gender and Sex: the Intrusions of World War II

Our authors see the gendered dimensions of World War II and its aftermath in Central and Eastern Europe mainly under two aspects. Firstly, they see it with regard to values and societal norms and role models, which are themselves always gendered. Secondly, they see it with regard to bodily experiences. If one means by *gender* (as distinct from *sex*) the cultural construct around biological gender, bodily experiences still remain a core concept of gender history. Experiences of one's own body in extreme situations are accordingly a recurrent theme. The theses and results collected in this volume can be briefly summed up in what follows using both these core concepts.

Gender: Dynamization Gender Roles in Central and Eastern Europe through World War II

All our authors see a dynamization of gender roles in World War II. Some of them argue for a substantial change in gender roles, initiated by the war. Wiesinger points to the fact that the war created chaos and destroyed communities of social life and social control. She argues that for Yugoslavia this anomy also enabled girls and women to transgress gendered norms. Georgeta Nazarska and Sevo Yavashchev show in turn for Bulgaria that while the political activity of female inhabitants increased after World War II, the war itself was the starting point for the activity. Also, established patterns of gendered hierarchies were deeply shaken. Some governments argued in fact that women had earned their rights as citizens through their armed service, as for example in Yugoslavia (Wiesinger). Nazarska and Yavashchev show that some women who fought in the Second World War "used this symbolic capital to continue their education and carve successful political and professional careers for themselves." Overall, that means that women did not just become active after the war, but were motivated to do

so by the war and in the war. The mobilizations in Central and Eastern Europe of the female population after the war need to be interpreted as a continuation of the war mobilization.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, both persistence of the old and radicalization of the new can be observed. Irina Rebrova notes no progressive changes in regard to women's roles. In partisan groups and the army, traditional gender role models were applied so no change resulted. Having conducted interviews with mainly a rural population, she argues that women were severely frightened by the changing gender roles in World War II. Although women had to organize farming life after 1945,[50] they were content for the most part to return back to their traditional occupations. Bischl argues, however, that the concepts of masculinity were radicalized in World War II. According to her, "a chauvinist masculinity became hegemonic" which also influenced the post-war societal contract.

For the Soviet Republic of Latvia, both authors (Lazda, Zelče) argue that there was a severe shock to gender relations. Having been a traditional society before the war, the two separate foreign occupations led to fundamental changes: men were away as soldiers or were imprisoned, and Latvian women performed male roles. Zelče argues that the boundary between "men's work" and "women's work" disappeared as the war progressed, but at the level of official discourse the spheres were kept separate. After 1945, the policies of the socialist regime took deeper root and the role was changed by economic policies which planned for women to take on traditional male occupations. "The regime insisted that women accept the Soviet way of life", Zelce concludes. Although they made up the vast majority of society, they were forced to adapt to new role models. Yet not everyone was convinced. Even during the Soviet occupation in 1939, traditional gender roles were used by locals to shield themselves from Soviet regime and ideology (Lazda).

In Ukraine, also a Soviet Republic, a "specific fight for female resources" took place. The participation of women in the underground movement was mythologized and politicized by different sides. Those allied with Soviet power portrayed the women who fought in OUN and UPA as having been seduced by their surroundings – their partners, friends, and husbands. Pető observes a similar pattern during the collaboration trials in the People's Republic of Hungary. She even sees gender politics at hand in the courts which served two aims: firstly, to reconstruct gender hierarchies and, secondly, to discourage women from participating in the public sphere – a clear attempt to untwist and restore the *deformed double helix*, one can say.

[50] Judt, *Postwar,* 3.

The society in the People's Republic of Poland was completely changed after the war. The German and Soviet occupiers had murdered millions, with especially the professional members of the society having fallen victim. Further, the multi-ethnic character of the country was lost. Another severe result was the profound shock to the moral fabric of large parts of the society.[51] A kind of paradox is described in Łukasz Kielban's case study on the imprisoned officers. They were kept away by force from the war and from the fundamental political and moral changes in their home country. They came back to their country deeply confused. After their return from their bubble existence in captivity, they formed "a veritable museum".

Bodily Experiences

The war was an extreme situation – for the body as well. Experiences with one's own body under extreme conditions have accordingly been recurrent themes (e.g. Rebrova, Leiserowitz). A further interface is presented in gender specific experiences of violence. In the research, the concept of sexualized violence is now preferred over that of sexual violence. The intention is to bring into consideration that we are dealing with a variant of violence that is directed towards the sexual, but without sexuality being the central aim. Regarding sexual violence at the Eastern front, the academic research has developed intensely in the last years. While the rapes by the Red Army on their way west had become a topic starting in the early post-war years,[52] in the West German debates about the forced migration in World War II, in the Central and Southeastern European countries which came under the influence of the Soviet Union, remembrance and research about the sexual violence of Soviet soldiers on their way west was taboo. Andrea Pető was one of the first to examine mass violence against women in this region. She focused on Hungary, the former ally of NS-Germany.[53] In the chapter for our volume, Pető refers to her studies about sexual violence and discusses them in a broader context: with regard to the forma-

[51] Regarding Poland see the approach of Marcin Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944-1947* [*The Big Fear. Poland 1944-1947*] (Kraków: Znak, 2012).

[52] See Elizabeth Heineman, 'The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's "Crisis Years" and West German National Identity', *American Historical Review*, 101, 2 (1996), 354-95.

[53] See her English-language chapter Andrea Petö, 'Memory and the Narrative of Rape in Budapest and Vienna in 1945', in Bessel and Schumann, *Life Death*, 129-48.

tion of emotional commemoration groups and selecting specific gendered experiences for their political purposes.

What has until now been a non-issue was the sexual violence by German soldiers. In Holocaust studies, which is still a booming research field, the issue has been slowly addressed since the 1980s. In her interesting and systematizing essay "Sexual Violence in the Holocaust. Unique and Typical" from the year 2006, Doris L. Bergen stresses the strong presence of the experiences of sexualized violence in relationships of survivors.[54] At our conference, papers integrated the Jewish and non-Jewish questions, but did not deal exclusively with the Holocaust. Here we would like to mention the upcoming publication following our conference about "Women and the Holocaust" held in Warsaw.[55] At this point, we want to stress that many of the issues discussed here, like groping, rape, survival prostitution, street prostitution, were also a reality for men and same-same gender relations.

For a long period of time, sexual violence by German soldiers against Jewish and non-Jewish women was not an issue. Only in the last decade have important studies provided us with facts about and interpretations of the sexual harassment by German soldiers.[56] Most of the attempts reconstruct how the authorities dealt with sexual assault by the occupiers. What is missing, however, are insights into the victims' narratives and this is what Irina Rebrova sheds light on in her paper on Russian women's producing a narrative about the shock of sexual violence. In addition to that, Rebrova and Bischl discuss experiences of gendered violence inside the Soviet Army. Among the unpleasant and seldom openly discussed issues was also sexualized violence in the army or the partisan groups. Irina

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[54] Doris L. Bergen, 'Sexual Violence in the Holocaust: Unique and Typical', in Dagmar Herzog, ed., *Lessons and Legacies VII: The Holocaust in International Perspective* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 179–200. A recently published volume by Sonia Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel relies in large parts on these survivors relations. See Sonja M. Hedgepeth, and Rochelle G. Saidel, eds., *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2010).

[55] See http://womenandholocaust.eu/ (last visited 3 June 2012).

[56] See Birgit Beck, *Wehrmacht und sexuelle Gewalt: Sexualverbrechen vor deutschen Militärgerichten, 1939-1945* [*The German Army and Sexual Violence: Sexual Crimes Before German Military Courts: 1939-1945*] (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004); Wendy J. Gertjejanssen, 'Victims, Heroes, Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front During World War II', Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 2004; see http://www.victimsheroessurvivors.info/VictimsHeroesSurvivors.pdf (last visited 31 July 2012); David R, Snyder, *Sex Crimes under the Wehrmacht* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Monika Flaschka, 'Race, Rape and Gender in Nazi-Occupied Territories', Ph.D. thesis, Kent State University, 2009, available at http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Flaschka%20Monika%20J.pdf?kent1258726022 (last visited 26 April 2011); Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*.

Rebrova states in her paper that this was not part of public discussion in the Soviet Union in order not to damage the image of the glorified Soviet soldiers. She and Kerstin Bischl show here that it was a part of female fighters' experiences. According to Bischl, sexual gossip and chauvinism, and to some extent violent concepts of masculinity came to dominate. The line between consensual encounters and violent ones became very thin. Sexual violence also played a role in regard to the mobilization of women. One of the Yugoslavian women interviewed by Barbara Wiesinger claimed rumors about sexual violence as one reason to join partisans.

Our volume is but a further piece on the way to a gender-integrated history of World War II and its aftermath in Central and Eastern Europe. The research presented here raises many questions in need of further investigation, among them questions of the continuity of pre-war to post-war societal formations and consent, but also questions of similarities and differences to Western Europe.